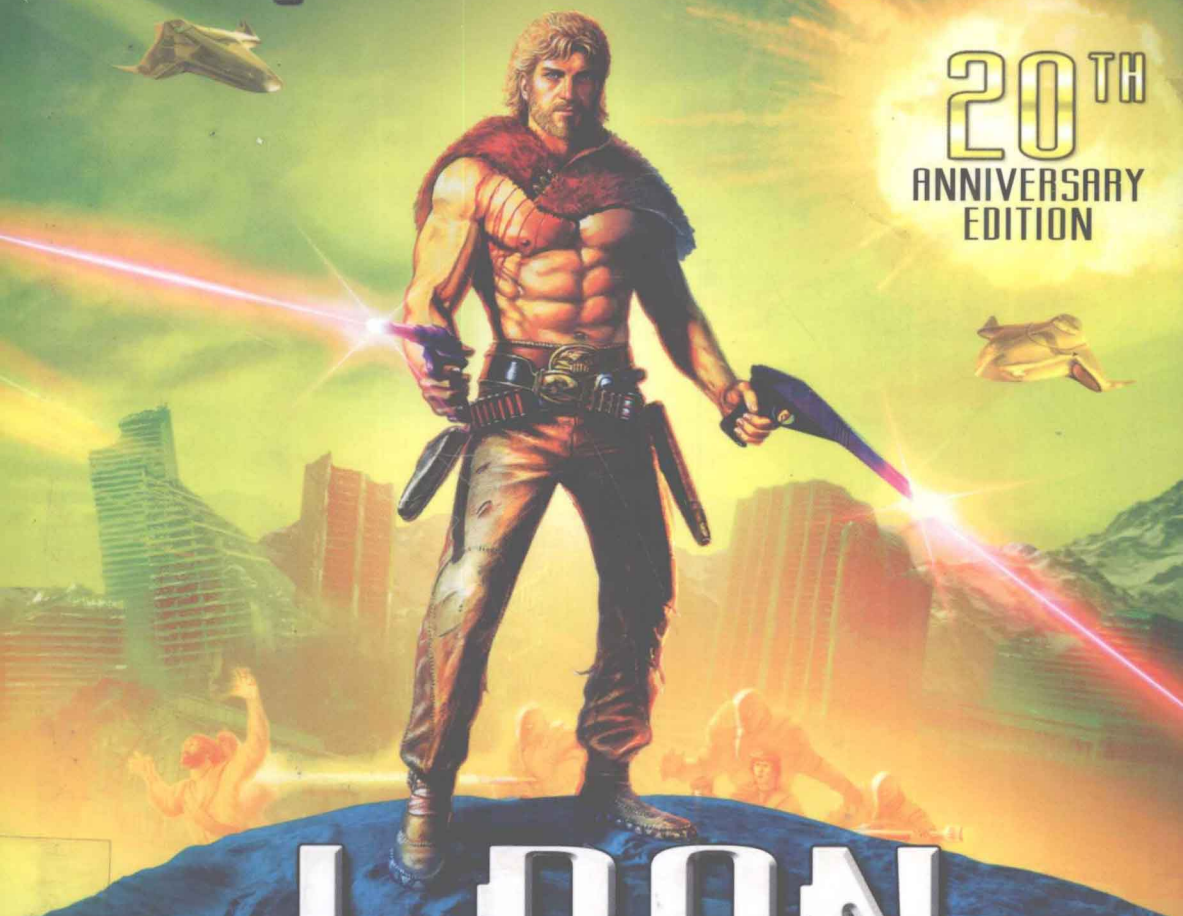


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BATTLEFIELD EARTH

A Saga of the Year 3000

20TH
ANNIVERSARY
EDITION



L. RON HUBBARD

BATTLEFIELD
EARTH
—A SAGA OF THE YEAR 3000—

L. RON
HUBBARD

GALAXY
P R E S S

PUBLISHER OF THE FICTION WORKS OF L. RON HUBBARD

BATTLEFIELD EARTH
A SAGA OF THE YEAR 3000
by L. Ron Hubbard

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INTRODUCTION

By *L. Ron Hubbard*



RECENTLY THERE CAME A PERIOD WHEN I HAD LITTLE TO DO. THIS was novel in a life so crammed with busy years, and I decided to amuse myself by writing a novel that was pure science fiction.

In the hard-driven times between 1930 and 1950, I was a professional writer not simply because it was my job, but because I wanted to finance more serious researches. In those days there were few agencies pouring out large grants to independent workers. Despite what you might hear about Roosevelt "relief," those were depression years. One succeeded or one starved. One became a top-liner or a gutter bum. One had to work very hard at his craft or have no craft at all. It was a very challenging time for anyone who lived through it.

I have heard it said, as an intended slur, "He was a science fiction writer," and have heard it said of many. It brought me to realize that few people understand the role science fiction has played in the lives of Earth's whole population.

I have just read several standard books that attempt to define "science fiction" and to trace its history. There are many experts in this field, many controversial opinions. Science fiction is favored with the most closely knit reading public that may exist, possibly the most dedicated of any genre. Devotees are called "fans," and the word has a special prestigious meaning in science fiction.



Few professional writers, even those in science fiction, have written very much on the character of “sf.” They are usually too busy turning out the work itself to expound on what they have written. But there are many experts on this subject among both critics and fans, and they have a lot of worthwhile things to say.

However, many false impressions exist, both of the genre and of its writers. So when one states that he set out to write a work of pure science fiction, he had better state what definition he is using.

It will probably be best to return to the day in 1938 when I first entered this field, the day I met John W. Campbell, Jr., a day in the very dawn of what has come to be known as The Golden Age of science fiction. I was quite ignorant of the field and regarded it, in fact, a bit diffidently. I was not there of my own choice. I had been summoned to the vast old building on Seventh Avenue in dusty, dirty, old New York by the very top brass of Street & Smith publishing company—an executive named Black and another, F. Orlin Tremaine. Ordered there with me was another writer, Arthur J. Burks. In those days when the top brass of a publishing company—particularly one as old and prestigious as Street & Smith—“invited” a writer to visit, it was like being commanded to appear before the king or receiving a court summons. You arrived, you sat there obediently, and you spoke when you were spoken to.

We were both, Arthur J. Burks and I, top-line professionals in other writing fields. By the actual tabulation of A.B. Dick, which set advertising rates for publishing firms, either of our names appearing on a magazine cover would send the circulation rate skyrocketing, something like modern TV ratings.

The top brass came quickly to the point. They had recently started or acquired a magazine called Astounding Science Fiction. Other magazines were published by other houses, but Street & Smith was unhappy because its magazine was mainly publishing stories about machines and machinery. As publishers, its executives knew you had to have people in stories. They had called us in because, aside from our A.B. Dick rating as writers, we could write about real people. They knew we were busy and had other commitments. But would we be so kind as to write science fiction? We indicated we would.

They called in John W. Campbell, Jr., the editor of the magazine. He found himself looking at two adventure-story writers, and though adventure writers might be the aristocrats of the whole field and might have vast followings of their own,



they were not science fiction writers. He resisted. In the first place, calling in top-liners would ruin his story budget due to their word rates. And in the second place, he had his own ideas of what science fiction was.

Campbell, who dominated the whole field of sf as its virtual czar until his death in 1971, was a huge man who had majored in physics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and graduated from Duke University with a bachelor of science degree. His idea of getting a story was to have some professor or scientist write it and then doctor it up and publish it. Perhaps that is a bit unkind, but it really was what he was doing. To fill his pages even he, who had considerable skill as a writer, was writing stories for the magazine.

The top brass had to directly order Campbell to buy and to publish what we wrote for him. He was going to get people into his stories and get something going besides machines.

I cannot tell you how many other writers were called in. I do not know. In all justice, it may have been Campbell himself who found them later on. But do not get the impression that Campbell was anything less than a master and a genius in his own right. Any of the stable of writers he collected during this Golden Age will tell you that. Campbell could listen. He could improve things. He could dream up little plot twists that were masterpieces. He well deserved the title that he gained and kept as the top editor and the dominant force that made science fiction as respectable as it became. Star Wars, the all-time, box-office-record movie to date (exceeded only by its sequel), would never have happened if science fiction had not become as respectable as Campbell made it. More than that—Campbell played no small part in driving this society into the space age.

You had to actually work with Campbell to know where he was trying to go, what his idea was of this thing called “science fiction.” I cannot give you any quotations from him; I can just tell you what I felt he was trying to do. In time we became friends. Over lunches and in his office and at his home on weekends—where his wife Doña kept things smooth—talk was always of stories but also of science. To say that Campbell considered science fiction as “prophecy” is an oversimplification. He had very exact ideas about it.

Only about a tenth of my stories were written for the fields of science fiction and fantasy. I was what they called a high-production writer, and these fields were just not big enough to take everything I could write. I gained my original



reputation in other writing fields during the eight years before the Street & Smith interview.

Campbell, without saying too much about it, considered the bulk of the stories I gave him to be not science fiction but fantasy, an altogether different thing. Some of my stories he eagerly published as science fiction—among them Final Blackout. Many more, actually. I had, myself, somewhat of a science background, had done some pioneer work in rockets and liquid gases, but I was studying the branches of man's past knowledge at that time to see whether he had ever come up with anything valid. This, and a love of the ancient tales now called The Arabian Nights, led me to write quite a bit of fantasy. To handle this fantasy material, Campbell introduced another magazine, Unknown. As long as I was writing novels for it, it continued. But the war came and I and others went, and I think Unknown only lasted about forty months. Such novels were a bit hard to come by. And they were not really Campbell's strength.

So anyone seeking to say that science fiction is a branch of fantasy or an extension of it is unfortunately colliding with a time-honored professional usage of terms. This is an age of mixed genres. I hear different forms of music mixed together like soup. I see so many different styles of dance tangled together into one "dance" that I wonder whether the choreographers really know the different genres of dance anymore. There is abroad today the concept that only conflict produces new things. Perhaps the philosopher Hegel introduced that, but he also said that war was necessary for the mental health of the people and a lot of other nonsense. If all new ideas have to spring from the conflict between old ones, one must deny that virgin ideas can be conceived.

So what would pure science fiction be?

It has been surmised that science fiction must come from an age where science exists. At the risk of raising dispute and outcry—which I have risked all my life and received but not been bothered by, and have gone on and done my job anyway—I wish to point out some things:

Science fiction does not come after the fact of a scientific discovery or development. It is the herald of possibility. It is the plea that someone should work on the future. Yet it is not prophecy. It is the dream that precedes the dawn when the inventor or scientist awakens and goes to his books or his lab saying, "I wonder whether I could make that dream come true in the world of real science."



You can go back to Lucian, second century A.D., or to Johannes Kepler (1571–1630)—who founded modern dynamical astronomy and who also wrote Somnium, an imaginary space flight to the moon—or to Mary Shelley and her Frankenstein, or to Poe or Verne or Wells and ponder whether this was really science fiction. Let us take an example: a man invents an eggbeater. A writer later writes a story about an eggbeater. He has not, thereby, written science fiction. Let us continue the example: a man writes a story about some metal that, when twiddled, beats an egg, but no such tool has ever before existed in fact. He has now written science fiction. Somebody else, a week or a hundred years later, reads the story and says, “Well, well. Maybe it could be done.” And makes an eggbeater. But whether or not it was possible that twiddling two pieces of metal would beat eggs, or whether or not anybody ever did it afterward, the man still has written science fiction.

How do you look at this word “fiction”? It is a sort of homograph. In this case it means two different things. A professor of literature knows it means “a literary work whose content is produced by the imagination and is not necessarily based on fact; the category of literature comprising works of this kind, including novels, short stories, and plays.” It is derived from the Latin fictio, a making, a fashioning, from fictus, past participle of fingere, to touch, form, mold.

But when we join the word to “science” and get “science fiction,” the word “fiction” acquires two meanings in the same use: 1) the science used in the story is at least partly fictional; and 2) any story is fiction. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language defines science fiction as “fiction in which scientific developments and discoveries form an element of plot or background; especially a work of fiction based on prediction of future scientific possibilities.”

So, by dictionary definition and a lot of discussions with Campbell and fellow writers of that time, science fiction has to do with the material universe and sciences; these can include economics, sociology, medicine and suchlike, all of which have a material base.

Then what is fantasy?

Well, believe me, if it were simply the application of vivid imagination, then a lot of economists and government people and such would be fully qualified authors! Applying the word “imaginative” to fantasy would be like calling an entire library “some words.” Too simplistic, too general a term.



In these modern times many of the ingredients that make up “fantasy” as a type of fiction have vanished from the stage. You hardly even find them in encyclopedias anymore. These subjects were spiritualism, mythology, magic, divination, the supernatural and many other fields of that type. None of them had anything really to do with the real universe. This does not necessarily mean that they never had any validity or that they will not again arise; it merely means that man, currently, has sunk into a materialistic binge.

The bulk of these subjects consists of false data, but there probably never will come a time when all such phenomena are explained. The primary reason such a vast body of knowledge dropped from view is that material science has been undergoing a long series of successes. But I do notice that every time modern science thinks it is down to the nitty-gritty of it all, it runs into (and sometimes adopts) such things as the Egyptian myths that man came from mud, or something like that. But the only point I am trying to make here is that there is a whole body of phenomena that we cannot classify as “material.” They are the nonmaterial, nonuniverse subjects. And no matter how false many of the old ideas were, they still existed; who knows but what there might not be some validity in some bits of them. One would have to study these subjects to have a complete comprehension of all the knowledge and beliefs possible. I am not opening the door to someone’s saying I believe in all these things: I am only saying that there is another realm besides dedicated—and even simple-minded—materialism.

“Fantasy,” so far as literature is concerned, is defined in the dictionary as “literary or dramatic fiction characterized by highly fanciful or supernatural elements.” Even that is a bit limited as a definition.

So fantasy could be called any fiction that takes up elements such as spiritualism, mythology, magic, divination, the supernatural and so on. The Arabian Nights was a gathering together of the tales of many, many countries and civilizations—not just of Arabia as many believe. Its actual title was A Thousand and One Nights of Entertainment. It abounds with examples of fantasy fiction.

When you mix science fiction with fantasy you do not have a pure genre. The two are, to a professional, separate genres. I notice today there is a tendency to mingle them and then excuse the result by calling it “imaginative fiction.” Actually they don’t mix well: science fiction, to be credible, has to be based on some degree of plausibility; fantasy gives you no limits at all. Writing science fiction demands care on the part of the author; writing fantasy is as easy as strolling in



the park. (In fantasy, a guy has no sword in his hand; bang, there's a magic sword in his hand.) This doesn't say one is better than the other. They are simply very different genres from a professional viewpoint.

But there is more to this: science fiction, particularly in its Golden Age, had a mission. I cannot, of course, speak for my friends of that period. But from Campbell and from "shooting the breeze" with other writers of the time, one got the very solid impression that they were doing a heavy job of beating the drum to get man to the stars.

At the beginning of that time, science fiction was regarded as a sort of awful stepchild in the world of literature. But worse than that, science itself was not getting the attention or the grants or the government expenditures it should have received. There has to be a lot of public interest and demand before politicians shell out the financing necessary to get a subject whizzing.

Campbell's crew of writers were pretty stellar. They included very top-line names. They improved the literary quality of the genre. And they began the boom of its broader popularity.

A year or so after The Golden Age began, I recall going into a major university's science department. I wanted some data on cytology for my own serious researches. I was given a courteous reception and was being given the references when I noticed that the room had been gradually filling up. And not with students but with professors and deans. It had been whispered around the offices who was in the biology department, and the next thing I knew, I was shaking a lot of hands held out below beaming faces. And what did they want to know: What did I think of this story or that? And had I seen this or that writer lately? And how was Campbell?

They had a literature! Science fiction!

And they were proud of it!

For a while, before and after World War II, I was in rather steady association with the new era of scientists, the boys who built the bomb, who were beginning to get the feel of rockets. They were all science-fiction buffs. And many of the hottest scientists around were also writing science fiction on the side.



In 1945 I attended a meeting of old scientist and science-fiction friends. The meeting was at the home of my dear friend, the incomparable Bob Heinlein. And do you know what was their agenda? How to get man into space fast enough so that he would be distracted from further wars on Earth. And they were the lads who had the government ear and authority to do it! We are coming close to doing it. The scientists got man into space and they even had the Russians cooperating for a while.

One can't go on living a naive life believing that everything happens by accident, that events simply follow events, that there is a natural order of things and that everything will come out right somehow. That isn't science. That's fate, kismet, and we're back in the world of fantasy. No, things do get planned. The Golden Age of science fiction that began with Campbell and Astounding Science Fiction gathered enough public interest and readership to help push man into space. Today, you hear top scientists talking the way we used to talk in bull sessions so long ago.

Campbell did what he set out to do. So long as he had his first wife and others around him to remind him that science was for people, that it was no use to just send machines out for the sake of machines, that there was no point into going into space unless the mission had something to do with people, too, he kept winning. For he was a very brilliant man and a great and very patient editor. After he lost his first wife, Doña, in 1949—she married George O. Smith—and after he no longer had a sounding-board who made him keep people in stories, and when he no longer had his old original writing crew around, he let his magazine slip back, and when it finally became named Analog, his reign was over. But The Golden Age had kicked it all into high gear. So Campbell won after all.

When I started out to write this novel, I wanted to write pure science fiction. And not in the old tradition. Writing forms and styles have changed, so I had to bring myself up to date and modernize the styles and patterns. To show that science fiction is not science fiction because of a particular kind of plot, this novel contains practically every type of story there is—detective, spy, adventure, western, love, air war, you name it. All except fantasy; there is none of that. The term “science” also includes economics and sociology and medicine where these are related to material things. So they're in here, too.

In writing for magazines, the editors (because of magazine format) force one to write to exact lengths. I was always able to do that—it is a kind of knack. But



this time I decided not to cut everything out and to just roll her as she rolled, so long as the pace kept up. So I may have wound up writing the biggest sf novel ever in terms of length. The experts—and there are lots of them to do so—can verify whether this is so.

Some of my readers may wonder that I did not include my own serious subjects in this book. It was with no thought of dismissal of them. It was just that I put on my professional writer's hat. I also did not want to give anybody the idea I was doing a press relations job for my other serious works.

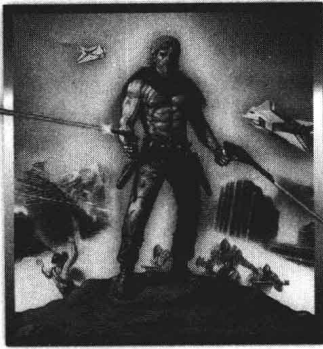
There are those who will look at this book and say, "See? We told you he is just a science fiction writer!" Well, as one of the crew of writers that helped start man to the stars, I'm very proud of also being known as a science fiction writer. You have satellites out there, man has walked on the moon, you have probes going to the planets, don't you? Somebody had to dream the dream, and a lot of somebodies like those great writers of The Golden Age and later had to get an awful lot of people interested in it to make it true.

I hope you enjoy this novel. It is the only one I ever wrote just to amuse myself. It also celebrates my golden wedding with the muse. Fifty years a professional—1930-1980.

And as an old pro I assure you that it is pure science fiction. No fantasy. Right on the rails of the genre. Science is for people. And so is science fiction.

*Ready?
Stand by.
Blast off!*

*L. Ron Hubbard
October 1980*

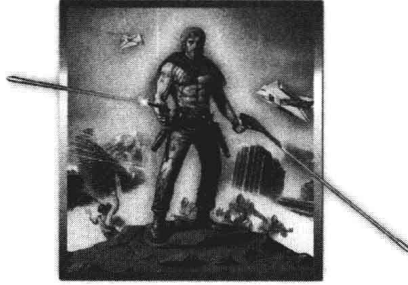


PART

1

PART 1

Chapter 1



MAN,” SAID TERL, “IS AN ENDANGERED SPECIES.”
The hairy paws of the Chamco brothers hung suspended above the broad keys of the laser-bash game. The cliffs of Char’s eyebones drew down over his yellow orbs as he looked up in mystery. Even the steward, who had been padding quietly about picking up her saucepans, lumbered to a halt and stared.

Terl could not have produced a more profound effect had he thrown a meat-girl naked into the middle of the room.

The clear dome of the Intergalactic Mining Company employee recreation hall shone black around and above them, silvered at its crossbars by the pale glow of the earth’s single moon, half-full on this late summer night.

Terl lifted his large amber eyes from the tome that rested minutely in his massive claws and looked around the room. He was suddenly aware of the effect he had produced, and it amused him. Anything to relieve the humdrum monotony of a ten-year† duty tour in this gods-abandoned mining camp, way out here on the edge of a minor galaxy.

In an even more professorial voice, already deep and roaring enough, Terl repeated his thought. “Man is an endangered species.”

Char glowered at him. “What in the name of diseased crap are *you* reading?”

†Time, distance and weight have been translated in all cases throughout this book to old Earth time, distance and weight systems for the sake of uniformity and to prevent confusion in the various systems employed by the Psychlos. —*Translator*



Terl did not much care for his tone. After all, Char was simply one of several mine managers, but Terl was chief of minesite security. “I didn’t read it. I thought it.”

“You must’ve got it from somewhere,” growled Char. “What *is* that book?”

Terl held it up so Char could see its back. It said *General Report of Geological Minesites, Volume 250,369*. Like all such books it was huge but printed on material that made it almost weightless, particularly on a low-gravity planet such as Earth, a triumph of design and manufacture that did not cut heavily into the payloads of freighters.

“*Rugbr*,” growled Char in disgust. “That must be two, three hundred Earth-years old. If you want to prow around in books, I got an up-to-date general board of directors’ report that says we’re thirty-five freighters behind in bauxite deliveries.”

The Chamco brothers looked at each other and then at their game to see where they had gotten to in shooting down the live mayflies in the air box. But Terl’s next words distracted them again.

“Today,” said Terl, brushing Char’s push for work aside, “I got a sighting report from a recon drone that recorded only thirty-five men in that valley near that peak.” Terl waved his paw westward toward the towering mountain range silhouetted by the moon.

“So?” said Char.

“So I dug up the books out of curiosity. There used to be hundreds in that valley. And furthermore,” continued Terl with his professorial ways coming back, “there used to be thousands and thousands of them on this planet.”

“You can’t believe all you read,” said Char heavily. “On my last duty tour—it was Arcturus IV—”

“This book,” said Terl, lifting it impressively, “was compiled by the culture and ethnology department of the Intergalactic Mining Company.”

The larger Chamco brother batted his eyebones. “I didn’t know we had one.”

Char sniffed. “It was disbanded more than a century ago. Useless waste of money. Yapping around about ecological impacts and junk like that.” He shifted his bulk around to Terl. “Is this some kind of scheme to explain a nonscheduled vacation? You’re going to get your butt in a bind. I can see it, a pile of requisitions this high for breathe-gas tanks and scoutcraft. You won’t get any of *my* workers.”



“Turn off the juice,” said Terl. “I only said that man—”

“I know what you said. But you got your appointment because you are clever. That’s right, clever. Not intelligent. *Clever*. And I can see right through an excuse to go on a hunting expedition. What Psychlo in his right skull would bother with the things?”

The smaller Chamco brother grinned. “I get tired of just dig-dig-dig, ship-ship-ship. Hunting might be fun. I didn’t think anybody did it for—”

Char turned on him like a tank zeroing in on its prey. “Fun hunting those things! You ever *see* one?” He lurched to his feet and the floor creaked. He put his paw just above his belt. “They only come up to here! They got hardly any hair on them except their heads. They’re a dirty white color like a slug. They’re so brittle they break up when you try to put them in a pouch.” He snarled in disgust and picked up a saucepan of kerbango. “They’re so *weak* they couldn’t pick this up without straining their guts. And they’re *not* good eating.” He tossed off the kerbango and made an earthquake shudder.

“You ever *see* one?” said the bigger Chamco brother.

Char sat down, the dome rumbled, and he handed the empty saucepan to the steward. “No,” he said. “Not alive. I seen some bones in the shafts and I heard.”

“There were thousands of them once,” said Terl, ignoring the mine manager. “Thousands! All over the place.”

Char belched. “Shouldn’t wonder they die off. They breathe this oxygen-nitrogen air. Deadly stuff.”

“I got a crack in my face mask yesterday,” said the smaller Chamco brother. “For about thirty seconds I thought I wasn’t going to make it. Bright lights bursting inside your skull. Deadly stuff. I really look forward to getting back home where you can walk around without a suit or mask, where the gravity gives you something to push against, where everything is a beautiful purple and there’s not one bit of this green stuff. My papa used to tell me that if I wasn’t a good Psychlo and if I didn’t say sir-sir-sir to the right people, I’d wind up at a butt end of nowhere like this. He was right. I did. It’s your shot, Brother.”

Char sat back and eyed Terl. “You ain’t really going hunting for a *man*, are you?”

Terl looked at his book. He inserted one of his talons to keep his place and then thumped the volume against his knee.

“I think you’re wrong,” he mused. “There *was* something to these creatures. Before we came along, it says here, they had towns on every