

DOUCHEBAG
MESSIAH

The Barbecue Continues
or
A Wholesale Massacre of
Frank Herbert's Hackwork

Tom Cole

Table of Contents

Author's Introductory Note.....	1
Synopsis	2
A Big Ole Highfalutin Messiah.....	6
The Swing Set	9

Author's Introductory Note

Alas, Herbert's book is so incomprehensible and boring that there is no way to lampoon it much farther than what I have finally got down on paper here. Upon reading any part of Herbert's work, every detail of it vanishes, instantly and irretrievably relegated to the wispy regions of a complete and tenacious amnesia. Hence, both the obvious and the nuanced in this parody will be lost even to the faithful Herberphiles.

I must say it again; what Herbert wrote is so immediately and completely forgettable that no cultural, folk, or literary memory of it can possibly exist.

Thus, today whatever I or any other essayist may endeavor to set down in ink or pixel about the book will remain wholly esoteric, obscure, and abstruse and forever beyond the ken of any living person.

Just the same, these short chapters are awfully funny just so long as one can both imagine what is being lampooned and trust that the ridiculing is fair.

Explore, gentle reader. A laugh awaits you.

—Tom Cole

Synopsis

The Weirdos of Dung

Dung, Ascaris, Desert Planet is a world of perpetual lazy summer days whose inhabitants exist stoically in the face of odds that might be described as “terrifying” if one is spared the eye of even the most incompetent of editors.

The Freebasers of Dung survive appalling desert vicissitudes with Dixie cups taped under their arms to reclaim a bit of water that might otherwise be lost to evaporation. Sandworms big and small are both a menace, a means of transportation, and a cottage industry for these hardy desert campers, the people of Dung, Desert Planet, Ascaris.

The Freebasers of Dung, despite their apparent love of petty squabbling, blood feuds, and endless tussling with neighboring tribes are nonetheless possessed of boundless optimism, generosity, good humor, and hearty, full-throated laughter. Indeed, they have often been described as Dung’s greatest treasure and resource, a title which otherwise would go to *meringue*, a worm-excreted, lemon-scented, take-one-hit-got-to-have-another kind of drug whose uses will be further studied in this volume.

Paulie Atavist sprang off of Dude Pito, who was killed when Spidy, Barman Valium

Harkincinema's assassin, bit into a chocolate bonbon that the family dentist Francis Hugh had filled with Silly Green, a deadly brain gas. Paulie and his mother, escaped from the Sardonicon besieged castle on Dung in the family PC Cruiser which crashed in the desert when a Windows reboot brought it down. Paulie and his mother there fell under the protection of Sturgeongar, the leader of the desert freebasers.

The mother of the boy Paulie was Jezebel, and she had been trained in the manner of the Benzadrine Geltabs, a guild whose members graduated from (or at least briefly attended) what might be best described as a faith-based kind of charter school. According to its administrators, Paulie might just possibly be the *Whachacalladat*, known in the legends of the *Missionaria Positionaria* as a tantrum-prone, teary-eyed, sissy boy turned galactic messiah.

Paulie won the hearts and souls of the desert Freebasers, learned to cowboy sandworms, and became an excellent slop hog salad chef. Thus, he was referred to reverently as both the Master of Slop Hog Bleu and the Lord of the Sandworms.

The mother of the boy Paulie took the Fibteller's drug for its Ponce de Leon effects and while doped up on it, got pregnant with the child Alice, who began to set new and unheard

of standards in the way of precocity. It was she who, at six years of age, assassinated the Barman Valium Harkincinema as well as his nephew Fay Ray, both with a hail of fire from the snub-nosed .38 she kept in her purse next to her Lucky Strikes and brass knuckles.

Paulie's command over the desert Freebasers resulted in the infliction upon the feared and deadly Sardonicons several black eyes and at least one bloody nose, all surprises to one and all. Most often, however, the soldiers that he led were soundly trounced.

Paulie "mated" with a desert Freebaser girl named Chianti, but he didn't as it turned out mate for life as pigeons do. He impulsively married Princess Ireful at a dinner party with a mind to securing his political position and also in order to curry favor with her four younger sisters. To his credit, however, it is said that he refused to consummate the marriage before talking things over with Chianti, who, of course, was hardly agreeable to the marriage in the first place but in the end really had little say in the matter.

Paulie continued to direct operations on Ascaris from his headquarters in Kitchenette #4 of the Breezy Palms Motel.

Now the great families of the Landgrab were making plans to oust Paulie Moab Utah (as he had come to be called). What followed was not

just another penny-a-liner pulp manuscript, but galactic history itself.

I

A Big Ole Highfalutin Messiah

There “were a man born,” or better said, there *was* a man born and also were born his sister and it is somehow of import to note that “their flesh was subject to space and time,” a statement that at the present time is beyond the ken (or the barf threshold) of normal humankind.

To understand the boy Paulie and his half sister, one first must have the slightest interest in doing so. In that unlikely event, one would see that their life disaster really turned out to be the disaster for all of mankind for which neither brother nor sister should receive the least bit of thanks.

For this reason, the following work is dedicated not to Paulie Moab Utah or his pistol-packing half sister, but to those who follow—to us—all of us—each and every one—without exception or the need to pass go—without regard to color race, creed, religion, or sexual orientation.

—From “If That Don’t Make You Hurl, Nothing Will” by the Princes Ireful

The way Paulie Moab Utah ran things on Ascaris made for more grist for historians’ mills than any other figure public or private—bar none, and anyone even remotely involved with him was proud of it. Darned proud.

There was a lot of rabid scribbling on the reign of Moab Utah and most of it had a big, fat noisy religious or political point of view. Everybody—and by that it is meant that *everybody*—on a thousand planets took to talking about him. Indeed, it has become practically clichéd to say that for centuries upon centuries the very firmament of the galaxy remained damp and dripping from the gigantic splash he made.

Having said that, in advance (a decidedly easy task), it then becomes necessary to back it all up with examples and tale telling and the balance of the strange story which can't be expected to live up to such high expectations. But then again, an author must at least try.

Paulie had some advantages over most everyone in that he was born to a privileged family and with a silver spoon in his mouth. He also received Benezdrine Geltabs training from day one. In addition, he was said to have also been greatly advantaged by the fact that the Geltabs Girls had for centuries been breeding themselves and their offspring to produce a *Whachacalladat* which as it just so happened turned out to be Paulie himself.

One would think the title alone would be worth something, but it wasn't that way. Being the *Whachacalladat* didn't bring the benefits that people assumed it did. It was simply a

matter of lineage, which really didn't even offer him any bragging rights. It was as if he were Greek and wanted to take credit for the works of Sophocles and Plato. All a detractor would have to say was, "Yeah but what have you done for the *last* two thousand years?" or for the last sixteen years in the case of Paulie—and he had precious little to retort.

On top of that, he was burdened with the task of living up to the Benzedrine Geltabs crowd's expectations of him. They took it for granted that he would soon be busy sweeping out temples, slaying infidels, and turning root beer into India Pale Ale.

So it was a tough position that the boy found himself in. Now, this isn't to say that lots of things didn't go his way. For starters, he had a monopoly on *meringue* and that would turn out to be a tremendous boost to his power as all of the starship navigators—a galaxy spanning guild—were hopelessly addicted to it and without the spice could not navigate or even so much as tie their own shoes or comb their own hair.

He who controls the spice controls the universe! the saying went, and it was true. What did it matter that Paulie Moab Utah had this inheritance thrown in his lap with no effort on his part? He still ruled the space ways!

2

The Swing Set

Scifitale Telluride, a Face Scruncher,¹ was hatching a really nasty plot to off Paulie Moab Utah, but down deep, his heart wasn't really in it. *I shall suffer feelings of sniffly remorse over having whacked the Whachacalladat*, he told himself. *I always liked him—he understands that.*

This hardly meant he wasn't going to have to go ahead with the killing and he certainly wasn't going to tell the other folks who were in on the plan how he felt. He hated any kind of

1 The word "Face Dancer" had previously been in use, but it sounded a little like the person was taken to dancing on other people's faces and that was *way* off, so it was changed to "Face Scruncher," which was really a lot more accurate because the face did occasionally twist and scrunch. In any case, faces *definitely* don't dance. Feet maybe. And "Face Dancer" sounded so corny!

teasing and that's exactly what he'd get if he let it slip out.

The meeting he was attending was being held on the Benzadrine Geltabs Planet. It was a popular planet where the Tellurides made their home.

Through the window everyone could see a wintery scene of green pines growing close and in the distance could be seen the sketchy figures of skiers slowly riding the lift up the snowy slopes of the mountain.

Scifitale paid no attention to the scene outside. Instead, he smirked secretly and inwardly at the vapid discussion of "Psychic Poison." He thought the concept ridiculous and could hardly keep from laughing when he heard someone utter the phrase.

He had that same reaction when he heard that Paulie Moab Utah was going around espousing the virtues of his miserable subjects' developing "Psychic Muscles" as a brawn-building result of his heavy handed totalitarian rule. *Psychic muscles! Psychic Poison!* Scifitale snorted to himself. *I love this job!*

The others in the room, including a Guild envoy named Pedro and Mother Teresa apparently didn't feel the same way. By the bristling conviction heard in the tone of their voices, they clearly believed they were

conducting the conversation on a very high plane indeed.

Princess Ireful, wife of the son of the mother of the boy Paulie was also deeply committed to the discussion. She was standing at the corner of Pedro's glass-walled tank where there was a small fissure through which enough meringue/crack smoke emanated for her to get the occasional furtive hit. She was dressed to kill in a walrus fur smock, matching hat, and elbow length worm skin gloves. She wore on her wrist as a bracelet a cartilage worm segment that had been lightly shellacked and set with Apache tears.

Pedro sat on a simple trapeze-like perch and swung leisurely forward and backward. Smoke from a brazier curled up slowly from the compressed tablets of worm dust, crystal meth, and crack that lay on top of the glowing coals. It was an odd environment to spend day in and day out, and Pedro himself admitted this as he often so casually told of how the tank system came to be.

"It started innocently enough," he would explain. "I used a cardboard toilet paper tube to make a 1960s-style *steamboat* to concentrate the smoke from the crack/meringue reefers I used to roll. That led to putting a piece of cheesecloth over my head to trap even more smoke and before I knew it, I'd built the tank

and bird swing system and I haven't gotten out in six years except to go to the bathroom!"

No one held the tank against Pedro. After all, who didn't have some sort of overindulgence? For Princess Ireful, it was fashion.

Pedro swung on his perch, today as every day looking more and more canary-like from the yellow meringue stains. "That's a lovely walrus hide smock," he told the princess.

"You are too kind," she blushed.

"And a lovely matching hat."

"You flatter me," she replied. "I've a secret. Look closely. It's not as matching as you might think. The hat is a half a shade off. I think it was made from a different walrus altogether and thus the slightly different shade of color."

"What *color*?" Pedro said. "By matching I meant something quite different. The tusks, my Lady. The tusks thrusting from either side of the hat bring the ensemble together so fetchingly."

"You haven't said much, Scifitale," said the reverend mother.

Scifitale wanted to say something less flattering about the way the princess was dressed but thought better of it.

"You want to get me into this idiots' argument?" he asked. "We're dealing with a messiah here. You don't turn the crowd against you by punching him in the teeth."

“Oh, like that’s our only trouble?” demanded the Reverend Mother, wheezing like an emphysemic country singer. *I’ve got to give up these Pall Malls!* she cursed to herself.

Scifitale snorted. His face puckered and bulged. He had taken on a Pillsbury Dough Boy appearance for this occasion. That cheerful, pasty-faced countenance had been a serendipitously good choice. The yellow smoke from Pedro’s cage was now combining to give him a slightly jaundiced look and no one was going to take him too seriously when he looked like a mound of *maza de maiz* and that’s exactly how Scifitale wanted it. Yes, he was going to be underestimated for sure.

Scifitale was a skilled face scruncher and could take on any appearance at will as long as he had a decent make-up kit.²

“No answer?” said the Reverend Mother.

“I prefer being quiet to telling you all what I think of you.”

The Reverend Mother blanched and began to reevaluate the oversized, half-baked dinner roll that was Scifitale. Everybody in the room was a result of the Piranha Bingo Art and had good control of their big, he-man muscles, steely nerves, and powerful sphincters.

² Besides make-up, the standard Face Scruncher kit included hair dye, lip stick, eye liner, tweezers, cheek pads, wigs, vampire’s teeth, bustles and a number of different stick-on noses and mustaches.

Scifitale, however, was a Face Scruncher who had nerves and muscles in places where most people didn't even have places. Added to this was his ability to charm—even after making comments like the one he had just made. An expert a flattery, he could even dress up to look just like you and how much more *simpático* can you get than *that*?

“Poison!” he suddenly shouted as if he owned the word.

Pedro swung on his trapeze and his voice was broadcast into the room through the Shure SM58 bolted to one corner of his giant, smoked-filled Sea Monkey aquarium. “We don't mean just a garden variety poison like arsenic, castor beans, or McDonald's French fries, Scifitale,” he said. “We're talking “*Psychic* poison!”

Scifitale burst into laughter. Every time he heard the words “Psychic Poison” he had to hold it back and Pedro's saying them once again had caught him by surprise. Now he threw his head back and roared with mirth. It was just as well; he could use the occasion to add an extra bit of derision to the guffaws. The grin that appeared on his countenance following the laughter was another Face Scruncher skill that would weaken them.

“Stop that!” cried Mother Teresa.

Apparently nobody made fun of “Psychic Poison” in front of this bunch. They’d invested too much hairsplitting and navel contemplation to have any of that kind of apostasy. He’d be better off telling them that refined sugar wasn’t poison, though they wouldn’t appreciate that challenge to their beliefs either. On the other hand, he would never dare tell them that diet soda wasn’t poison. That would be too much for them to bear.

Pedro was enraged and the Princess too looked ready to strangle Scifitale.

“Are you in or out, Scifitale?” asked Pedro. He looked at the Face Scruncher with beady, birdy eyes.

“Whether I’m in our out isn’t material,” Scifitale answered. He looked at the princess. “I’ll bet you’re wondering if you’ve wasted your time coming all these light years to attend this meeting.”

“I have to admit I am,” Ireful said. She was looking longingly at the snow covered slopes and realized she was also wasting a good half of the money she paid for her two-day lift ticket.

“It surely wasn’t just to talk to a smoky bantam hen on a swing set or a fat faced cross dresser like me.” said Scifitale.

“Hardly” she said, then wrinkled her nose and moved away from the aquarium. She’d had

enough of the smoke and her head was spinning enough to tell her she was set for at least the next hour.

“I didn’t ought to have come here,” Ireful said. The smoke was obviously getting to her.

Pedro snorted a little blow on his perch. He was an expert navigator, but without the drug cocktail in his tank, he couldn’t even think straight much less guide a starship across the gulfs of space. He snorted a little more blow, reached down, took one of the tablets off of the charcoal, ate it. Now he could at least follow the conversation—that is if anyone could.

Meanwhile, Princess Ireful, a devotee of fetish, began to muse about Pedro’s sexual technique and to wonder about how it would feel to be locked in his smoky embrace. She couldn’t help herself.

“A penny for your thoughts,” said Scifitale and the Princess turned bright red. The face scruncher felt he was onto something but knew he wasn’t likely to get any more out of the princess. Despite what he claimed publicly, he was no good at all at reading minds as he always claimed.

Similarly, Pedro often boasted of his ability to foresee the future, which was as good *at least* as being able to read minds.

“I am a skilled navigator and have the *Power*,” he always bragged, and in the

mysterious, mystical way he said it, you could actually hear the italics.

When Scifitale heard this it was like hearing about “psychic muscles.” It always cracked him up and he would think to himself, *You remind me of the man. What man? The man with the Power. What Power? The Power of Hoodoo! Hoodoo? You do! I do what? You remind me of the man...*

“The science of non-science is poorly understood,” the Reverend Mother often said, and she was right too as there was nothing about it to understand: Scifitale and Pedro both knew that.

Scifitale’s professed ability to read thoughts was about as credible as the interpretation of a 21st century lie detector print-out, which wasn’t saying anything at all. And even in the 101st century clairvoyance was still hogwash (although Alice Atavist, Paulie Moab Utah’s half sister, was *awfully* good at faking it).

So, as far as telling the future, if Pedro was so darned good at it, why was he at this very moment stuck in a ski lodge room in the middle of nowhere with an overdressed princess, a grumpy, frumpy old broad, and a doughy chameleon? Instead he could be in Vegas making a fortune rather than the paltry \$9.95 an hour the GLOAMIN LOCH LOMON

Company was currently paying guild navigators.

“Can we defeat the emperor?” Ireful asked.

“Hard to say,” said Scifitale. “Maybe we can and just maybe we can’t. Everywhere we turn he’s there like an artichoke around our necks. It’s like having a personal relationship with Jesus. He seems to be with you always.”

“At least Paulie Moab doesn’t go into the bathroom with you,” said Princess Ireful.

“Well, he shares your bed, Princess,” noted Mother Teresa. “And that of his Freebaser girlfriend Chianti and those of your four sisters as well if I understand the situation correctly.”

“The rutting goat,” said Scifitale.

“And yet, Princess,” said Mother Teresa. “He has sired no heir.”

Ireful just gave her a blank look.

“Well?”

“Well *what?*”

“Is there any reason for that?”

“Maybe there is,” said the princess. “And then again, just maybe there isn’t.”

Answer my question!”

“All right! I’m administering a contraceptive to him. I’ve been putting it in his *meringue*. There! I *said* it. Happy?”

“That is no way for you to get in the family way, Ireful, and, believe me, joining the family

is the only way you're going to get any respect out of that lot."

"Well, I *am* married to him and that's a start at least."

"Not much of one. The Atavists don't give a hoot about a piece of paper from City Hall. A *baby* though. *That* they've got to make some adjustments over."

"So what am I supposed to do? Stop giving him the Spermaway? I can't have him knocking up Chianti."

"Or one of your sisters," said Pedro.

The princess shrugged. "Actually, we could work something out in that case. But Chianti? No way. Even if I somehow ascend to the throne as empress, the little bastard will depose me the minute he turns eighteen. Runs in the blood."

Scifitale rubbed his chin. So did Mother Teresa and even Pedro. They all rubbed their chins. They thought, That's right. It's written plainly enough in the Atavist family Policies and Procedures Manual and that has at least as much weight as the OK Corral Bible itself!

"And if we whack him, how's he supposed to get me in a motherly way?"

"It *is* a dilemma," said Scifitale and then suddenly turned his back to them and pulled off the pudgy nose and removed the dough boy's horse teeth and cheek pads. He reached into his

tunic and palmed a toupee, stuck in on his head and then shook a half a can of hair fibers on top of it. Next, he quickly attached a new Roman nose to his face with a dab of sticking paster, and did the same thing with a large black Pancho Villa mustache, then plucked his eyebrows to two rough crescents and threw the pulled-out hairs on his head to add extra realism to the fibers. With three smooth motions he applied lipstick and applied and wiped off cold cream along with the first layer of make-up revealing the tan skin and the wide circles of rouge on both cheeks, then yanked at the front of his white T-shirt, pulling it completely off to reveal the dark tweed coat and neatly knotted neck kerchief underneath. He unzipped his fly, stuck the T-shirt, cheek pads, horseteeth, and false nose inside, then spun on his heel to face them.

The whole process had taken only twenty-two and a half seconds, a record for him.

When he turned around, a thinner, darker, hairier man stared back at the others.

Not bad, thought the princess. Quite a transformation. He forgot to zip his fly, but still that's real good, solid face scrunching. No denying it.

"They also say that Telluride give victims a way to escape," she said aloud, completing her thought. "Am I a victim?"

“Well, let’s just say we always give people a fighting chance,” said Scifitale.

“Don’t listen to him,” snorted Mother Teresa. You’re snitching on Hubby and feeding him Spermaway, so relax. You’re in.”