



The Glory of Ippling
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There's an axiom in the galaxy: The more complicated the machine, the bigger mess it can make. Like the time the planetary computer for Buughabyta flipped its complete grain-futures series. The computer ordered only 15 acres, and Buughabytians had to live for a full year off the government's stored surplus—thus pounding down the surplus, forcing up the price, eliminating the subsidy and balancing the Buughabytian budget for fifteen years—an unprecedented bit of nonsense that almost had permanent effects. But a career economist with an eye for flubup and complication managed to restore balanced disorder, bringing Buughabyta right back to normalcy.

Or like the time a matter-duplicator receiver misread $\text{OCH}_3\text{CH}_3\text{OH}$, to turn out a magnificently busted blonde sphygmomano-raiser with an HOCH_3OH replacement, putting a strain on the loyalty of a billion teen-age girls dedicated to Doyle Oglevie worship. Doyle-she insisted she was Doyle-he, as it took quite a while for her hormones to overcome the memory of his easy, eyelash-flapping, tone-torturing microphone conquests. Put a strain on his wardrobe, too.

No machine, of course, can compare for complexity with any group of humans who have been collected into machine-like precision of operation. Take one time when an Ipplinger Cultural Contact Group was handed a Boswellister with V.I.P. connections and orders to put him to an assignment—for his maturity.

Boswellister sat patiently. He squirmed emotionally up and down his backbone, but he affected a disdainful appearance of patience in view of the importance of his and his poppa's positions compared with the pawn-like minuscule of the audience's.

The Blond Terror strode majestically down the aisle of the open air sports arena, preceded by twenty-four harem-darling dancing girls. The orchestra wailed an oriental sinuosity of woodwinds and drums, accompanying the hip-twitching, nearly naked, sloe- (by benefit of make-up) eyed, black-haired beauties.

Fifteen heavyweights, draped in leopard skins, had preceded the dancers to set up the Blond Terror's tub on a polar bear rug in the center of the ring. A dozen luscious watercarriers had emptied their jars into the tub. Soap and towels, oils and perfumes, mirror and comb, were arranged on top of a lushly ornamented box that stood by one of the corner posts.

The Blond Terror vaulted the ropes and stood in the ring, popping his muscles, waiting for his handmaidens to remove the five layers of

elaborately decorated robes that were draped over his super-manly body.

Boswellister cringed slightly (inwardly), speculating that the Blond Terror really was a muscled man. All that man—nearly seven feet tall, bronzed, developed, imperious, condescending to notice just slightly the adulations of the women in the packed arena.

The Blond Terror stepped into the tub, carrying out his advertised boast of being the cleanest wrestler in the ring, a boast he was unable to prove with ring action through the exigencies of type-casting, for the Blond Terror was the villain.

The Blond Terror muscled down into the tub. He was scrubbed, then rinsed. He stood out onto the white fur rug and sneeringly allowed his handmaidens to pat him dry and powder him down. They held up the large hand mirror and allowed him to view his handsomeness while his short-cropped, blond curls were carefully combed.

"Now." Boswellister spoke the order into the lapel receiver. On the Ipplinger starship a communications tech slapped home a switch and the solido-vision circle settled over the Blond Terror's head, a halo of solid light for a complex Ipplinger signal-reaction device.

"Hail Ippling!" Boswellister shouted.

Boswellister strained forward, clutching the seat arms. It had to work! His equation must be right! The symbol had the proper cultural connotations. It was bound to capture the audience, put them in the right mood of awe-struck superstitious reverence, make the revelation of the great circle of the Ipplinger starship overhead a thing of wonderment and devotion-focus.

The Blond Terror should now look upwards, guide the eyes of the audience, bring them to the recognition. After all, as a Boswellister ... and according to his great grandfather, and his poppa too... .

But the Blond Terror gazed appreciatively into the mirror, smiling slyly at the audience.

The crowd roared its applause for the trick lighting effect. You could depend on the Blond Terror. No matter how many times you'd seen his act, he always managed to come up with something new. Now, for the opening of the new Million Dollar Ventura Boulevard Open Air Sports Arena, the Blond Terror had done it again.

Boswellister shouted. He pointed. He stared upwards, trying to draw the crowd with his vehemence. But he couldn't capture one gaze, no matter what he did.

He poked the man seated next to him, but the surly fool snarled, "Shuddup! The Hatchet Man's goin' into his act!"

Boswellister moaned. There it was, sailing in the night sky, illuminated with soft etherealness to give the proper effect to these superstition-ridden people. All they had to do was glance up and accord to Ippling the superiority that was Ippling's, and they would be brought gently, delicately into galactic contact, opening out their narrow ways into the broad ways of the galactic universal worlds. With Boswellister to lead them.

But he couldn't make the play. Not a head would tilt up. The TV cameras that should be scanning the great lighted circle of the Ipplinger starship had swung to the entrance, waiting for the Hatchet Man.

And here he came, down the aisle like a bolt of Chinese lightning. He vaulted the ropes, leaped to the tub, overturned it and was gone back up the aisle before the Blond Terror could retaliate. Bath water sopped the piles of robes and made a mess out of the bearskin rug; but the ring attendants carted everything off, removed the waterproof canvas from the ring mat and prepared to get the match underway.

The Blond Terror paced in his corner, waving his hand mirror, challenging the Hatchet Man to quick, bloody death. And every few moments he'd stop to gaze admiringly into the mirror, running his hand along the edge of the solid band of light, grabbing all the credit for Ipplinger electronic science. He turned on cue to give the TV audience a full-face closeup.

Boswellister cursed himself for choosing the Blond Terror. That cynical, egocentric muscle artist was too pleased with himself to have any room in his thoughts for proper superstitious awe, and too stupid to recognize the superior science in back of the halo device.

"Remove the device," Boswellister ordered. There was no point in allowing it to stay, and that band of solid light, immovably in place on the wrestler's head, made a perfect battering ram for head-butting mayhem.

Boswellister paid no attention to the gladiators-at-mat; he left his seat as soon as the device was removed and walked out onto Ventura Boulevard. He went over his cultural equation, trying to find the flaw.

In the year he had spent on the preliminary survey, he had assessed this cultural equation to the last decimal point of surety. He had absolute faith in these people's superstitions. He knew what to expect; but somewhere the equation had been off. He should have chosen a quieter event, he guessed. The audience had been too well schooled in the acceptance of the spectacular.

What was needed was a more acute contrast, and suddenly he had it: the burlesque runway. He had watched it many times ... and there was one girl, a big-bodied blonde with mild eyes.

He checked his watch and hurried his pace. It was about time for Dodie's turn on the runway that extended out from the front of the gambling house.

With satisfaction, Boswellister called up the memory of Dodie's peel act. This would be a natural, and he couldn't think why he hadn't decided on it right away.

In many ways Dodie was a big girl. In clothes she could never be the fashion ideal, but she certainly made a good thing out of nakedness. Her soft, heavy, white breasts made old men blanch and young men start to grab. She was tall, with a narrow waist, flaring hips, long curvy legs and arms; with those big, innocent blue eyes, wearing high heels and an ounce of flimsy, up there on the burlesque runway ... mmm ... Boswellister groaned.

She wouldn't date Boswellister a second time no matter what he promised, and his promises had included many things she'd never before heard of. Boswellister squirmed momentarily.

It was too bad there wasn't a better crowd. Most of the Boulevard's regulars were at the Arena opening, but there were a few loiterers, standing along the curb, watching the free show. And all he had to do was make a beginning, Boswellister felt. He was sure that everything would roll by itself after that. He had faith in his superstition equation.

Dodie peeled. She seemed headed for complete nakedness at any moment, but to Boswellister's surprise, the revealing costume contained more pieces than he had remembered.

"Any moment now," he whispered to the solido-tech. "Now, wait ... there ... that should be the last piece. Settle the device around her head," he ordered. Then he groaned and countermanded the order. He had remembered Dodie's details, not her act. For at the last moment she slipped to the wings, dropping the last swatch of lace to slide down one long, white, out-thrust leg.

Oh, blessed Ippling! There was his ship, floating majestically overhead, but no one would give it a glance. He pointed to it. These men *must* follow his excited gestures and look up; but they were busy calling suggestions to the line of ponies who had taken over the runway. Boswellister felt as if he were standing in a desert, surrounded by a mob of phantoms from his own imagination.

The crying voice of the gambling-house barker rode in over the clang and brass of jazzy music, but he couldn't turn the tip. As soon as the line-girls left the over-the-sidewalk runway, the idlers moved on down the street to take in the next spot's free outdoor lure show.

Boswellister leaned against the wall and watched the barker wipe his sweat-soaked forehead. He felt kinship with the man in his failure. The manager came out and talked to the barker for a moment. Boswellister overheard: "Dodie didn't draw one customer. A buck ain't to be made these days."

The barker replied, shaking his head, "They're oversold, Marve. The give-away is all they want."

Boswellister turned away and walked towards his motel. They wanted the give-away, but the glory of Ippling he had to give made no impression. He felt desperate. He had to make one more try.

His family position demanded obedience from the starship officers and crew. He stopped for a moment and gave a swift command into the lapel pickup, then went on to his motel room.

The next morning, full of confidence after a good breakfast, he headed for the intersection of Laurel Canyon and Ventura Boulevards. There he would make his stand.

The boulevard swarmed with women shoppers. Cars and trucks roared by. The spectacular signs and free lure show runways were closed down, for ballyhoo of a different character had taken their place for the daytime.

Boswellister stopped for a moment to watch a demonstrator work before a huge, block-long, glittering drugstore.

The demonstrator went into his pitch:

"—money back. Now watch! Into a wet glass I pour a small amount of medically tested Calsobisidine. See how the Calsobisidine clings to the sides of the wet glass."

The pitchman smiled with flawless teeth and the women smiled back at him. His shoes were waxed and buffed; his hair fell in a black curl across his high forehead; his gardenia dripped dew like the ones in the box by his elbow. Each bottle of Calsobisidine came complete with an intimate smile from the pitchman, a fresh gardenia pinned on the breast by his clever fingers and a trial sample bottle. Just for six ninety-five, plus tax.

"In the exact same manner, Calsobisidine clings to the lining of your stomach and intestines, giving positive relief from burning pain and acid indigestion."

This puzzled Boswellister, and he remarked in a voice that seemed overloud, "But who has glass insides?"

The women giggled and turned away.

The pitchman's scowl was a menace; his voice bitter: "Go on, scam. You queered my tip."

Boswellister slipped away while the pitchman started to collect a new crowd. He popped into the entrance of the drugstore, and as always stood momentarily amazed by the bewildering variety of merchandise. Gardening implements, paper goods, dishes and glassware, whiskey, Calsobisidine, a huge display of baby dolls that performed every human function but reproduction... .

Then he gasped and walked towards the inside demonstration. There, presided over by a fake medical man, dressed in operating room regalia, including mask, rubber gloves and stethoscope; there, right in the middle of the block-long drugstore, a demonstration of the newest educational doll was taking place. The doll, stretched out on a miniature hospital delivery table, was being delivered of a replica new-born infant.

Again and again the "doctor" performed the delivery, alternately inserting the doll-baby into the doll-mamma and removing it.

Boswellister flushed and walked quickly away. He had no doubt of the toy's educational value, but nevertheless—he sighed deeply.

When Boswellister reached the corner of Ventura and Laurel Canyon, he made his stand on the southeast corner, facing the hills over which the Ipplinger starship would come to hover over the intersection and be revealed by him.

He contacted control and ordered the halo focus for his head. He reached up and felt the circle, planted firmly over his brow. He smiled to himself and went into his pitch.

"People of Earth," he began in a quavering voice, then he remembered the Calsobisidine demonstrator, firmed up his tones and started again. "People of Earth! Listen to the message from the stars!"

"Selling horoscopes," a woman answered her child's question.

"What's a horrorscope, mamma?"

"A bunch of hooey," she snapped in reply, scowled at Boswellister and jerked her child complainingly down the street behind her.

"People of Earth!" Boswellister stated commandingly. He grasped a man's arm, saying, "Stand still a moment, friend, and hear the promise of Ippling. Glory beyond your imagination can be yours with the ascendancy of Ippling in this world of tears and sorrows."

The man jerked away. "What the hell, Mac!" He looked searchingly at Boswellister and muttered, "Geez, a nut." He stood back from Boswellister to listen, smilingly superior, tolerantly waiting to be entertained. A woman dragging a toddler stopped, then several other people stopped to see until Boswellister had about ten people standing around him.

"People of Earth!" he started in again, but he was interrupted by a cackling voice from the rear.

"Where else?"

The small crowd laughed and started to move away, but Boswellister stood straight and commanded them. "Listen! Wait for a moment and learn your glorious destiny.

"Now," he said quietly into the lapel pickup, and the great doughnut circle of the Ipplinger starship sailed in close over the hills. A line of brush fire followed the starship.

Boswellister held up his hands and pointed. "Behold the glory of Ippling that can be yours!" He held onto the halo, trying to get them to follow the symbolism. "Look upwards!" He screamed at them, but they watched the brush fire that swept the hill top. It was a goodie. It would wipe out a number of homes.

He grabbed a boy by the arm and demanded, "Look at the Ipplinger starship. Behold the glory of Ippling!"

The ten-year-old sneered. "Yah! That's the new 1993 Lockheed X69-P37 experimental ship. I got a model last week."

"No, no, lad! The Ipplinger starship, come to Earth to bring the blessings of Ippling's culture to this backwards planet. Ippling will save you from wars and ills, from poverty and hatred. Ippling will be your destiny. Follow me, Boswellister! Ippling will lead you to the stars! Glory for all!" Boswellister patted the boy on the head.

"Keep your hands off me, you big stiff!"

Boswellister gulped and pointed upwards. "See the Ipplinger starship!"

"Aah! Shuddup!"

His mother jerked his arm in reproof. "How many times I've gotta tell you not to say, shuddup. Say, SHUT UP! S-H-U-T U-P!"

"Aah!" the boy said in disgust. "Everybody knows starships are big rockets!" He'd said the final word; he had no more interest in Boswellister, for the fire engines were coming.

They sirened down Ventura and turned up Laurel Canyon, their heavy motors, air horns and sirens drowning out Boswellister's speech. Cars had piled up at the intersection to wait for the fire engines to make their swing, and Boswellister leaped to the middle of the intersection as soon as the trucks had turned.

He held up his arms and went into his *People of Earth* spiel again. But angry, blasting horns cut his voice to nothing. The drivers pressed close in on him, pinpointing him in the middle of the intersection. Shouts and jeers and horns; the roaring scream of fire engines; people running and shouting; Ventura at Laurel Canyon was a cacophonous maelstrom.

A traffic officer screeched his copcycle to a halt and made his way to the center of the mass of tangled traffic. He blew his whistle and waved his arms, ordering Boswellister to the sidewalk, but Boswellister refused to move. He had his mission on Earth.

Boswellister shouted over the piled-up noise, waving his hand to the sky, calling to them to follow his lead to the glory of Ipling.

The officer grabbed his coat collar and hustled him to the sidewalk. "You're under arrest!"

"You can't arrest *me!*" Boswellister squirmed and jerked away. He shouted, "Follow me!" and ran north, a good part of the crowd after him. He shrieked an order into the pickup while he ran over the bridge towards Moorpark.

A woman spotted the Iplinger starship that followed overhead. "Free samples!" she screamed, and those who had lagged behind fell into a run with the crowd following Boswellister.

The northwest corner of Laurel Canyon and Moorpark had been cleared of houses for the erection of a new billion-dollar shopping center, and the ground was smooth and bare. Here, in the center of the five-acre construction site, the Iplinger starship settled to Earth.

The Iplinger Supreme Starship Commander was panic-stricken. He had to rescue Boswellister from that sample-seeking mob. If Boswellister should be trampled and injured! Each screamed demand, picked up by Boswellister's lapel microphone, sent the Supreme Commander's blood pressure up another notch, and the moment the ramp was unshipped he hit the ground.

Officers and crewmen quickly lined up to pipe Boswellister aboard. But the crowd pushed in close, forcing Boswellister to the rear as they screamed for their free samples. Two bulky crewmen stood embattled by the entrance port, strong-arming the kids who tried to storm through the port and inside.

"Space Angel's inside!" That was their battle cry as they tried to wriggle under the legs of the crewmen.

"Ya sellin' Oatbombs?" one screamed in the commander's ear, then reached up to snatch off a shoulder patch.

Boswellister stood in the rear of the crowd and wrung his hands while the crowd clamored for their samples.

"Give us the pitch, then pass out the stuff!"

"Lookit that ship! Ain't it a dilly! Whatcha sellin', Wheatsnaps?"

"Bring on the dames!"

They pressed in close to the starship, running their hands over the slick metal surface.

"Boy, what a prop! Bet it cost a million bucks. What ya sellin', mister?"

"Sanity!" Boswellister shouted from the rear.

His men tried to hold their ranks, but the crowd broke the lines, jerking the medals off their chests for souvenirs.

Boswellister was almost babbling by the time the commander and his men battled their way to him.

"You saw it all! You know!" Boswellister protested. "That Blond Terror and his harem darlings, and those violence-avid ruffians in the audience! Dodie, the stripper, with her lip-licking ogglers! That Calsobisidine pitchman, oozing allure and implied invitation! My equation! My precious equation, buried under a mass of pills, lotions, toys, food, clothes and everything sold with a bump and grind!"

They fought to the ship with him, while the crowd opposed each step, yelling for entertainment, for TV cameras, for samples of anything.

"How could I have missed it?" Boswellister moaned. "I should have sold them with sex, right from the beginning."

"What do you do, handsome? Sing?" A bundle-clutching housewife breathed into his face, stepping on the commander's foot as she shoved in close to Boswellister.

"Take me home!" Boswellister beseeched the commander.

The officers and crew, tattered, demedaled, bruised and completely defeated in morale, formed a flying wedge and drove for the safety of the ship.

The ramp retracted. The port closed, then opened briefly to eject a nosey boy, closing finally on the demands and the mocking laughter and the clangor of arriving police cars.

"Raise ship!" the commander ordered. He sopped at the blood from his gashed arm and said to his first officer, "Somebody in that mob used a knife to go after those service stripes."

The first shuddered. "Ugly brutes."

Boswellister leaned against the corridor bulkhead and sighed as the Ipplinger starship rose from the ground. How could he explain to his poppa? All his brothers had won their worlds. He *would* do it. He squared his shoulders. After all, he was a Boswellister. Boswellister XIV, no less. A son of Gaphroldshan IX himself, the Prince of Ippling World LXIV, a Royal Prince of the Central Ippling.

He walked resolutely to the control room, riding the crest of his refurbished dignity.

"Put me down on that planet we spotted last year," he ordered. "What was that star map number?"

"G.S.R. 285139-F. R. A. 592-105-R.U. 13," his alert assistant astronomical officer answered, reading the number from a prepared memorandum.

Boswellister hesitated. Should he reprimand the officer for anticipating his failure or compliment him for his efficiency? Boswellister backed water and went to his room to learn the language he'd need, while the officers pulled their own demoralized spirits together so they could go to work on the crew when the news broke that they weren't going home.

They made a quick passage to their destination, and Boswellister—well rested, well fed, hypnotically tutored, supplied with communicators, a synthesizer for his food and a portable equation writer strapped to his back, and his irrepressible, dauntless belief in himself in triumphant operation—stepped from the ramp onto this newest world of his Princely destiny.

"Circle in orbit," he ordered. "I'll call you when I need you."

Boswellister walked confidently down the road to town. He congratulated himself on having learned, also on his wise humility in admitting the fact of his having learned. He smiled now at the naiveté with which he had approached his first try at establishing a realm for his Ipplinger Princedom rights.

He had been so full of illusions that he had landed openly, had stepped right up and announced that he had come to establish his household and rear his own Princes, who would, in their maturity, leave to

win their own worlds. In addition to their being small-minded on that first world about his needing five wives for his household, they had nearly managed to commit him to a lunatic asylum, for he had overlooked, in his equation, the fact that his first planet, with its two suns and perpetual daylight, had never known about the stars. There had been no way to break through their wall of stupidity, and he had left, the planet's sanity-police close on his heels. Had he used money it would have been a cinch, he had realized as soon as he was safely in the ship.

That hard-earned lesson he had applied to his second planet, but there superstition meant more than money, though money had seemed on the surface to be the answer to everything. On that second planet he had made the error of buying his way into the half-political, half-religious temple setup, and had tried to bring the local superstitions into line with Ipplinger Reality Philosophy. They had lost an officer and three men when they rescued him from the temple's torture chamber; and none too soon, for he had been taking quite a stretching when his rescue had arrived.

Applied on Earth, the superstition equation had not paid off. He had failed to notice that they didn't really believe in their religions and superstitions, though they showed every indication of being extremely devout and credulous. He should have sold Earth, and sold it with sex.

Well, he had learned, all right, and here, on this new world, in this fresh start, he would show how well he had learned. In the idiom of Ventura Boulevard, he'd hit 'em with the whole deck, deuces wild. He'd give 'em sex and money and superstition and to hell with fact and logic.

These primitive worlds had to be brought slowly into a respect for logic; for Ipplinger logic, the only valid system of logic in the whole universe.

In the hovering ship, the commander turned to the astrogator and said, with the bitterness of yesterday's conflict with the mutinous crew evident in his voice, "Well, our little vaporized circuit is off again." He motioned to the image of Boswellister in the forward viewscreen.

It was a sight that tended to increase the tremor in the astrogator's hands. He replied, "I only hope we can pull the crew through another pickup. Home and family! Do they think I want mine any less?"

Boswellister marched confidently down the road. He *would* succeed, for didn't he have the well oiled machinery of the whole Ipplinger starship crew of cultural contact specialists to back him up?

While he walked, he practiced the strident-voiced delivery of extravagant lies he had learned so well and had so magnificently imitated from the Ventura Boulevard pitch artists. He practiced the leering insinuation of the barker outside the gambling hall; he gave it the Calsobisidine con come-on; he sold it solid, dripping with sex, twitching with lure.

He knew that here, finally, he would succeed.

Boswellister XIV, Noble Prince of Ippling, smiled his confidence in his sex-money-superstition equation as he walked briskly down the road to begin his contact with a world that had substituted vat-culture procreation for sex; that had abolished money in favor of a complicated system of verbal, personal-honor swapping credits; that had no religions or superstitions. A world of people who considered the most sweetly distilled essence of living to be the minute investigation of the fine points of logical discourse, engaged in on the basis of an incredibly multiplied logic structure composed of thirty-seven separate systems of discursive regulations, the very first of which was based on a planetary absolute, the rejection and ridicule of all persuasive techniques and those who used them.

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