

**APOPEYELYPSE**

**NOW**

I'M POPEYE THE SAILOR MAN  
I'M POPEYE THE SAILOR MAN  
I'M STRONG TO THE "FINICH"  
'CAUSE I EATS ME SPINACH  
I'M POPEYE THE SAILOR MAN.

CONCEPT AND DESIGN BY:

PYTHON V. ANGHELO

WRITTEN BY

JEREMY BOBROWSKI AND

PYTHON V. ANGHELO

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The last of the sun's rays fell upon the eighth sea, and just as the sun was setting behind Spinach Island, Popeye felt a tug on his line.

"Well, blow me down!" says Popeye, as he jumped out of his chair with anticipation. The fish had not been biting today. In fact, they hadn't been biting all week. This was day 14 of Popeye's fishing excursion, the last day. It was an effort he told Olive Oyl he must do himself for he was getting older and did not want to lose touch with the sea.

As he yanked the fish into his boat Popeye's one good eye opened as wide as his mouth. What Popeye saw was what resembled a grouper, but, there was something different about him.

"Me thinks there's sumthin' wrong wit ya'," says Popeye.

Popeye lays the fish on the deck of the "Olive" and examines it. Sure enough it is a grouper. Only, this one is a different color. Popeye has never seen one like this before.

The fish, flapping lazily on the deck wheezing for air, is noticeably marred with propeller scars. It's mouth is loaded with hooks, and it's eyes are glazed over purple from mercury poisoning.

"Poor 'lil fish, I can't take ya' home to Olive. She'd muoider me!"

At once Popeye makes it his mission to clean up his new friend and make him healthy again. After proper bandages, gauze strips, bactine and some spinach the fish feels like new.

"Dat oughta make ya' feel right again!" says Popeye, feeling better now that he fixed up his wounded fish-friend and is ready to toss him back.

"Now, I'm gonna toss ya' right back!"

The fish shakes his head a resounding NO!

"What?" questions Popeye.

The fish shakes his head no again, and then spits out water in Popeye's face.

"Why I oughta!" Popeye shakes his fist at the fish.

The fish then points, with his fin, towards the sea. Popeye looks overboard and is horrified by the sight. His boat, the "Olive", is stuck in a collection of sewage, plastic containers, and dead fish.

The sea is quiet. Not even a sound from the gulls that whisk through the thick air above Popeye. The silence is broken by anger, by impatience, and by fright. The sound is from Popeye.

"Aaaaaagggggghhhhh!"

On Spinach Island Olive Oyl looks up for a moment. She thought she heard something, a scream, very faint in the distance, yet, she continues to scan the beach for more shells. She picks up only the best, because she knows she won't have much time to herself once Popeye gets home from fishing. He'll act all romantic to her, and they'll cuddle up next to the fire with a spinach pizza and a bottle of champagne.

"Owwwwww-wooo-hoooo-!" screams Olive. She has stepped on a discarded syringe that has washed up on the beach.

Holding her foot in one hand she hops a few feet. Then she slips and falls on her butt in a pile of dead fish. The fish are slippery because they are covered in oil.

"What's going on?" asks Olive to herself. The waves pound the beach as dead fish slap the hard, wet sand.

Olive watches as an empty oil barrel floats onto the beach and stops dead in front of her. A sign on the side of the barrel reads:  
BRUTUS OIL.

An old, tired pelican flaps its wings for the last time as it dives to the sea. It's carnage is due to eating one of the oil infested fish. The bird dive bombs from out of the dark sky, and then collides with the water not for food this time, but for death.

From the middle of the cemetery of spoiled fish Olive Oyl's scream breaks the silent night on Spinach island.

"Aaaaaaagggggggghhhhhh!"

The home of Popeye and Olive is decorated with honorary medals and flower petals. As Olive Oyl hops through the front door she can hear something in the living room. She slams the door and huffs and puffs her way into the kitchen.

She is twice surprised by the horrible sight that is making so much noise. First, Popeye is home alive and well. Second, a bottle of Absolut Spinach is empty and Popeye is resting comfortably in his Lay-Z-Boy recliner, singing. There is a fish in an aquarium that sits on the coffee table. Olive doesn't remember seeing it there before.

"Great, big gobs of greasy grimy fishy guts," Popeye mumbles through a drunken singing voice.

"Popeye?" Olive asks, "What are you doing? What's with the new fish?"

Popeye's one good eye slowly turns and notices her presence.

"I'm reminiscing, Olive. Won't you join me and my new pal, Groupie?"

On the television an old cartoon of Popeye plays. Popeye is beating Bluto to a pulp. The "real" Popeye looks at the t.v.

"Glass jaw," Popeye mumbles.

Olive stamps her one good foot against the floor.

"Popeye, you'll never guess what I saw on our beach!"

Popeye turns back to Olive.

"A bunch a dead fishies, a whole bunch a plastic containers, and maybe some oil?" Popeye answers, questioningly.

"Yeah, and a whole mess a oil. How'd you know?"

"Cause I saw the same thing, Olive."

"What's going on? I never noticed anything like this before!"

"Neither have I Olive. I guess we just never had time to open our eyes to the environmints!"

"Popeye, Spinach Island is ruined!"

Popeye's head turns back to the television.

"Remember the good old days, Olive?"

"Popeye, maybe you should lie down, or, eat somethin'?"

"When all's I'd have to do is eat some spinach, punch Bluto once or twice and then we'd sail off into the sunset together..."

"Of course I remember."

"How come we can't be doin that today?"

"The world's changed I guess, Popeye," says Olive, "Nobody cares about us or their garbage."

"They oughts to, they oughts to..."

With that Popeye drifts into unconsciousness and also into nightmares of him getting beaten up by mutant fish with three heads and five fins the size of boulders. Spinach just won't cut it against this environmental savage.

In the middle of the night, as the acid rain drenches the spinach garden, Popeye opens his eye.

"Me thinks me gots the idea."

A very hungover Popeye drags Olive Oyl from bed onto the boat. Outside the boat, a storm rages as Olive tosses and turns in her sleep. Only now she's on the "Olive."

"Popeye?" Olive questions.

Her eyes peer through the dark cabin and she realizes she's on board the "Olive."

At the helm Popeye's eyes burn through the night air and scan the horizon. He looks like a demon.

Olive appears and is furious.

"Popeye, what's the meaning of this?"

Popeye doesn't move, doesn't reply, and doesn't even notice Olive in the room.

"Popeye, what's wrong? What's wrong with you!?" Olive said as she grabbed hold of his ferocious forearm.

Only then did Popeye turn to her. His eyes still filled with fury.

"I gots me an idea, Olive," he said.

"Where are we going!"

"Places."

"Where?"

Popeye fought the hard, twisting sea. He fought it with more intensity than all of his previous bouts with Bluto.

"Out there Olive!" Popeye said and pointed to the sky.

Popeye drove the ship through the sea like a jockey in the Kentucky Derby. The storm raged and blessed Popeye with ideas.

The statue of liberty still had her lamp raised. Only, now, it looked to Popeye like she was pointing towards the sky.

Olive's eye lids rolled back to reveal reality. She had thought Popeye's rage and madness was just a dream. Luck was not on her side today, she thought.

Popeye came below and stared deeply into her.

"What's wrong with you, Popeye?" she questioned.

Popeye looked away, almost afraid to see her now, and thought for a moment.

"It's all over for us, Olive."

"WHAT?"

"No, not for me 'n' you. But for us as a species."

Olive sat up in bed and remained silent.

"We, as a species, screwed up the planet."

"Popeye, you're taking it all too hard! There's a big movement on to clean up the Earth."

"Don't ya' realize, Olive? It's too late for the Earth."

"Popeye, we're gettin' old anyway."

"Olive, listen to me a sec. Have you lost your mind? I've always looked for the right thing to do. The minute you start to compromise your morals for a "I'm gettin' old" speech, then that's when you trade your conscience for a tombstone! I'll do anything, when it comes to this planet and you, to keep this world a clean safe place. If we don't do anything, we're all dead!"

"Popeye, I didn't know you felt that way."

Popeye knocked on the upper west side apartment's door. Popeye heard only a tv, and the distinct sound of chewing. Popeye knocked harder.

"Open up this door, Wimpy, or I'm going to kick it in!"

A sound of rustling papers came from inside the apartment.

"Might that be who I think it might be?" said the voice from inside the apartment.

"Yes, and me too!"

The door opened and to Popeye and Olive's fright they recognized the mess of man that stood in the doorway. It was J. Wellington Wimpy, holding a half chewed Big Mac, only three times the size when Popeye and Olive left him after their last adventure together.

"God!" Popeye and Olive exclaimed.

Wimpy stood there with a sad smile.

"Won't you both enter my abode?"

The two surprised heroes entered Wimpy's mess hole.

Looking around they saw McDonald's bags were used as wallpaper. It took them a few minutes to realize that Wimpy had just not had the energy to get up from his couch so he piled the empty bags next to the wall.

"I was just watching Donahue. I hope the both you don't mind because I was rather involved in the topic.

Popeye went to the wall and peeled away a sticky McDonald's bag to reveal a portion of one of the twenty four college degrees that Popeye helped Wimpy hang up.

"So, what have you been up to Wimpy?" Popeye asked.

Wimpy put a finger to his mouth, as if to keep Popeye from disturbing him from his talk show.



Popeye looked over to Olive with obvious aggression. He did not come here to be quiet. He came here on a mission, and to hell with some fat guy with a 324 i.q. was going to tell him to shut up.

"Wimpy, I think Popeye has something to say."

"Sssshhhh!" Wimpy said and put his finger to his mouth for Olive as well.

Popeye, not able to stand for this, walked over to the tv and adjusted the antenna.

"Thank you, sir. It's been like that for a week, but I just haven't had the will to pull myself up to fix it."

"Oh, I see."

Popeye stepped in front of the tv and blocked out Wimpy's view.

"I'm just gonna adjust it some more."

Popeye pulled his right arm back and swung into the television screen. His hand seemed to enter Donahue's face and then the tv exploded with fireworks shooting from the backside.

"Now it looks better."

"What is the meaning of this?" asked Wimpy, almost in pain to see his tv smashed to bits from Popeye's punch.

"I think Popeye wants to tell us something," Olive said to Wimpy who in turn stared stupidly at Popeye.

"Yeah, I gots me somethin to say to the both of ya'. I want to tell you both why I'm here. Olive, Wimpy, I need your help."

"Anything you need, Popeye, I can get for you. Hamburger?" Wimpy chomped into the Big Mac.

"No. I need your help Wimpy, not your appetite."

Popeye paced the room.

"You still got that friend of yours in Texas? That rich guy?"

Popeye asked.

"Yes, we keep in constant contact. A true friend, and a smart businessman."

"Yeah, well we need him, and his support."

"What do you need me for, Popeye?" asked Olive.

"I'll need you to go see that old boyfriend of yours. The one who owns the shipping yards with all the famous boats out front."

"Yeah, what about him?"

"I want the Glomar. And we're gonna get it."

"What do you want with Hugh's Glomar?"

"We're making a ship."

"What kinda ship?" asked Olive.

"Never mind that now."

Wimpy moved on the couch to try and position his body upright, but failed.

"Hold it right there for a second, sailor boy!" screamed Wimpy, "You guys go retire off to that little island of yours and leave me here. You never called, never wrote, not even bothering to send a hamgram, and then you come back years later and try to get me to help you! What help could I possibly bring to you? I can't even get up to go to the bathroom."

"Gosh, I'm sorry Wimpy. I'm so sorry. I didn't think 'bout it like that."

"Yes, well I've had plenty of time to think in this lonely city."

"C'mon Wimpy! We need your help! I don't quite know for what yet, but we need your help!"

"C'mon, Wimpy," said Popeye, "There's a hamburger in it for ya' if ya' get me a phone call with him."

"Well, what are you going to be doing?"

"I gots me somone to see."

"Are you in?" asks Olive.

Wimpy suddenly sat up, smelling a hamburger in the air.

"You got it!" said Wimpy.

For the first time in years Popeye smiled.

Popeye walked through the campus of NYU and looked for the address that was written on his arm. Amidst giggles, he passed sorority houses and frat houses. Then, he walked up the steps to an apartment complex. He looked on the wall and pushed the buzzer that had the initials S.P. next to it.

"Yes?" questioned a voice through the speaker.

"Flowers for Sonny Popeye!"

"Second floor, I'll ring you in."

Popeye opened the door as the lock freed itself at the hands of the son of Popeye.

He walked up the stairs to apartment 2D. The door opened and Popeye instantly recognized his adopted son.

They exchanged greetings and an hour later sat at the kitchen table with a bowl of spinach in front of each other.

"Healthy meal," Popeye said.

"Cheap meal!" said Sonny.

"Hey, I've sent you lots a money."

"I know, Dad, I just hate to spend it. I thought you were gonna retire with that money?"

"I've been savin'," said Popeye.

"What's up Dad. I got the feeling this isn't a social visit."

"I need your help son."

"Anything, you name it."

"You've got any friends at the Nasa research center"

"Sure, I've been there millions of time. It is my major, Dad."

"Well, I need to talk to someone about building a ship."

"What kind of boat? I thought you had the "Olive"?"

"Not a boat, son. A ship. A spaceship."

Sonny Popeye got up from the table and picked up the phone. An hour later they were at the Nasa office in New York.

Popeye and Sonny played on the pinball machine.

"I never figured you for the one who would bail out on planet Earth," said Sonny.

"I'm not bailin out, or selling out. I'm just upset with the way we, as a race of human beings, been treatin her!"

"So, you've decided to go off into outer space. You don't know the first thing about space travel!"

"Why, son. That's what I've got you for."

Popeye and his son exchanged glances over the game.

"Didja ever notice how life is like a pinball machine, Sonny?"

"No, Dad. I didn't."

"Well, you given this ball, right. And you do the best with what you have by using your flippers. You can hit it this way, or that."

"But in life, you only get one chance!"

"Right."

15

"Yes, it's possible. Completely possible. Absolutely possible. I just wish I knew it would work for sure."

Popeye and Son took notes while the scientist, Professor Holkus Polkus, lectured.

"Good, when can I bring the ship here?" asked Popeye.

"I can't believe you're serious?" said the professor.

"I'm as serious as I gets!" Popeye said in statue-like manor.

Just then the office phone rang. The professor walked over to the desk and picked it up.

"Hello, Holkus Polkus here."

The next second transformed the professor's face into putty. His hands shook, and his voice trembled with nervousness.

"It's for you, Popeye!" the professor squeaked out.

"Who is it?" asked Popeye.

"It's Ross Perot!" the professor said. "He wants to know how soon we can get up in space."

Popeye smiled and the professor fainted.

"So, it's just like I said, people. The world is going to hell in a handbasket, and this man wants to go off into outer space and see what's out there."

It was Ross Perot talking. He was appearing on every channel in the world. He was telling of Popeye's future plans of searching space for a place to live.

"Ya' see. I ain't got no gripes 'bout a man who wants to shoot off in the Glomar Explorer and search space for a new planet. Hell, if I ate more spinach when I was a kid I might be right along his side. But, ya'

see, I do have it in for the man that tosses cigarette butts on the street, never recycles, and drives to the grocery store when it's a half-block away."

Popeye stood in the background and looked proud. He was a sailor and that was what this was all about. Only this time it wasn't going to be water. It was going to be space.

"So, what my good friend Popeye wants to do is go sailing off to space to look for a new planet, ya' see. I think he's a man that's ticked off with us other humans and is going to try and do somethin' about it. So, let him. That is why I'm here, with Popeye, to unveil the "new" Glomar Explorer. It's the biggest ship in the world! Howard Hugh's did go to great lengths, didn't he? Talk about a man who did everything. Well, let's get back on the subject. 'Cause I like to stick to the topics. It's called... Ark Angel-get it. I don't, but that's what Popeye wants to call it and whatever he wants, he'll get, Ya' see. 'Cause personally I don't eat all that much spinach. Heh, heh, heh, heh!"

With the last chuckle coming out of Perot, Popeye, being cued by his laugh, pulled the cover off the Glomar Explorer. It was huge, and the whole world recognized this by one long "Oooohhh, aaagggghh" that echoed around the world. Strapped to the sides of the Glomarr were sixteen booster rockets that are normally used to power a space shuttle.

At that moment, in his penthouse suite, Bluto laughed.

"Crazy sailor!" Bluto said and laughed.

A group of lawyers sat around the monitor and did not move, did not even talk.

"He's got a point, though," said one sweaty lawyer.

The whole group nodded their head in agreement.

"What're you saying, suit?" asked Bluto.

"I mean, the whole escape from the Earth thing," the same lawyer bumbled.

"Tell me more," Bluto ordered.

"Well, lately, I've been thinking we should escape."

"Why?" Bluto questioned.

"Well, the EPA, the DEA, FBI, and CIA are all over us."

"How come this is the first I hear about this!"

All the lawyers wiped their brow in sync and breathed erratically.

"Well, sir, after the twelfth oil spill we kinda thought you'd figure out we were gonna get kicked out of the oil business. And everybody knows you're a compulsive gambler, and you can't stay away from the beauty contests."

"Hmmm," Bluto pondered, "Escape, I like that. I like that idea a lot. What's your name?"

"Abrams, sir," he answered dutifully.

"Abrams, I hoped you've got a parachute in that briefcase 'cause you're about to escape."

Bluto pushed a button on the arm of his chair. In the next second Abrams disappeared from sight and Popeye was replaced with a camera outside the building. It showed Abrams falling through the air, clutching his briefcase and screaming.

The lawyers jumped up from their seat and ran from the room.

"Escape, I like that. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"Ready when you are, Popeye," said a voice through the speaker on the bridge of the newly named Ark Angel.

Popeye turned to Olive next to him.

"Are you all strapped in, Olive?"

"Yes, Popeye."

Popeye strapped himself in and pushed a button on the console.

"Son, you ready?"

"Yes, Dad. I'm ready."

"Well, then let's go. What're you waiting for ya' stupid kid?"

"Did you say something, Dad? I couldn't quite get that?"

"Nuthin, son! Let's get off this rotten planet!"

"Wimpy, you ready?"

"Uhhmmmm, huuummm," said a voice that obviously spoke through a mouthful of food.

"Space control, this is Popeye the sailor. Let's do it!"

Nasa replied with a countdown.

"10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, ...."

The ship's engines exploded with power and pushed the ship to the stars.

Once out of the Earth's orbit, Olive turned to Popeye and asked him a question.

"Popeye, what was that huge crate with holes you put in the ships' storage area?"

"I'll tell you when we find out where were going."

"Was that Spinach?" asked Olive.

"No, not spinach. Those were me companions. Animals, Olive. I brought animals. The politicians and conservationists wouldn't let me take 'em, so, I kinds a borrowed 'em."



Groupie swam in his tank and smiled as the ship broke from the Earth's atmosphere.

As the lift-off of Popeye's spaceship filled each newscast, there were other important stories that went unnoticed.

"All across America today, Zoos report animals missing. Two bald eagles, two chipmunks, two manatees, and the last two condors in existence," says Tom Brokaw in America.

"Two jaguars, two parrots..." in South America.

"Two pythons, two...." in Africa.

"Two..." in Asia.

"Two..." in Asia, Australia, Antarctica, and Europe....

"Now back to the Miss America contest where we'll see the talent competition..."

The Ark Angel sped silently on fresh fuel towards Jupiter.

"Well, where to?" asked Sonny.

"I figure we just cruise out of the milky way and..."

Popeye couldn't finish his sentence. The Ark Angel was sucked into Jupiter's orbit.

"Dad, we're getting sucked into Jupiter's orbit. If we don't shake free we'll be ripped apart!"

"I got ya', Son."

Popeye rocked the Ark Angel back and forth to free the ship from the planet's orbit.

"Looks like we underestimated it's gravitational pull!" said Sonny.

"Yeah, I think we can get us free."

The Ark Angel snapped free from Jupiter's orbit and was jettisoned into a flow of stars on the other side of the planet.

"What's going on?" asked Popeye.

"Looks like we've caught an alpha-drive wind."

"What's that?" asked Popeye.

"It's a circulation of stars that flows throughout the universe.

It's like a river."

"A, sort of, cosmic river?"

"Yeah, only.."

"Only, what?" asked Popeye.

"Only, it's just a theory some of the scientists have recently come up with. I don't know much about it."

"Well, we're about to find out!"

The Ark Angel glided into the cosmic river and journeyed to the outer edge of the milky way.

The Ark Angel strayed down the cosmic river emptied of all its fuel. A cloud of vapor drained from the remnants of the sixteen booster rockets.

"Well, Popeye," said Sonny, "What do we do now?"

Popeye got up from the captain's chair and walked to the viewing screen.

"We've's got no choice but to wait. Maybe, if's we's lucky enough, we'll drift to a planet that's can spare us some fuel."

"And what do we do when we run out of fuel again?" asked Wimpy.

Popeye said nothing. He just stared blankly at the empty space in front of him.

The crew looked upset. They were stranded, and angry with Popeye for not foreseeing this problem.

"Don't worry, crew," said Popeye, "Sumthin's bound to come up!"

"It just did!" said Sonny. He pointed at the viewing screen that Popeye had been staring at a moment earlier. Sonny's finger pointed to a dot in space that had been growing. It was another spaceship.

"What is it?" asked Olive.

"It's another ship!" said Popeye.

"How could another ship be this close to us on the river?"

"I don'ts know," said Popeye, "Unless, it followed us!"

"From Earth?" asked Olive.

"Yeah," said Popeye.

On board the "Brutros", the Sea Hag stood at the helm while Bluto barked orders.

"Bring us in real close!" bellowed Brutus, "I want him to know who's knocking on his door!"

"I still don't fully understand how to work these controls, Brutus!" the Sea Hag explained.

"Bring us around to port, and then go underneath," shouted Brutus amid various warning bells of impact, "He's weak underneath. We'll send one of our boosters underneath there, and that'll be the end of him."

"Isn't that bringing us a little too close to him?" asked the Sea Hag.

"NO! I want to be right next to him!"

"Pop, I can just make out a name on the ship!"

Popeye didn't ask for the name. He knew who it was.

"It's the Brutros, Dad!" said Sonny.

"Oh, Popeye!" exclaimed Olive.

"What an interesting turn in events. It appears Bluto is on his way to help us from being stranded."

"No such luck, Wimpy," says Popeye eyeballing the ship as it closes in on the Ark, "He ain't here to help."

"I think you're right, Dad!" said Sonny, "He's coming in REAL fast now."

"Port?" asked Popeye, again, knowing the answer back in his mind.

"Yeah, and it looks like he's gonna move underneath," said Sonny peering into his scope.

"Underneath....," Popeye muttered under his breath in sync with Sonny.

"Um, excuse me," said Wimpy, "But isn't that suicide?"

"No," said Popeye, "It's stupididity!"

"What are you going to do about it?" asked Wimpy.

"Nothings I can do. We don't have any fuel, no weapons."

"I've got an idea!" said Sonny.

"Shoot."

The Brutros closed in on the Ark Angel. The Angel dwarfed Bluto's suped-up oil rig, but the Brutros had one thing the Angel didn't. Fuel.

"Come on, Haggy," shouted Bluto, "Faster!"

"I don't even know how these controls work!" pointed the Sea Hag.

The Sea Hag pounded her fists on top of the console that controlled the ship's speed. Warning lights flashed as the ship came closer to the Angel's hull....

"Whatever you're going to do, do it now, Son," said a nervous Popeye.

"Relax, Dad," said Sonny, now in a different station on the bridge, "I think I can work this thing!"

"Brace yourselves, everyones a you!" said Popeye to his

crew. "Me thinks this is ones a those times you pray silently to yourself!"

On the Brutros, chaos was steering the ship.

"Haggy, slow us down. Stop the dang ship!"

"Shut up, Bluto! I can't stop this thing."

The Sea Hag got up from the console and ran from the bridge.

The Ark Angel filled Bluto's viewer and still grew as the Brutros seemed headed for imminent disaster.

Bluto's scream was heard throughout the ship, over warning bells and emergency sirens.

"Aaaaagggggghhhh!"

The Brutros slammed into the underside of the Ark Angel, which rocked both ships with immense force. The shockwave carried throughout both ships and sent everyone flying to the deck, except one. Sonny had strapped, and doublestrapped himself, in tight at the mechanical arm console. He laughed as he saw everyone rubbing their head.

The Brutros had knocked both ships off course with the blast. They were now heading in opposite directions.

Sonny's fingers danced on the computer keyboard and watched the display as the mechanical arm stretched from underneath it's hull. The Brutros was jettisoned away from the Angel, so, Sonny would need all the length he could get on it's extension.

"C'mon, baby! It's just like fishin!" he shouted at the display. The gigantic arm locked onto Bluto's ship at the last second.

"Careful, son," said Popeye, "There's probably a millions a gallons a fuel in there. One little spark could very wells take us with!"

"I got it, Pop," said Sonny smiling from the exuberance of catching his biggest fish yet.

"Bring it in nice and slow, Son!"

In the infirmary, Bluto lay on a broken cot. His arm was in a sling, and his foot was wrapped in ice.

"Ohhhh," Brutus moaned in pain.

The infirmary was dark, and dusty with age.

A figure loomed in the corner and paced.

"Oh, Bluto shut up!" said Olive Oyl as she walked up to him.

"I must be dreamin'!"

"No, you idiot!" shouted Olive, "You ain't dreamin'. You're hurt. So, shut up and rest!"

"What happened?"

"You tried to play chicken!"

"Who won?" asked Bluto.

"Need I answer that question?"

"Never mind," said Bluto.

Olive felt Bluto's forehead. It was red hot as usual.

"Thanks," said Olive.

"What for?" asked Bluto.

"Well, with help from the supplies on your ship, we got this tub moving again."

"WHAT!" shouted Bluto, "YOU STOLE MY OIL!"

"Listen, bub," said Olive, "If it weren't for Popeye you'd still be laying unconscious in your ship, only you'd be drifting because you had to pull a stupid stunt like that and practically blow both of us up!"

"You're so beautiful when you yell at me!" said Bluto, "By the way, where's Haggy?"

"The Sea Hag? I didn't even know she was on board?!"

Olive went over to her walkie talkie and hailed Popeye on the bridge.

"Go's ahead, my sweety!" said Popeye, knowing she was near Bluto.

"We've got a problem!" Popeye thought Bluto had remembered that he didn't get hurt from the collision of the two spaceships. Popeye had "a little talk" with Bluto before he dragged him on board the Ark Angel.

On deck three, the tropical forest section for animals, the Sea Hag crept in the bushes.

"They'll never find me here!"

In the tree above a python slided down the tree and dangled slowly above the Hag.



"Olive, pass me the spinach soup," said Popeye. They were in the cafeteria of the Ark Angel.

"Here ya' go Popeye," said Olive.

"Olive, pass me the spinach soup, now!" said Bluto, from across the room.

"Why don't ya' get up and get it yourself!" screamed Popeye.

"All right, wiseguy. Let's go!"

Popeye and Bluto stood up and went toe to toe.

"You've been buggin me since we left Earth," said Popeye.

"What's somematta, can't take the heat in the kitchen!"

"No, I hates vegetables," said Popeye and blasted Bluto in the face with a right.

Bluto went down and counted the birds that circled his head.

"Let's go, Olive," said Popeye.

Back on the bridge Popeye, Olive, Wimpy, and Sonny stood and watched as planets glided by on the cosmic river.

"Jeez, they all look so small!" said Olive.

"Yeah, well, let's land on one of those stinkin' planets."

The Ark Angel sputtered out of the cosmic river and idled into a new planet's orbit.

The ship dropped down into the atmosphere and out of orbit. The ship sped down towards a large city that held cathedral-like towers in it's palm.

"Okay, gang," said Popeye, "Let's take a look at this place."

The group walked towards the city and watched as the purple clouds hid a morning sky.

Bluto and the Sea Hag walked close behind them, unbeknownst to the group, and planned a strategy.

Popeye and his following walked into the city and started asking people questions.

"Excuse me," said Wimpy, "Where might we find your leader?"

The figure glanced up at Wimpy and then dropped its eyes back to the book it was reading.

"Hmm, it seems no ones wants to talk," said Popeye.

People walked, slowly, down the street. They all had books they were reading as they walked.

Two armed guards walked up to the group. They were not holding books, but large rifles.

"You must follow us!" they said.

The group had no choice but to follow. They were led into the largest building in the city, which looked like a church.

The man that was in the building looked up as the guards pushed them in front of him.

"What is your business here?" asked the Overseer.

"We come in peace," said Sonny, "Looking for salvation."

"There is only one salvation here," said the Overseer, "And that is what you must follow!"

"We're here because our home planet has ignored the warning signs of a failed environment," said Popeye.

"That does not matter! You must follow what I say. You must follow The Order!"

"What is The Order?" asked Olive.

"The Order is a set of rules that the people of this planet follow. It is what they live by, and is the code of their actions. They do not do something unless it is commanded by The Order!"

"You dictate the way your society acts?" asks Popeye.

"No, The Order does!"

"Who wrote The Order?" asked Wimpy.

"My ancestors!" remarked the Overseer.

"Why do you make the people of the planet follow one set of rules?" asked Sonny.

"Because if they didn't, there'd be anarchy. We must govern the people and make them act in a way acceptable to the planet, and our rules."

"You can't make someone follow something if they don't want to. You've got to let them make their own choices. You've got to let them lead their own lives. They can make their own decisions, let 'em."

"Mr. Popeye, I think you've overstepped your bounds on this planet. You can leave anytime."

The group, thankfully, turned and left the large cathedral.

"They will not leave this planet alive," said the Overseer.

About halfway back to the ship, Popeye and the others noticed they were being followed.

"Looks like we picked up a tail," said Popeye.

They started running and the guards followed close behind. When they made it to the ship, they found Bluto and the Sea Hag on the bridge reading, what looked like, a copy of The Order.

"Whatcha got there, Brutus?" asked Popeye.

"It's the original book of The Order."

"Where'd ya' get that?"

"Hag and I stole it. Do you have a problem with that?"

"Yeah," said Popeye, "I do!" Popeye threw a left jab and then pounded him with a right.

The book of rules flew up in the air and fell to the floor of the Ark Angel, cracking from centuries of age.

"Oh, good one, Popeye," said the Sea Hag, "Now look what you've done."

"I didn't do nuthin! It was Bluto."

Popeye picked up the cracked remnants of The Order and threw them out the door at the oncoming soldiers.

They were horrified by the sight and started opening fire.

"Let's get out of here!" screamed Popeye. Sonny fired up the rocket boosters and the ship left the planet in the midst of gunfire.

They watched from the windows as Sonny powered the ship off the ground. Popeye saw the people attacking the guards

and beating them over the heads with their copies of The  
Order.

The cosmic river spun its' tangled tracks across the galaxy and left a trail of uncharted planets in the path of the Ark Angel.

Popeye stood at the helm, still sleepless from the excitement of having left the littered Earth.

"Popeye," asked Olive as she strode up onto the bridge, "Don't you think you should wake Sonny for his shift?"

"No, Olive," said Popeye, with a chilled cup of coffee near his mouth, "I think I'm gonna go it alone tonight."

"What's gotten into you?"

"Nuthins, Olive," said Popeye.

"Why don't we stop and get some rest?"

"Don't need it."

"Well, we should stop soon. We're running low on some essentials."

"Okay, Olive. We'll stop at the next planet."

The Ark Angel broke off from the cosmic river and slung itself into the orbit of a new planet.

The landing was getting easier as Popeye adjusted to the bulk of this new ship.

"What's ya' make of this planet, crew?" said Popeye as Wimpy, Olive and Sonny broke from their sleep to join Popeye on the bridge.

"It looks kinda strange," said Sonny.

"Yeah, let's go out and take a look."

As the crew burst through the door of the Ark Angel, they were met by a group of aliens that watched the ship land.

"Well, blow me down," said Popeye, "Aliens."

"Welcome to Discrimitoria!" said one of the aliens.

"Won't you take us to your leader?" asked Wimpy.

"By all means," said another alien.

The aliens were dressed in white gowns that covered them from the neck down. The aliens' skin was colored yellow with a beige tint, and covered with white spots.

As Popeye and the crew were led to the leader's castle, Bluto and the Sea Hag were sneaking out of the Ark Angel through a back exit. They followed in the general direction but turned off, a mile or so, to search the nearest town for life.

"So, what's kinds of people you got livin here on this planet?" asked Popeye.

"We have both kinds, of course," said the leader.

"What do you mean both kinds?" asked Sonny.

"Well, we have the superior and the inferior."

"What's da difference?" asks Popeye.

"Well, there are the kinds of people that brought you here, safferdots, and then there are the streaks. The safferdots are the superior race. Calculating, thinking, and analyzing every situation. Whilst the streaks are the workforce of the planet."

"I dons't understand ya', leader."

32

"What's there to understand? You have the safferdots running the planet, while the streaks dig and build."

"But why does one race work physical labor, while the other does all the thinking?" asks Olive.

"It's the will of the leaders. I'm just carrying out centuries of tradition. I impose no new laws to stop this. If I did, I'd be kicked out of leadership by the omitzvakas."

"Who are they?" asks Sonny.

"They are the only political governing body we have to watch me and study me to be correct. I have no choice but to listen to their bidding."

"Are those chumps safferdots or streaks?" asks Popeye.

"They are safferdots. And have been for centuries."

"Okay, I've seen enough. Let's go!" said Popeye.

"No," said Wimpy, "I'm curious as to the political empoweress of the safferdots."

"I don't give a hoot as to who's running this bogus planet. I want to leave, and since I'm the captain of that ship out there, I say we go."

"Why do you want to leave so soon?" asks Olive.

"Because any race that puts so much a burden and persuasion over another just because they gots stripes is disgustipatin. I hate it!"

A guard walks from the outer corridor of the leader's office and steps up the stairs to whisper something into the leader's ear.



"If you'll excuse me for one moment I have to take care of a little matter that has just come to my attention."

The leader stepped out of the room with the armed guard and Popeye and the others went to the window to see what was going on. They had heard a clamor from the outside and wanted to see what it was.

"Looks like we's got company," says Popeye.

From out of the top floor window the group saw a mass of streaks running towards the tower carrying torches.

"Burn the tower, burn the leader," they all screamed in unison.

In the front row of streaks they saw Bluto and the Sea Hag leading the resistance.

"I'ms gonna have to take care of this!" shouted Popeye as he pulled back the ring on his aluminum can of spinach and swallowed it whole in one gulp.

"Go get those streaks," shouted Olive. Popeye shot a nasty look at Olive after she said that.

In front of the castle, the streaks had managed to start small fires which had begun to take and spread smoke up to the tower.

Popeye watched Bluto and the Sea Hag as they shot around back with more torches. He followed them quickly, for if any more fires started Popeye would have to rescue each and every safferdot in the tower. And he didn't want to do that, especially after the comments the Leader had just made to him.

Popeye ran up behind Bluto and the Sea Hag and punched them from behind. They fell to their knees as Popeye went to work on Bluto.

"Where's ya' get off startin a revolution on a planet that doesn't evens know what you are?" asks Popeye. Bluto couldn't answer because Popeye was giving him roundhouses to his face. The Sea Hag stood and watched as Popeye didn't even break a sweat to Bluto's being knocked unconscious.

"We want to be leaders!" shouted the Sea Hag.

"Haggy, you couldn't be elected leader if ya's stuffed the ballot box.

"Well, we figured if we started the revolution between the safferdots and the streaks then we'd be looked at i a iffereent light."

"You's never learns, does ya'?"

Popeye gave Bluto one more punch as Bluto knees buckled under him as his mammoth body slapped the ground.

"That's ought to teach you's never to mess in anybody else's busyness!"

Popeye heard the first blast from the fire canon, which was positioned on the roof of the tower, and then he heard screams.

The safferdots were shooting fireballs down from the tower into the mob of streaks. They were being burned alive.

Popeye scaled the walls with as much agility and speed as if he was being pulled up by a rope.

When he made it to the top he saw the leader giving the order to fire again.

"Stop!" Popeye screamed.

"What?" asked the Leader, "These madmen attack my home with my family and you beg me to stop?"

"I'm not askin ya', I'm commanding ya's!"

"Where do you.."

"Ya's just don't gets it do you?"

"No, please enlighten me with your galactic psychology."

"Ya's can't fire on those people because they are people, with feelings and with family of their own."

"But look what they're doing."

"They're just trying to get something back. They've been held hostage all these years, and now they want some freedom."

"Well, I won't give it to them."

"I'm tellin ya, these are people that have been shoved into the corners of humanity and they're just tryin's to survive. Maybe fight their way out of that corner so as to earn some respect for their race."

"Hmm," said the Leader.

"You can't blame them for tryin to get some dignity."

The Leader looked down to the ground and saw the streaks were regrouping. Half of them already looked like charcoal briquettes.

"Fire," said the Leader, his arm dropped and his warriors shed the barrage of fireballs down to the ground.

Popeye jumped on top of the Leader.

"No, no, no!" Popeye screamed at him as he bloodied his face.

"Popeye!" screamed Sonny as he finished climbing the steps to the roof.

Popeye looked up at his son and felt embarrassed. He had let his son see his anger get the best of him.

"Dad, you can't do this. No amount of aggression is gonna solve this planet's problems!"

"I was just tryin' to stop him from hurtin everybody!"

"Dad, you can't win this war by beating the hell out of him."

Popeye looked down and saw the Leader bleeding out of his nose and holding cuts underneath both eyes.

"I didn't want him to hurt anybody!"

"C'mon, Dad. Let's get outta here."

The Sea Hag crept unknowingly behind the large aquarium under the deck of the Ark Angel.

"Hmmm," she said, "If I can get rid of the dolphins in this tank, then I'd have five thousand gallons of pure, fresh water to use for my genetic experiments with plankton and planaria."

Bluto sneaks up behind the Sea Hag as she carefully plots her next move.

"Whatcha doin, Haggy?" asked Bluto.

"SHHHH!" she says, "You don't want to wake Popeye or that runt son of his!"

"Oh, you're up to no good, huh. Can I help?"

The Sea Hag gets an idea.

"Yes, as a matter of fact you can. I have to see how to get these dolphins out of here without ruining the water in the tank."

"That's easy," says Bluto. "Try this!"

Bluto yanks on one of the door handles on the aquarium. Water pours out and floods the compartment. The dolphins float on the water frantically flipping their bodies in an attempt at breathing. A warning bell goes off in the distance.

"You idiot!" says the Sea Hag, "Look what you've done!"

The Sea Hag hits Bluto over the head as they float down the corridors of the ship.

Popeye swims, upstream, towards the emptied aquarium. On his way into the aquarium he gulps a can of spinach.

"Now what did Bluto and Sea Hag go and screw up!"

Popeye swims to the deck where the dolphins lay helplessly. All the water in the aquarium having been emptied into other parts of the ship.

"I'll helps ya'," says Popeye as he lifts the five hundred pound dolphins onto his shoulders and runs down a dry corridor of the ship.

He enters a room with a large circle in the middle. It is an empty pool. Popeye runs over to the water fountain, and with the help of another can of spinach, he sucks up five thousand gallons of water and spits it back into the pool. The dolphins dart through the pool and explore their new home.

"Popeye?" questions Olive, "What's going on?"

"Oh, da' Sea Hag and Bluto gone and messed somethin up again. By the way, who's flyin' da' ship?"

The Ark Angel drifted out of the cosmic river and strayed into an alien atmosphere.

Back on the bridge, Popeye struggled with the wheel.

"I can't gets us back on course. There musta been some water leakin' into the control systems. We're headin straight for that planet."

"Can't you do something?" asks Olive.

"Yeah, I can land."

The Ark idled into the alien planet's orbit and set down on its' surface.

The first people to leave the ship were Bluto and the

Sea Hag. They were wiping themselves dry as they surveyed the surrounding areas.

"What is that smell?" asks Bluto.

"It smells wonderful!"

"I think it stinks. I'm going back inside."

"No you are not," says the Sea Hag, "You've already messed up my plan once, so you're gonna help me get that plankton if's ya' have to get beat up by Popeye a hundred times."

"I think I **have** been beat up by Popeye a hundred times."

"Well, then a hundred more."

The Sea Hag and Bluto were long gone by the time Popeye and his crew came out of the Ark Angel.

"Olive, it's a good thing ya's brought so many hair dryers so we could dry out the controls," said Popeye.

"Dad, where are we headed?"

"I thought I saw some buildings over across those plains on our way down. Thoughts we might check 'em out."

"Does anybody notice a particular aroma to this place?" asked Wimpy.

"No, but it sure does smell," said Popeye.

"You're right, Wimpy, it reeks out here," says Sonny.

"Should we go back to the Angel and get some masks?" asks Olive.

"Oh, just rough you bunch of women," says Popeye as he leads the group towards the city.

The smell got exceedingly worse as they got nearer to the city. Popeye even started to complain. After an hour of walking they finally reached the city.

"My friends," shouted a figure at the end of the city block, "Welcome to my world. I am king of Odorspheria!"

"Well, I think it stinks," says Popeye.

As the figure walked closer to them the group started to notice some strange physical features about him.

To start, he had no nose. Considering his head was shaped like a banana, that was nothing to be proud of. Another trait they noted was that he had three eyeballs.

"Well blow me down," says Popeye, "You're almost as ugly as the Hag."

"Oh, yes, the Hag," said the King, "I've met her and her friend Bluto. Most interesting people. All's they wanted to know about our culture was where our main water supply was located."

"Blast them," said Popeye. "Well, we don't care about them. We're just looking for a new home."

"Well, you'll find that Odorspheria is an attractive place."

"Phhtt, on you!" said Popeye.

"Let the King speak, Popeye," said Wimpy.

"Well, as you can plainly see we look much different than you. We are a people who have very short life spans. Why my twin brother, Ludvigza, died just yesterday."

"How old was he?" asked Sonny.

"Two months."



The explorers were taken back by this revelation.

"You must have some sort of rapid aging process going then," said Wimpy.

"No, not really," said the King.

"What's that disgustipatin smell?" asks Popeye.

"I can't smell anything," said the King.

"Smells like a mixture of gasoline and fuzzy sour cream," says Sonny.

"I don't care what it smells like, I just hate it," says Popeye.

"I'm sorry but I can't smell anything," says the King.

"That's cause you have no nose!" says Olive.

"Yes, but I breathe in the same air as you do."

"That might explain your short life span," says Sonny.

"What do you mean?" asks the King.

"I mean, maybe there's some kind of poison in the air that you all breathe in?" says Sonny.

"I've never thought of that," says the King, "I'll get my top scientists working on that..."

All of a sudden, as the group was walking down the street they hear a rumble. Then a gigantic tidal wave floods the town and carries the villagers and explorers with them.

"I think I know who is behind this!" says Popeye.

The town swims to the top of one of the buildings and haul themselves on the roof for safety.

"There they are!" shouts the King.

The King of Odorspheria points to the edge of town

where the Sea Hag and Bluto are surfing with bottles of infected water. Popeye decides it is time for action. The smell of the town is accelerated with the water's arrival.

"It's the water, Dad," says Sonny.

"What?" he screams back over the roar of the waves crashing against the buildings.

"The water is what kills these people. It must be a virus of some sort."

"Well, I'm gonna have to teach Haggy and Bluto a lesson."

Popeye pulls a can of spinach out of his pocket and downs it in one gulp.

He pulls a clothesline of the roof top and makes a lasso out of it in seconds. Then he ropes Bluto and the Sea Hag and swings them in circles high in the air. He reels them in like fish and ties them up with the line.

"Where's ya' think you's goin with thast contaminated water," says Popeye, "Not aboard my ship I hope."

Popeye grabs the bottles of water from out of the Sea Hag's snared hands.

"Here ya go King," says Popeye handing the containers over to him, "This should make ya's a good sample to test."

"Thank you, Popeye."

"And no offense but we thinks your planet stinks."

"Literally," says Sonny.

"That too," adds Popeye, "So, we're getting off this odiferous oddity and catchin a ride back to the cosmic river."

"I can have a star shuttle give you a jump. Thanks for helping us."

"Eh, yours planet still stinks."

"Olive," said Bluto, they were on the bridge of the Ark Angel, "You don't understand how I feel about ya'!"

"Bluto, I don't care how you feel. My love is dedicated to Popeye!"

"Well, maybe I can show you just how much your love means to me!"

With that Bluto pulled out, from underneath his shirt, a gold necklace with a thick, ivory tusk attached to it.

"I want you to have this, Olive," said Bluto.

"Where did you get that?"

"I took it off one of dem elephants. He doesn't need it anyway!"

"You jerk! Popeye brought all the animals on board just so he could populate a safe planet with them. Now we're going to have elephants with no tusks!"

"Ah, phht! You don't deserve it anyway!"

"Hey, Olive!" called Popeye from the corridor outside.

Olive shrieked and Bluto did his best to cover the tusk in his shirt.

Popeye burst through the door and saw Bluto with Olive.

"What's goings on around here?" asked Popeye.

"Uh, I was just talking to Olive about what kind of planet we were gonna land on next."

"No, he wasn't...guh,guh..." mumbled Olive as Bluto threw his hand over her mouth.

Popeye stepped up to Bluto and noticed something had changed about him.

"Me thinks sumthin's funny goings on!" said the always grammatically correct Popeye.

"No, I swear..."

Popeye lifted up Bluto's shirt and exposed his mammoth gut, and with that, came the elephant's tusk jutting out.

"I thoughts you were up to no good!" said Popeye.

"Popeye," said a nervous Bluto, "I can explain!"

Popeye didn't have time for explanations. He cross-faced him with a left jab and then landed his right onto his jaw. Bluto fell to the ground with unconscious dreams of being the President of the United Bluto States.

"I'm telling you this, Bluto," said Popeye, "Don't be messin around on me ship, and, especially not with Olive."

"I don't think he can hear you!"

"That's okay," said Popeye, "Me thinks I'll have to knock him out a few times just to get the picture."

Back on the bridge, Popeye was motioning to his aquatic friend, Groupie, to take a look at the new planet on the screen from his fish bowl.

"Is he giving you a response?" asked a concerned Wimpy.

"No, not yet, but me thinks..."

Just at that moment Groupie began swimming in rapid circles.

"What's wrong with Groupie?" asked Sonny.

"I don'ts know. Maybes I fed him to much spinach!"

"I hope he isn't forecasting his opinion for this new planet."

"No, I don't think so. Son, just go land this ship, would ja!"

The planet the Ark Angel had landed on was blazing from red clouds. There looked to be no sun, but yet, there was intense heat.

"Looks a lot like Mars," said Sonny.

The crew was followed by a lion and a giraffe. The crew walked patiently towards a clearing where some people gathered.

"Burn the dredlines!" the mass cheered, "Burn the dredlines!"

The group shouted and cheered as they threw long, purple vines into a blaze of fire.

"What's going on here!?" asked Popeye in a raised voice.

An archaic-looking man walked up to the crew and the animals and spoke obtrusively.

"We must burn the dredlines," he said, "For it is the coming of the rooza, and that means we have no need for them anymore this feary."

"What do you speak?" asked Wimpy.

"I see you are foreigners. I must explain. The dredlines are plants which grow during the summer and house us in the winter. We use these vines to sleep in and to dwell in. We live in these vines through the winter and up until the rooza!"

"You mean spring!" said Popeye.

"Correct. We have no need for them as plants during the heat of the summer."

"Me thinks you got a crazy idea about spring cleaning," said Popeye.

"No, we just cannot let the dredlines grow, for they will spread trthroughout the planet."

"I didn't realize that was a bad thing," said Sonny.

"We must have our freedom from the dredlines in the summer. We only need them in the winter."

"You burn off the remnants of your winter housing. I don't get it?" questioned Sonny.

"You see, the dredlines are living vines that breed each other and intertwine together. Why, if we didn't cut them down and rip them, they'd cover the planet."

"They look so pretty though."

"Yes, maam, they are. It is rather unfortunate that we have to kill them for they shriek when they hit the fire."

"What?" the crew said in unison.

"The vines will cry and shriek when they burn. You will see. Watch."

A couple of villagers walked to the fire with a cart full of vines that moved like purple snakes. They tossed the cart into the fire and the clearing echoed with shrieks of pain from the vines.

"It sounds to me likes ya's burnin-babies!" said Popeye.

"Well, since they are living things they do make it

sound rather pitiful. There is nothing we can do, though. We need room to work and to breathe and to build."

"You destroy those living plants just so ya's can build?"

"Yes. Does that bother you?"

"Yeah, it bothers me. It reminds me of Earth. We had a few rain forests left and it was guys like you who were cutting them down so they could build buildings and cause pollution and endanger the atmosphere. I'm sorry but I'm going to have to deny your planet my animals and lives of my crew members."

"Oh, but one-eye, the fun is just getting started. We play this game where we let two villagers get tied up and the first one out gets let free."

"And the second one?" asked Sonny.

"He gets the fire in the dredlines grip!"

A villager was sneaking up to the group and then hit Popeye over the head with a club.

"It looks like we found our second contestant. Thank you Miss Oyl."

The group was held back by guards as others hauled Popeye off in a cart.

Later, the group stood motionless as they watched Popeye being wheeled over next to the fire. It was to their surprise also that the first contestant was already picked as well.

It was Bluto.



"Okay," said the old man, "The first one out of the entangled dredlines gets his life. The second one out gets death. GO!"

Popeye and Bluto both struggled to get their hands free from the grip of the dredlines.

"Oh, Popeye," screamed Olive, "Oh, Bluto."

Popeye shot a jealous look at Olive as he searched for an opening in the living vines.

"No spinach around to save you now!" said Bluto as one of his hands broke free. It would be a matter of seconds, Popeye figured, before he got the other one free and was out.

One of Popeye's hands loosened up and ripped at the dredlines to get free. He thought he heard a cry from the living organism as he did so.

Sonny fooled in his pockets a minute looking for the reserve can he always kept in special cases of emergency. He pulled it from his pocket and motioned to the giraffe for a moment.

"Okay, stick your head over the villagers and give it to Popeye."

The giraffe took the opened can in his mouth and extended his neck over the crowd of people. Popeye's mouth was open, waiting for it. After his first gulp he felt the power surge through his arms and at one flex he broke through the stockade of dredlines.

"We have a winner!" shouted the old man as the crowd cheered for Popeye.

"Yeah, and it sure ain'ts you!" said Popeye as he knocked the man off his feet.

"Some of the crowd stirred and came after Popeye. While watching this take place, Sonny sent the lion to untie Bluto.

When it was all over, Popeye had managed to convince the tribe to work around the dredlines, and to forget about celebrating the coming of rooza.

The Ark Angel blew past another planet at the speed of light. It was something which Popeye marveled as he watched each planet burn by the ship.

"Me thinks we's gonna set down soon!" said a tired Popeye.

"You okay, Popeye?" asked Olive.

"Yeah, I'm fine. Just gettin sick a flyin."

"Maybe we should stop?"

"Okay, Olive. You don'ts have to twist a me arm!"

The Ark Angel slipped out of the cosmic river and sped towards the new planet.

The crew plopped themselves down from the Ark and set out towards the village that lie ahead.

By instructions from Popeye, a large hawk flew out of the ship as the doors closed, and followed the crew overhead.

They walked up to a powerful looking man who was giving orders to a flight crew.

"God, dammit, suit-up you jerks!" he screamed.

The man in charge was bald and chomping on a big cigar.

"Ahoy, mate!" said Popeye.

"Ah. a navy man. Ever do any missions past the Zoe-Lung planet?"

"No, but I could kick any butt that makeses me mad enough!" said Popeye shaking his fist.

"Good," said the military man, "I might need you today. Could you be ready?"

"For what?" asked Popeye.

"Well," said the man, "By the way, I'm Col. Strangler."

"I'm Popeye the sailor, and this is my crew! Now, get on with whatses you was sayin!"

"Well, we're gettin a good amount a coin to turn that bush into a has been."

Col. Strangler pointed at the dense jungle that stood a hundred or so yards in front of them.

"You's gonna eradicacate all that green?"

"Yeah, the people on this planet seem to think that it would make a nice place for an inter-planetary mall!"

"A mall!" shouted Popeye.

"Yeah, here's what we're gonna do. See that plane over there?"

"Yeah."

"Well, it's got this spray. It's a gas-secticide. As soon as we spray it, the plants turn to this brown color and die. Then we torch the place and watch it burn in less than a minute."

"That's murder!" shouted Olive. "You're gonna destroy all the plants and animals!"

"It's not murder. It's business. Ya' see we get payed for torchin this place, and that's what we're gonna do!"

The plane rolled off the grassy plain and took off for the sky.

"Popeye," said Olive pointing at the jungle, "There's people in there!"

"Really?"

"Popeye, help them!"

"Yeah, Popeye," said the colonal, "Help them!"

Popeye whistled for the hawk that flew overhead. It swooped down towards Popeye and the group below.

"Ahoy, mate. I've got a job for ya'!" Popeye said and grabbed a can of spinach, downed it, and stuck it on the beak of the hawk. Popeye pointed to the sky above and the airplane that flew over them towards the jungle. The hawk took off for the jet.

Popeye, having been rejuvenated by the can of spinach, clocked Col. Strangler in the face. In the process, Strangler fell to the ground and the tried, old mercenary was knocked unconscious.

The hawk was pushing faster and faster to catch the plane.

It's beak held the empty can of spinach and then jammed the aluminum container into the nozzle of the gas-secticide. The ship tried to release the spray, but since the hole was plugged, the gas-secticide flooded the ship and it's compartment.

The plane blew up as the hawk dove out of the way in the nic of time.

Popeye smiled and held out his arm for the hawk to land.

"Any more takers?" asked Popeye.

The mercenaries were quiet as Popeye led his crew back to the ship.

The Ark Angel tumbled down the cosmic river, running on only hope and desperation.

Bluto sat on his broken bunk and prayed.

The Sea Hag stared at the ceiling and thought about the wicked concoctions she loved to make at home, on Earth.

Wimpy drooled over his McDonald's calender and searched his quarters for a hamburger that was not there.

Sonny studied up on interstellar drifting, and tried to find a way to get the ship moving again.

Olive wiped her nails free from nailpolish, and looked out her window searching space for a sign of help.

On board the bridge, Popeye was sending distress signals.

"This is Ark Angel," he communicated through the microphone, "S.O.S, OVER."

He repeated it twenty-four more times. Just like he did ten minutes ago.

"This is..." Popeye was interrupted by Sonny's presence on the bridge.

"Nothing yet?" Sonny questioned.

"Nope, nothing!"

"I couldn't come up with anything either."

"How long until the food runs out?" asked Popeye.

"Well, the most we'll have is another week. But the way Wimpy and Bluto eat, it looks more like three days."

"Hhhmmm."

"We've always got the animals."

"No," said Popeye, "Nobody touches me furry friends."

"Dad, in order to survive, we might have to start looking at them for food!"

"Listens, son," said Popeye, "I brought those animals along for a reason. That reason was to populate a new planet. Not use them for food. Besides, after another week what do we got then. If nothing comes up sooner how do we know anything ever will. No, son. We don't eat the animals."

"Dad, maybe we're just at a lull in the river. Maybe we're at a sand bar or something, I don't know."

"Son, we haven'ts seen a planet for a month."

"I know. I know."

"Just keep lookin' in dem college books, son. See if you can come up with anything."

Sonny left the bridge worse then when he came up. Popeye went back to the radio. He thought it was over a month since they'd last seen a planet. They needed fresh supplies. There was hardly any water left and the crew had to abandon showering. That was fine except when Bluto got a little too close to ya'.

"This is Ark Angel," voiced Popeye, "Come in anybody."

Still no answer.

Popeye didn't know what to expect. The viewing screen was pitch black and the stars were spread so far apart he could count how many he'd seen on one hand.

"Somebody answer me!" shouted Popeye.

His depression went on as he steered the ship down the

intertwining cosmic river. Popeye noticed it was getting a bit choppy, as they headed past no man's land.

The crew slept with dreams of large meals and lots of friendly people sitting at a dinner table.

Popeye steered as the river pushed them farther down the universe. An event such as turning the ship around would probably tear it apart in the process with the force of the river.

Popeye's eyes darted down the river, and looked for something, anything. His eyes found a light.

It was nothing he could designate, or even begin to describe. It was like a small star, but growing larger as the Ark was being pulled towards it.

"Eh, what in the blazes?" Popeye asked himself.

The light was microscopic and appeared to be at the entrance of a tunnel.

"I hope that's not what I think it is!"

It was not.

Popeye thought it was a black hole, but, he couldn't get that lucky.

The light surrounded the ship now and glared so bright that it woke everybody from their dreams.

"What's going on?" asked Olive leading the rest of the crew onto the bridge.

"Me thinks it's a black hole!"

"That's not a black hole, Pop," said Sonny, "That's the end of the river."



The Ark Angel was draped with the white light that bathed the end of the cosmic river. It was like a vacuum and sucked the end of the river into the tunnel. The crew, blinded and covering their eyes, fell to the floor in pain.

At the end of the tunnel, the Ark Angel was spit out like unwanted food. Popeye was the first to rise.

"Everybody wake up!" shouted Popeye.

The crew was slow to rise, but they did, and rubbed their eyes from the remainder of the pain from the brilliant light.

"Where are we?" asked Sonny.

"Two guesses!" said Popeye

The viewing screen gave them the picture of the remnants of Earth. It was charred, half of it, but still unmistakably Earth.

"What happened?" asked Olive.

"I believe we're about to find out," said Wimpy.

The crew left the Ark Angel and stepped out on the planet Earth, again, for what they thought of as home.

"Whoa," said Popeye. "Hey, where's Sonny?"

Sonny was on board the Ark Angel trying to find Evella. She was in the aquarium staring at the dolphins.

"Are we okay?" she asked.

"Yes, Evella. We're home!"

Sonny came out to see the surface of the Earth, and to Popeye's surprise, was escorting a girl.

"Sonny, who's dat?" asked Popeye.

"Pop, this is Evella. I saw her on the planet Monedoma. I had to take her with us, because, I just couldn't leave her on that horrible planet!"

"Well, why didn't you guys tell me?"

"I thought you would be angry with me!"

"Sonny, you know I've alwayses tried to do the best I could for ya'. If you like her then I don't mind. Besides, it doesn't look like she's gonna get to meet very many Earthlings."

"Why?"

"Nobody's around. Nowhere." said Olive.

"Well, maybe they're in hiding."

"From what?" asked Wimpy, "A nuclear war. Look at those clear, blue skies. Doesn't look like there's much fallout."

"Then what?" asked Popeye.

"I can't explain it. It's like everybody just fell off the face of the planet."

The crew walked down the streets of Manhattan and watched the newspapers fly through the air in the wind. Popeye and Bluto both grabbed them.

"Elvis sighted in doomsday aftermath," said Bluto.

"What paper is that?" asked the Sea Hag.

"The Enquirer."

"Figures," said the crew.

"Massive fires rage across the Earth!" said Popeye, reading from the New York Daily News.

The crew looked up at Popeye dismally.

"Read the rest of it, Pop," said Sonny.

Popeye looked back down at the article in the paper.

"Yesterday, April 14th, 1997, colossal fires started in Jerusalem, China, Africa, and here in New York. The fires raged throughout Manhattan and spread throughout the Bronx. The fires were described as "gigantic plumes of death" said one citizen who watched the fires spread and burn down his house. The fires are like nothing ever seen on the planet. "It is the wrath of God" said one street person. If it is, we have no choice but to die!"

The crew looked around. they had remembered the way the Earth looked when coming into orbit. It was half-charred, almost like it was burned.

"No offense, Popeye," said the Sea Hag, "But Manhattan doesn't look to have been overrun by massive fires."

"I know. That'ses da strange part."

"Could it really be the wrath of god?" asked Bluto.

"I don't know," said Popeye.

"According to my calculations, April 14th, 1997, was...yesterday!" said Sonny.

Popeye looked in every direction. There was nothing that looked even remotely-burned.

"I thinks it's an act of God."

At that moment the crew looked up in the sky and

watched as the sun rifled rays down upon them. One ray in particular, lit up the side of the Ark Angel.

The sun's ray cut open the side of the Angel. The animals jumped from the opening and ran through the streets past the crew, the dolphins swam in the Hudson, and the birds shotgunned towards the sky.

"Definitely, me thinks it's an act of God."

"Pop, everybody's gone! The whole planet."

"That's okay. It was meant to be, Son!"

"How do you figure, Popeye?" asked Olive.

"Well, we've got the animals. We've got us. We've got the "new" planet Earth."

"It's going to be tough!" said Sonny.

"What ya' afraid of a little work, Son, ya' wuss. You and Evella likes each other right.

The two smiled at each other with hopeless embarrassment.

"Well, you guys are in charge of reopopulatin this new planet."

"Well, Pop," said Sonny, "We finally found one that's suitable for us and the animals."

"Yeah, and we didn't even have to leave."

"If we didn't leave, though," said Olive, "We wouldn't be standing here right now."

"Yeah, we'd be a charcoal briquette. Arf-Arf."

Nobody laughed.

"What made you want to leave in the first place?" asked Sonny.

"I don't know, " said Popeye, "It kinda came to me in a dream. I just was sick of everybody treating the planet badly. I wanted to start over. I wanted to do something right. Nothing was getting done on this planet backs then, so I thought we all should just take off and see what else is out there for us. Maybe it's karma, that got us back here, but I tend to believe it was the big man. I think he put us back here so we could start over and do it right this time."

The crew of the Ark Angel held hands and wept.

A few weeks later, and a few hundred hours of sleep for Popeye, Bluto and he were fishing off Staten island. This time, as if by a freak accident, the Statue of Liberty's torch was pointing towards the water.

"Well, Bluto, I'ms kinda a glad we's friends now. I mean after all those years a fightin for Olive. I'm glad we made up."

"Me too, Popeye," said Bluto, "I mean, if it was one thing I learned on that space voyage, it's that you're not only my arch-enemy and fiercest competitor, but you're also one of my closest companions."

"That's great, Bluto," said Popeye, "I'm glad we're friends, now."

"Well, you've taught me a great many things. Like, for example, fishing. We're using no hooks right? Well, it doesn't matter because the object to fishing is not just to fish but to relax and have a good time with your pals."

Suddenly, Bluto's line moved.

"That's funny," said Popeye, "How could ya's line move if we wasn't usin any hooks?"

"Uh, uh, uh," stumbled Bluto, nervous now, "I don't know Popeye.

Bluto reeled in a fish. Not just a fish to Popeye, though, because he quickly recognized Groupie. A healthy, strong Groupie who instantly spit water in Bluto's face.

"Ahoy, Groupie," said Popeye, "You must a gotten free when the Ark's side was broken open."

Groupie nodded his head yes.

"Bluto, you used a hook after I told you not to!"

"Sorry, Popeye," said Bluto, "I just thought..."

Popeye and Bluto stood face to face and decked one another as Groupie hopped off the island and back into the bay.