

## THE MADNESS OF BRADBURY'S OUTPOST FEB CONTEST by CTHULUANDFRIENDS

"August 3rd 1897

I am Jaron Longfors, of the Eastern European Scientist League. I am visiting Siberian Outpost of Dr. Charles Bradbury of The United Kingdoms to observe his studies in Biology. This will be a short entry, the bumpy road is making hard to write anyway. I have never met Dr. Charles Bradbury before, but I am sure he will be good company and a good host. Why wouldn't he be? He just has to show me a few research documents and I will approve them with a big red stamp, and my signature, and I will be on my way in less than a weeks time."

The buggy approached a town, Jaron peered out the window at the small cluster of buildings, their drab colors blending in with the colors of the mountains around it. As the buggy entered the town, it turned right down a narrow road lined with two story shops. At the end of the road, a cathedral loomed above the rest of the buildings. "Well at least this forsaken village has not abandoned God, as He has surely abandoned them," Jaron muttered under his breath. To the left of the cathedral stood the inn that Jaron would be staying at. As Jaron stepped out of the buggy, the stench hit him. A dank smell floated over the town like an ominous fog. It stank of rotten vegetables and wet animals. Like a disease was festering in the Cathedral, the odor emanated through the brick walls. Disgusted, Jaron hurried out of the street into the hotel, which acted as a poor substitute for a barrier against the smell. "I have a reservation for Longfors," Jaron sputtered at the hotel clerk, an elderly lady with worn skin, that resembled a leather bag. She said, slowly and deliberately, "Hmm, yes right here, Dr. Jaron Longfors, sure enough. Your room is right up stairs to the right, room 332."

"Thank you very much."

Jaron took the key that the clerk extends out to him and heads upstairs to his room.

"August 4th, 1897

The room is small, cramped, and reeks of the cathedral. I tried to catch a nap, but after that failed, I decided to take a stroll and explore the town. It couldn't take long, the town was so small, especially compared to Warsaw. I decided to get away from the cathedral as fast as possible, so I headed down the hill away from the cathedral, back towards the entrance from whence I came. As the sun began to descend, he notices that the shops start to lock their doors. As I came back around to the the hotel, a man stood in front of the Cathedral. He looked like a pastor, and I rushed to him, curiosity filling my mind. 'Hello, how do you do? I am Jaron, what is that smell?' The words rushed out of my mouth, which startled the pastor. He replied slowly, as did everyone in this town, 'I am perfectly fine, the smell is the sick inside. I try to cover it up with the incenses, and it worked for a while, but there are too many now. The smell overwhelms the town it seems, and sticks to our clothes.'"

The sickness seemed like some form of leprosy. A few patients every weekend were sent up to Bradbury's Outpost for medicine. Most of the town's elderly citizens were already up there, and the children were starting to report the sickness. Jaron stumbled back up to his room, bearing this fact, and wondering what Bradbury had come up with in a way of a cure.

Jaron slept that night, woke up that morning, and went into town not far from the hotel for

breakfast. The innkeeper pointed him to a local coffee shop. The bread there wasn't the freshest Jaron had ever tasted, and the coffee was subpar, but he figured this is what he needed to expect here in the rural cities. He was sure the food wouldn't be much better at the outpost.

Jaron hired a new buggy to take him out to the outpost. The driver a decrepit old man, with a cloak drawn high over him hiding his wrinkled face. The new buggy left as the sun reached its peak in the sky. What would have been a two hour journey, the icy paths extended the trek until night fall.

As the sun descended, Jaron peered out the window and saw the Outpost rise on the horizon, perched on it's plateau, a rivulet running down the hill into a lake at the base of the hill. Night descended upon the buggy, and a fog rose blocking the view to the Outpost. The lantern hanging from the buggy hardly pierced the fog, yet the old man drove the buggy forward at the same pace, not fearing the ice nor a sudden bend in the road.

A shriek pierced the night, Jaron jumped in his seat. "What was that devilish noise?" Jaron asked the driver. The driver didn't respond, and unmoved by the sudden noise. Howls filled the air, and shapes shifted through the fog like spectres. Jaron quickly pulled the curtains, closing the buggy's windows and all visual access to the world around him. The sounds were near enough, that Jaron could envision the horrible beasts around them, snarling werewolves, biting and clawing, looking to open the buggy and tear at the precious meat inside like it was an oyster. The buggy shook violently, and Jaron cowered in fear, pressing himself into as small a ball as possible. The creatures continued to toss themselves against the walls of the carriage, perhaps trying to force it off some precipice, so they could feast on the crushed remains of the passengers. The driver drove on however, persevering through the massive battering the beasts put on the buggy.

Eventually the poundings lessened, and stopped, yet it still took another hour for Jaron to get the courage to protrude his head from the window. He stuck his head out, looking like a chicken about to be executed, and observed the imminence of his arrival.

The buggy pulled up into a driveway, and stopped in front of gates, colored white, perhaps even pearlescent at one point in time, yet they had seen many years and now settle at a bone color. The iron bars curling around, creating the image of antlers of a caribou or moose.

The driver glared at Jaron, and Jaron climbed out of the carriage, and the driver sped off before Jaron could retrieve his luggage. "Damn him and damn this country," Jaron mutters as he opens the gate, a creaking sound emitted as the perturbed dust around the gate is lifted into the air, blinding Jaron and forcing him to cough. Jaron started to trudge up the dusty path, it's only saving grace from being a desolate wasteland were the pines that lined each side of the trail. It took Jaron another half hour and was surely the dead of night by the time Jaron reached the outpost. The outpost was basically a two story cabin, made of logs and a balcony looking out over the hill. Firewood was piled against the wall and a detach stood several meters away from the main cabin. Even though it was late at night, light still wavered through the curtained windows and Jaron knocked loudly on the wood door leading into the cabin. Shuffling was heard inside, and a croaking voice shouted out, "Wait just one minute!" A loud clang was heard from inside and a yelp as Dr. Bradbury opened the door. "Hmm, who are ye? Oh yes, a Dr. Jaron Longjohns or something like that," Bradbury said in a British accent.

"Dr. Longfords."

"Yes of course, come in, it must be terribly cold out."

"Well not really, but the ride was terribly exciting."

"Oh yes, I imagine it was, I need to get those potholes paved over someday."

"Hmm, potholes, yes those."

Dr. Charles Bradbury was a middle aged man, balding, with just a few reddish hairs combed over messily. He moved across the room in his bathrobe and poured two cups of tea. He had a scruffy red beard, speckled with grey. He passed a cup of tea to Jaron and sat down in a big comfy arm chair, right in front of the fireplace. The walls were bare, no decorations or game trophies as one might expect in an outpost. The den was small and cozy with two armchairs looking over a fire. Jaron settled in the armchair opposite of Bradbury and sipped on his tea. They sat there for awhile, unsure where to begin, until Jaron stood and said, "It has been a long night, and I am afraid I must retire. Good night." Dr. Bradbury looked at him, like he was observing some specimen under a microscope, then laughed. "Good night?" Bradbury said through his laughter. "It is already morning! Surely you haven't been having so much fun on the way up, that the night has flown away from you. Why it is nearly four o'clock, the sun might be rising by now."

"Forgive me then, but it is hard to tell night from day in such gloomy weather. The sun is so often blocked by snow and fog that all time feels like night. Still, I must go to sleep, and pray I will not rise too late."

"Take all the time you need Dr. Longfors, my research is not so advanced that it will take weeks to analyze."

"But surely it is not so primitive that it will only take this afternoon."

"Surely."

"August 5th 1837

I like Dr. Bradbury well enough. He is humorous and a nice enough host for me to endure a few days. It is a relief to know that my encounter with the supernatural earlier was nothing more than my imagination and a disrepaired road. From what Dr. Bradbury has said, it seems my stay will be a short one and I hope to return in 3 days time."

The next morning, Jaron woke with a start, as he heard a sudden clang from downstairs, as his room was located on the second floor of the cabin. Jaron threw on his robe, slid on his slippers and rushed down the wooden steps. Jaron found Dr. Bradbury cleaning glass off the floor. "Just a bit of a slip, haven't had my coffee yet," Bradbury said, wearing his robe from the previous night, his hair still a mess, and his scruff of a beard grown scruffier. "I hope nothing spilled," Jaron said, as he moved across the living room into the kitchen, "Should I make coffee then?"

"Yes please, if you would, the grounds are in the cabinet above the pot."

"You have a vac pot?"

"Yeah, yeah, it's toward the back of the kitchen."

"Should I just use the plumbing water?"

"Yeah, that'll do."

Jaron found the coffee grounds, filled the vac pot with water, and started to heat the pot. Bradbury came into the kitchen and dumped the glass into the can. He then asked, "What do you want for breakfast? I got a new shipment of eggs yesterday from town, so they're fresh."

"That's sounds great."

Jaron stared out the window at the whiteness, the detach outside. The sudden boiling of the vac pot pulled Jaron out of his thoughts and he went and poured the coffee into the cups Dr. Bradbury had provided. They both sat down and ate together, neither talking. Dr. Bradbury, after finishing, got up and announced, "I have to go feed my patients and prepare my presentation, then you shall see the method of my madness." Bradbury chuckled to himself, then pulled on his heavy coat and headed outside towards the detach. Jaron washed his plate and watched as the Doctor made his way to the detach, fumbled with the keys and eventually entered. Jaron headed back upstairs into his room.

"August 6th 1837

Today should be it then, the day I see the experiments of Dr. Bradbury, the 'method of his madness'. I explored around a little bit, to try to get a peek at Bradbury's research. I know there has been a massive influx of leprosy in Norway, as well as in the Hawaiian Islands. Looking around, I saw various test tubes labeled chaulmoogra oil, others labeled mercury. Although most disturbing of all, his bathroom had quite a lot of bloodied bandages, and marks of red appeared around the drain. I know for a fact that Dr. Bradbury isn't qualified for surgery, but perhaps it was just a injury on himself, some accident in the lab."

Bradbury came back a few hours later, and they fixed lunch, just a tuna sandwich, then they Jaron prepared to view Dr. Bradbury's experiments. He grabbed his journal, and his coat, slid on his boots and waited by the door as the Doctor bundled up. They both went outside and trudged through the snow to the detach. "Looks like the weather is gonna get bad!" Dr. Bradbury shouted over the wind. His words almost escaped Jaron, riding off on the wind, but Jaron was able to catch the gist of it. Dr. Bradbury fumbled with the keys, but eventually opened the door. Stairs led down into a cellar like area. As they headed down, Dr. Bradbury said, "The weather might mean you will have to stay here longer than expected. I hope that is alright."

"Yes, yes, that should be fine, now where is the light?"

Dr. Bradbury flipped a switch, and illuminated the room.

"August 6th 1837

I have never seen anything so horrifying. I am trapped by the weather, in this outpost. Me and it, the madness of Bradbury, trapped together in a bitter and cold embrace. As the light flickered to life, the life flickered out of me. Cages lined the walls, each one crowded with lepers. They all seem dazed, like they were retarded as well as lepers. Slobber drooled from their mouths as their sad eyes peered out at their gaolers. They weakly pounded their hands against the bars of their cages as Bradbury blithely strode along the corridor formed by the cages. 'Welcome to my experiment!' he shouted, proud of his work it seemed. Some of the lepers had bandages covering their face, blood seeping through them. Some had already died, lying on dead on the metal floor of the cage, piled atop each other. I stood horrified, then rage overcame me, and here I am now, locked in my room, a throbbing pain on my head and dozens of lepers trapped and drugged below me."

Jaron lunged at Bradbury, they grappled on the floor. Bradbury reached his hand out and grabbed a metal pipe. He crashed it over Jaron's head. Bradbury dragged Jaron back up the stairs and into the cabin. He then carried Jaron to his room and locked the door behind him.

Jaron awoke, and made a loud groan, clutching his head. He heard loud steps coming

up the stairs. Bradbury burst into the room, clutching documents. He dropped all the documents on the top of the dresser, making dust fill the air. Bradbury rubbed his hands together and breathed into them, trying to warm himself. "Well this weather is quite unfortunate isn't it?" Bradbury asked. He acted like this afternoon didn't even occur, and Jaron wished it didn't. "I guess it was impolite to shock you with such an... outlandish experiment as mine. Let me enlighten you on my intentions and methods. As I said, there is a method to my madness." Bradbury pulled a document from his stack and put on a pair of reading spectacles. "Oh where oh where to begin, do you have any questions before we start?"

"You will never get away..."

"That doesn't sound like a question! Let's we move on. The lepers are a very unfortunate group of people. Cursed with the horrid perplexion, plagued with nerve and muscle issues. Can only mate with each other, because let's be honest, no one else wants to. To be honest I don't know how they convince themselves." Bradbury chuckled to himself, then continued, "Their children cursed with the same ailment as their own. Deformed by nature itself, how cruel, don't you think?"

"I think you're..."

"That question was rhetorical, my dear Jaron. Now, now, the leprosy outbreak wasn't me of course, not really sure what happened there. Perhaps a bad batch of meat... just kidding. More realistically, it had been in them for a few generations and is just now emerging. So I ship them up here, telling them I have a 'cure', then I commence my experiments.

"What are your experiments?"

"Ah yes, the juicy stuff right there, really getting into the meat of the story!" Bradbury breaks out into laughter. "Oh, I apologize, I really crack myself up sometimes," he states through his fits of laughter, "First electrotherapy, then visual therapy, then drugs, then torture. All for one goal, complete control. I wanted the power to enslave, to force others to obey every whim, every fancy. The electrotherapy was for nerve control, so I could manually force their actions with buttons, and it worked! But the weak died, and having to do it manually was highly inefficient. So then visual therapy commenced, trying to implant an idea into someone's head long enough so they see it as true. The bigger the lie, the easier to convince. However it took loads of time, and only the weak minded succumbed. So I moved on, drugs were the simpler solution, some group of chemicals that made the mind snap. I tried cannabis, inducing the patients into such a high, that they could not tell what they were confirming to. This went as expected and I just had a bunch of stoned lepers that couldn't do shit. Next was LSD, then mescaline, then sodium amytol, blah, blah, blah. Nothing worked! Next was the crudest way, coercion by force. Torture, the most active, and at first I would just kill them, but I got better as I went along. I found the pressure points and weaknesses, and could eventually break the strong ones. I mean it took some help, drugs in combination with certain techniques, hmm, beautiful really; like art even, torture has a nice form to it."

"You're going to hell, you bastard."

"You shouldn't say that, my father was a very nice man."

"How can you live yourself? You're a murderer!"

Bradbury laughed, "I torture people!" He shouted, "Killing them is the nicest thing I can do, and guess what Dr. Longfords? You are next in queue!"

Bradbury burst out of the room, leaving the door wide open. Jaron listened as he stomped down the stairs.

Jaron quickly hopped out of bed, pulled his shoes on, and peered out into the hallway. He saw no sign of Bradbury. He stepped out of his room and headed down the steps into the living room. He opened the front door and stepped out in the cold. He headed to the detach. He jostled the knob and found that the door was open. Jaron crept down the steps, into the cellar. He reached the bottom, and found the cellar in darkness. He fumbled around for the light; when he found it, he started to systematically unbolt each of the crates that the lepers were trapped in. However, no matter how much Jaron urged them, they would not come out. They all huddled in the corner of their crates farthest away from the opening. Jaron gazed at them, bewildered that they would not want to be freed. Jaron soon gave up on the idea of liberation, and headed back up the stairs; however at the top of the steps stood an ominous silhouette. Jaron backed back into the cellar. Bradbury marched down the steps toward Jaron, "They are mine now Jaron," Bradbury stated, "And there is absolutely nothing you can do to help them." Bradbury closed in on Jaron. Jaron backed himself up against a workbench on the far side of the room, opposite the staircase. Bradbury lunged for Jaron's throat, grappled it, and pressed down his thumbs. Jaron flailed around, grabbed a wrench and swung it forward. It connected to Bradbury's head, and he released his grip around Jaron's throat. Jaron lunged forward for the staircase, and stormed up into the cold. Bradbury quickly recovered and headed up after him. Jaron started trudging through the snow, down the hill away from the cabin. Bradbury burst out the cabin and started running after Jaron. Bradbury quickly caught up and tackled Jaron to the ground. They started to tumble down the hill, grappling each other. They skidded to a stop at the bottom of the hill. Jaron attempted to quickly stand, but slipped back to the ground due to the icy floor underneath. Bradbury stood up with more care, and swung a kick at Jaron, connecting at the stomach. Both Jaron and Bradbury slipped back to the floor. Jaron crawled away from Bradbury, trying to make it off the ice, but Bradbury caught up and gave another kick to Jaron. Jaron slumped on the ground, cowering from the blows Bradbury inflicted. Jaron lashed out, grabbed one of Bradbury's legs, and pulled him to the ground. Jaron quickly stood up, keeping his balance this time, and started to run. Jaron ran for his life, the sort of run a wounded animal runs, limping along, just trying to keep away. Then a crack sounded, and Jaron plummeted. Icy water rushed around him, but as he sank he saw a hand come down and grab him.

"August 12th 1837,

My name is Jana Varshavskiy, and my betrothed, Jaron Longfors is gone on a business trip. My father always said that I should marry a strong, respectable man, and although Jaron may not be strong, he sure is respectable. Science is a respectable profession, no? We have a new tenant coming to our house. An Englishman, Dr. Charles Bradbury, is staying for a month, maybe two. I hope Jaron returns soon. I know he will be glad to hear a new tenant is moving in, my father's house hasn't been the wealthiest lately, so this new tenant is a financial blessing. Oh, how I miss my man, or any man, to hold me and touch me. I have been visiting a boy staying from Germany across the street. Every weekend I go over, and we talk, then kiss, then he lays me on my back and I spread my legs willingly. I should feel awful, and be called an adulterer, but I love my expeditions so. Unfortunately, this boy is leaving, going back to Germany this weekend. He begged me to come with him, poor boy, I had to refuse. What would Jaron

think of me, what would my parents think of me? ”

Bradbury sat across from Jaron, on a passenger train, heading into Poland. They unload at the station, and walk to the street. Jaron waves down a buggy, and they both hop in. It took them into the capital, Warsaw, where the the house they were staying at was crammed into the block of buildings, bordered by a deli on the left and another house on the right. Jaron approached the door, and rapped the door with his knuckles. An older lady opened the door, she wore a casual dress, and had her blonde, graying hair, pulled up into a messy bun. “Are you the tenant?” she asks, in english, yet she had a thick accent. “No,” Jaron replied, “That is the man behind me, I am just his assistant.” The lady waved Bradbury inside.

“Head to the warehouse, Jaron,” Bradbury ordered, “prepare our laboratory there. I will follow soon.”

Bradbury entered the house, and gave his coat to the woman, and set his luggage at the feet of the stairs. He enters the living room to see the rest of the family sitting on a couch. “Greetings, I am excited to stay with you all for this short time. I hope you will bear with me,” Bradbury pronounced. The older man on the couch stood and approached Bradbury to shake his hand. “Nice to meet you,” he said, “I am Mr. Varshavskiy, this is my wife, and my daughter, Jana.” He gestured to his wife and child. “A pleasure to meet both of you,” Bradbury smiled and shook the hands of Mrs. Varshavskiy and Jana.

Jaron walked down the alley, approached the woman leaning on the brick wall, and pulled out his wallet. “I suppose you want some?” Jaron questioned. The woman nodded, and reached for the money. Jaron jerked his hand away, “Uh, uh, not yet, follow me first.” The woman complied, following Jaron farther down the alley, turned down multiple more, and ended up at a door. Jaron pulled the door open, “Ladies first,” Jaron smiled at her. She smiled back, and entered. Jaron pulled a piece of piping off the bench and swung it across her head. She fell to the floor, and Jaron quickly bound her feet and hands. He dragged her across the warehouse, and pushed her into a cage, where another woman was already unconscious in. He bolted the cage and left, turning out the light before he returned to the world.

Bradbury’s first night was a restful one. He awoke to the smell of breakfast being cooked by Mrs. Varshavskiy. He ate up, got dressed, and headed out. He walked down alley ways, a long, sinuous route, that led up to the warehouse. He entered, and inspected the girls. “Nice work Jaron. You did good,” Bradbury said. Jaron emerged from the side room, wiping blood from his hands onto a rag towel, “Thank you,” he replied quietly.

“It is time for your therapy Jaron, prepare yourself.” Jaron obediently removed his shirt, and kneeled. He shoved the rag towel into his mouth. Bradbury positioned two cone shaped instruments on stands above Jaron. Jaron tensed his body. Bradbury poured water down the instruments, allowing water to slowly drip onto Jaron’s back. Each time water precipitated onto Jaron’s back, he shivered and tensed, until he was screaming his lungs out each time a water droplet touched his back. He prepared other tools for the women, as he had to work on their therapy too. He also prepared syringes, filled with drugs to make winning their mind over easier.

Life at the house was going well. Jaron didn’t have to stay at the house, he just stayed at the warehouse with the women. It would be better if his betrothed still thought Jaron was still in Siberia. Bradbury was sitting in his room one afternoon when he heard a fist rapping on his door. “Come in,” Bradbury said loudly. The door opened and Jana entered, “Hello,” she said

shyly, "I just, um, wanted to talk."

"Yeah sure, come sit." Bradbury looks skeptically at Jana, as he shifts over on the bed to make room. She sits down next to him, "So, you know I am betrothed right?"

"Hmm, yes."

"I was just wondering, since you came from Siberia, did you see my Jaron?"

"No."

"Oh, it's just, he usually sends letters, and he hasn't been."

"That, that is a shame."

"Yes, I suppose so."

Jana suddenly clutches Bradbury, and kisses him fervently. They fall over on the bed. Bradbury slips her shirt off, as she fumbles with his belt. This sort of action continued for two weeks, as Jaron continued to reside at the warehouse. Bradbury would leave every morning for work, and return each afternoon to make love to Jana.

Jana had a slim, petite body, and short cropped blonde hair. She was tall, and had pretty, light blue eyes. In her loneliness, she turned to Dr. Bradbury. One day, he asked Jana to take a walk with him. They turned down an alleyway, and snaked their way through the narrow alleys. Bradbury eventually leaned Jana against a wall, and kissed her. They stood there, until Bradbury pulled away, and went through a door. Jana eagerly followed. As she entered, the door swung closed behind her. She stood, stunned as she looked around the warehouse, then her eyes fixed on the man that emerged from a small side room. Jana screamed, and tried to run out the warehouse, but found Bradbury blocking the door, holding a pipe. She turned back around, screaming and went to hug Jaron. She flung her arms around him, but Jaron did not respond. He stood there, unmoving, as Bradbury approached and pulled Jana away from Jaron. "He doesn't know you now, darling!" Bradbury shouted. He swung the pipe across her head, and dragged her towards the cages. "She should go quickly, the trauma will make her easy to mold," Bradbury told Jaron, as he bolted the cage shut, "The final step of our project is almost underway, Jaron."

The next day, Bradbury left the house before Mr. and Mrs. Varshavskiy awoke. He set off down his path of alleys, and entered the warehouse. Jaron was waiting for him; they started releasing all the women from the cages. They all aligned in ranks in front of Bradbury and Jaron, Bradbury broke down into tears, "It's so beautiful Jaron. Everything came together perfectly."

Jaron began to hand each of them a sharp object, ranging from kitchen knives to ice picks. Once all of them, forty or so, were armed, Bradbury stepped up onto a platform, and spoke, "Welcome to the apex of our adventure, and what adventure we've had. Not every citizen gets this sort of experience. I've turned your life around. You all were whores, prostitutes, slummers maybe, adulterers," Bradbury glanced at Jana for a brief moment, then resumed, "and I have given you purpose. All your lives have led up to this movement. Shed your clothes and take to the streets, so we can give a message to the public that none will forget. We shall astound them with my feats of scientific endeavor, and give them a taste of what goes on underneath their noses. Let's go out, and give them a show!"

Jaron then began to lead them out, naked, onto the streets. The squadron marched to the Castle of Ujazdow, and made a formation across from it. By the time they had marched there, a following had gathered, keeping space from the assembly of naked woman. The ladies

shielded their eyes from the spectacle. A pair of guards approached the ranks. He approached Jaron and said, "Sir, you have to move, you can't stand here with this public indecency." Jaron took his knife and stabbed him in the gut, and another woman stabbed the second guard. Bradbury retreated into the crowd, which, by this time, was in a panicked state. One by one, each of the nude women fell upon their blades. Like dominoes they fell, Jaron being the last to fall. As he stood, Jaron made eye contact with Jana, and with his unwavering expression of blankness, he watched his love fall upon her blade, as he then fell upon his own.

Like dominoes, each woman fell. As Bradbury observed from the crowd, he saw the militia arrive. He saw them rush to the bodies, and start to inspect them. One kneeled down next to the dead guards from earlier. Bradbury saw one suddenly start to tremble, and he realized one wasn't dead. The guard slowly sat up, turned, and weakly pointed at Bradbury. The guard assisting the fallen one followed his finger and his own and Bradbury's eyes met. Bradbury's eyes widened, and backpedaled into the street. He reoriented himself, and then set out running. The one guard shouted, and starting chasing after him. Bradbury didn't turn back, and wound down his path of alleyways, until he reached the warehouse. He rushed inside, bolted the door, and leaned against the door. He panted heavily, and wiped sweat from his brow onto his sleeve.

"August 23rd, 1837,

This is the report of Secret Police Officer Szymon Stec. Identification number: 443903. The man responsible for the mass suicide at the Castle of Ujazdow is still at large. Suspect remains still to be the former tenant of the Varshavskiy family, whose daughter and son-in-law was one the deceased. We have confirmed the suspect's name as Dr. Charles Bradbury of London. We have contacted London Police and we have permission to apprehend, and punish Dr. Charles Bradbury for his crimes. This is my number 1 priority, and I will see it through."

Officer Stec was heading down an alleyway, on the east side of town. He was heading down the alley, until he came to a fork in the paths. As he turned to the left, he saw a flash of clothing come from the opposite direction. He slowly turned, and decided to check that direction. He turned the corner and saw, just in time, the far door on the right swing close. He slowly approaches the door, and puts his ear up to it. He hears no sounds emitting from the inside. Szymon slowly opens the door, but his head collided with the hard, metal pipe Bradbury swung.

Szymon awoke tied to a chair. He was in an empty room, with plain grey walls. He was facing a door, and Szymon tried to edge his chair closer to it, but only succeeded in falling to the floor. About half an hour later, Bradbury entered the room. He relieved Szymon from his precipitated position, and took a seat on a stool across from Szymon. Bradbury pulled a knife from his coat pocket. He spun it around and stabbed it into the police officer's hand. Szymon screamed in pain, writhing in his seat. Bradbury twisted the blade slowly, and then yanked it out. Szymon breathed heavily, trying to relieve the pain. "Alright, I have some questions for you. I want you to answer them truthfully. Can you promise me that?" Bradbury questioned.

"No."

Bradbury chuckled, "Clever, clever. I will let that one pass. Now, what is your name?"

"Szymon."

Bradbury sighed, "Last name too."

"Stec."

"Now, what is your occupation?"

"I can't-"

Bradbury grabbed Szymon's left hand and with the knife, cut straight through one of Szymon's fingers. Szymon screamed in agony.

Bradbury said sarcastically, "I can't, don't remember that being an occupation. Is the pay well? Now let's try again. What is your occupation?"

"I am police."

"Better, much better. Next up, what is your name?"

"But you-"

Bradbury lunged for Szymon's hand again, and Szymon flinched. Bradbury pulled back and chuckled to himself. "Of course, the question was confusing, I had already asked that one," Bradbury said reassuringly, but then under his breath, he muttered, "But rules are rules." Bradbury lunged forward and sliced through another one of Szymon's fingers, now the index and middle finger removed, and on the floor. Szymon sobbed in pain. "Now one final question, no faltering now. Who am I?" Bradbury asked.

Szymon's expression did not change, but he just looked into Bradbury's eyes. Slowly, deliberately, he spoke, "You are a monster, a demon, a soulless vessel, you are Charles Bradbury." Bradbury, at hearing this, chuckled and stood. He started to exit the room, but turned, and kicked the chair back, sending Szymon crashing to the ground. Bradbury exited, and Szymon was left alone.

When the chair fell, the backing cracked, the wood splintered, digging into Szymon's lower back. Pain shot through his back, but Szymon was able to loop his hand binds around the splintered wood. He wriggled back and forth, wearing out his bonds. They eventually tore, and Szymon massaged his wrists before working on the binds around his feet. Once, completely free, Szymon opens the door out of his room, caressing his mutilated hand. He opens into the warehouse, however there were stacks of crates around him, obstructing any extended view of the warehouse.

He crept around a stack of them, peered around the corner, and saw Bradbury standing over a griddle placed on a small portable stove. Szymon backed slowly, and went around the other direction, hoping to get closer to Bradbury. As he went around the other way, Szymon was able to duck behind a stack of crates, just a few meters away from Bradbury. Bradbury whistled as he worked the griddle, and Szymon could see that on the griddle, were his own fingers, sizzling in their own fat. Szymon groaned and clutched his stomach. He leaned his mutilated hand onto the ground, forgetting that it was maimed. Szymon gasped aloud in pain as his bloody fingers hit the floor. Bradbury looked up, and saw Szymon at the crates. Bradbury shouted, "Hey!" but Szymon could not catch the rest of his words, for he fled the scene, running back around the crates. He heard Bradbury's footsteps following behind him. As Szymon came around the crates, he ran to the clearing where the griddle, roasting his mutilated fingers, laid. Szymon turned, saw Bradbury closing in, and, with his good hand, flung the hot griddle at Bradbury's face. Bradbury screamed as the griddle connected, falling to the ground. Bradbury looked up in rage, his scowl enhanced by the burns that covered his face. Szymon then kicked the crates supporting the portable stove, still lit, over towards Bradbury. The fire spread among the crates, for they were filled with cannabis, the drug used on Bradbury's patients. The crates and their contents quickly caught fire, and Bradbury seemed to be caught in the smoke and

embers, encircling him.

Szymon fled, looking for a way out. He found a door, but it was locked. After several attempts of trying to kick the door down, Szymon gave up as the smoke started to obstruct his breathing. He continued to follow the wall of the factory, until he found a ladder. Szymon started to climb, yet the smoke grew denser each time he reached to a higher rung. The climb was slow and tedious, for one, because of the smoke growing ever restricting, and two, his mutilated hand prevented him from using his left hand as he climbed. The ladder seemed like it would never end, but suddenly, Szymon felt something grasp his right foot, then yank. Szymon lost grasp, and fell, which seemed much quicker than the climb. Szymon crashed into a stack of cannabis-filled crates. As he reoriented himself, he saw a charred Bradbury hop down from the ladder. Szymon scrambled back, but flames backed him, and he could retreat no further. Bradbury brandished a pipe, and slowly approached Szymon, the loathing in his eyes clouded by the smoke that swirled around the two. Szymon stood, and Bradbury swung the pipe, which Szymon deftly dodged to the side, but he stepped into a patch of flames, scalding his ankle. Szymon swore and hopped around on one foot. Bradbury took the opportunity and rammed the end of the pipe into Szymon's gut. Szymon doubled over, grunting. He fell to the ground, and Bradbury raised the pipe to swing downwards towards Szymon's back, but Szymon rolled to the side before the strike could connect. Szymon grabbed a chunk of burning wood, and flung it at Bradbury. A flurry of charcoal and embers burst around Bradbury as he screamed, and blindly swung his pipe around. Szymon charged, and tackled Bradbury by the gut into a stack of crates. Szymon heard a crack, and was unable to react before the burning crates fell around them.

"September 1st, 1837,

The mass murderer, Dr. Charles Bradbury, was apprehended last week by Warsaw's own Szymon Stec. This is a reminder that the King's secret police are once again, out to protect us. Let this tragic event, the mass suicide of Ujazdow, and the fires that spread from the warehouse that served as Bradbury's headquarters in Warsaw, burning several other buildings to the ground in the New Town district. News has also come down from Siberia, that Dr. Jaron Longfurs, one of the victims in the suicide, was in fact inspecting Bradbury's Outpost, when he discovered Bradbury's systematic torturing of the leper community in the small town closest to Bradbury's Outpost. This horrific series of events, that circled one man, can never escape our minds. We must always be vigilant, to be prevent such crimes to happen under our very noses. (The Warsaw Voice, crime column, September Issue.)

Szymon sat in his buggy, feeling sick from the constant rocking of the buggy. He stared at his bandaged hand through one eye, his other eye bandaged for the burns he received. The militia responded quickly to the fire, although it had already spread to two of the neighboring warehouses before they got there. They were able to pull Szymon and Bradbury out. Bradbury was dead by the time they found him in the fire. Szymon lived however, and was now headed up a rocky, snowy, road in Siberia. When he entered the small town, it seemed void of life. The buggy pulled down a street, which ended at a cathedral building.

Szymon hopped out of the buggy, and entered the cathedral. It was candlelit, and sterile. Szymon approached the altar, and dropped to his knees. He touched both his shoulders, his forehead, and his lips in the form of a cross. "God forgive me, I have sinned, I have killed. Though the man I killed was wicked, and I hope that he his damned to Hell, but I suppose it is

sinful to wish that upon a man. This man was no man though. He was a monster, a demon himself. So might be I wish him Heaven, so he would be the furthest away from the pain and suffering he adores,” Szymon muttered this to himself, then rose.

He exited the cathedral, and turned to travel to the hotel, just next door. He entered, and greeted the clerk, who was no longer an old lady, whose skin resembled a leather bag, but now replaced by a young man, perhaps in his mid-20s. He smoked a cigarette, which lazily drooped over his fat bottom lip. Szymon received his room key, room 332, and headed upstairs quickly in order to get away from the stench the cigarette left. He slept well, and woke early. He went down stairs, got breakfast from the cafe from a little way down the road, and hopped in a buggy. The buggy headed up a rocky road, and Szymon clutched his stomach. The sun progressed higher in the sky. Suddenly the buggy jolts to one side, throwing Szymon across the carriage. It continues to jolt in this way, tossing Szymon around. Once the buffets subdue, Szymon leans out the window and shouts to the driver, “What was that horrendous shaking?” “Potholes, sir,” the driver replies. “Potholes my ass,” Szymon muttered to himself, as he pulls himself back in the carriage, “If potholes reached the depths of hell.”

The sun had reached the afternoon by the buggy reached the small cabin and the detach up the hill. The sun had melted the brook that ran down the hill to the small lake at the bottom. Szymon exited the cabin, and paused at the pearly gate barring the path up the hill. He stared at the ornate carvings of the metal work. Szymon opened the gate slowly, and entered. He trudged up the pine lined path, which was now covered in snow due to lack of Bradbury’s care. Once he reached the top of the hill, and the end of the path, he entered Bradbury’s cabin. Everything was organized well, books on shelves and pots and pans in their respected cabinets. Clothes lined the closets, and clean sheets covered the beds. Szymon took the luggage case he had been lugging around. He unbuckled the latches and pulled out a large can of gasoline. He systematically spread the gasoline around the house, upstairs, as well as downstairs. He left the house and headed to the detach. He headed down and observed. No crates remained, as Bradbury had to transfer them to Warsaw with him. Only an empty workbench remained. Szymon decided to spread the gasoline around the wooden frame on the outside. As he circled the detach, spilling the gasoline on the dry wood, he spotted a stone protruding from the snow. Szymon took a respite from his work to check the stone. He wiped the snow and ice from it, and found, crudely etched in, the words, “Here are the less fortunate, that gave their lives to a greater purpose.” Szymon returned to his work with greater resolve, and once it was sufficiently soaked, he tossed a match upon the detach first. It burned, then collapsed into the hole it covered. Szymon then headed to the house, and had to toss multiple matches for the fire to spread sufficiently. It blazed, and Szymon dropped to the snow covered earth. He rested on his behind, putting his hands behind him to support his body. He watched as twin columns of smoke rose into the air. Szymon knew he could not let Bradbury’s work live on, so he erased his only trace. He erased the madness of Bradbury’s Outpost.