

THE PIPE OF REBELLION

By

John P. Seiler

© Copyright Nov. 2007, All Rights Reserved by the Author

Thronnheim was the main planet in a stellar system way out on the rim of both the Empire and the galaxy. It had seen better days and was now out of the flow of the events in the Empire. On such a planet an Empire Security Agent (EIS) lived with his pipes and tobacco, long forgotten by his friends and associates for a long ago indiscretion.

The old man sat behind his desk puffing on his dark oily old pseudo-briar smoking a non-descript neer-tobacco while staring at the package. This was indeed a novel event as usually very little passed the EIS desk in his sector. It had been received several hours earlier from one of his trusted sources on Tarani. According to the attached letter, the package contained an old pipe from the estate of Dennis O'Malley, one of Tarani's wealthiest, prominent citizens. According to the letter, the O'Malley family could trace their lineage in an uninterrupted fashion back to the First Age of Old Earth. Dennis O'Malley was also a noted pipe collector. It was well known that he had a very extensive collection of new, antique, and folk-art pipes from across the empire and down the corridor of time. It was hinted that a number of Old Earth genuine briar pipes had passed through his hands and resided in his extensive, eclectic personal collection.

The old man re-lit the pipe and continued to read his agent's letter. It seemed that after his untimely death, O'Malley's children had sold off his pipe collection a piece-at-a-time through various legitimate channels. A quite substantial sum was received, especially for several of the Old Earth pipes and tobaccos. There were enough monies so that they were set for life as being quite wealthy. However, the letter went on, while cleaning out the O'Malley mansion, after it had been purchased by new owners, they had found an old leather pouch containing one pipe and a note. It had been discovered hidden away behind a secret panel in the wall near the floor trim in the bedroom. In fact, they would not have found it at all had it not been for accidentally triggering the release of the door mechanism while sweeping the carpet. The included note was in Dennis O'Malley's precise handwriting:

*Irish to the CORE!
Send this little pretty to my friend Emperor Leopaldo.
He can solve the mystery!*

The old man's pipe had gone out. He chose another one from the football-shaped rack on the desktop. While filling the pipe with more of the strong tobacco he decided to send a hyperwave message to the head EIS office at Castle Pesaro and await instructions. Quickly he composed the message on the hyperwave communicator's keyboard and hit

the transmit button when he was done. He struck a match and lit the pipe. ‘He was not a fool. If it is to go to the Emperor, then he would send the package to him without opening it. The Emperor’s security staff could check it out for any hazard. I wonder who they will send?’ he thought as he puffed on the pipe. ‘Maybe if I handle this right Emperor Leopaldo will show favor on me and get me out of this dead-end assignment. I’ve worked for the Empire Intelligence Service all my life and have been loyal all these years. Surely, the small indiscretion I committed years ago can be forgiven. Maybe I will be moved to a better assignment or maybe I should just retire.’

The indicator was lit on the computer signifying receipt of a message on the hyperwave. It was from Castle Pesaro. All it said was “Send the package..Intact...on the first EIS needle ship. An EIS agent will be dispatched as soon as possible. Your contact is Nick Reardon.”

‘I will have a chat with Mr. Reardon’, he thought ‘maybe I can finally get out of here.’ He sat smoking his pipe well into the night staring at the package. Meanwhile, the package sat on the old man’s desk, quiet and unmoving – a Pandora’s box waiting to be opened.

-2-

The needle ship was traveling from the Wendover star system back to the Lynase star system, home of planet Hayden and Castle Pesaro. Castle Pesaro was the nerve center of the Empire and home of Emperor Leopaldo and his staff. Nick Reardon was expecting an uneventful trip home which would take three jumps. The first jump through space had gone smoothly. It was then, when the ship returned to normal space, that he noted a message had been received on the hyperwave communicator. He pulled up the screen and read the message. “URGENT! Re-route to the Galick Star System and the planet Thronheim. Pick up package from local EIS agent and transport immediately to HQ.” It was signed by Varten von Eckman, the Emperor’s Weapons Master and Chief of Empire Security. It passed all of the embedded security codes and counter codes so he knew it was genuine. He lit his Old Earth Dunhill Group 5 2000 RTDA pipe and performed some rough calculations in his head. The results indicated that it would take about one universal day for him to travel to the Galick star system using the older flash drive found on his one-person needle ship. While puffing on some McNay’s Red Ribbon Flake tobacco, he reset the ship’s navigational system for his new destination. He also checked the ships database and found that the EIS agent on Thronheim was J. Robert Fuzzmann, aka ‘fuzzy’. He recalled Fuzzy as being the keynote speaker when he graduated from the EIS Academy many years ago. He was marooned in a dead-end assignment after a brilliant career with the EIS due to a ‘minor indiscretion’. Rumor had it that the ‘minor indiscretion’ was with the wife of an Empire Sector Governor.

‘This Red Ribbon Flake isn’t bad for a neer-tobacco’, he thought ‘I must stock up on some of the older vintages when I get back to civilization.’

‘I will have a chat with Fuzzy when I get to Thronheim to pick up the shipment. Whatever it is, it must be important’, he thought.

As he wondered about the interruption to his trip, he puffed on as the needle ship jumped through the starry sky.

-3-

The communicator has received the message that Nick Reardon had arrived at the starport. ‘He should be arriving shortly’, he thought. Fuzzy cleaned the junk off of his desk, except for the package. He opened the safe and removed an old tin of tobacco containing a stained blue-green aged label. ‘Last one’ he thought. ‘I hope this little bribe works!’ he smiled. The door indicator chimed letting him know his visitor had arrived.

“Ah, Nick Reardon!” he said as he let him into the old dark office. His visitor carried a standard issue EIS briefcase.

“Hi Fuzzy. I remember you from the Academy”, Nick Replied.

“A young whippersnapper as I recall, just out of the Academy when last we met.” he said.

“Yes, it has been a while”, Nick replied “You were our Graduating Class keynote speaker.”

“Yes, and how the mighty have fallen low. Here I am herding intelligence on four, out-of-the-way, unimportant planets. But come in, at least I can still be a gracious host to my infrequent visitors.” he answered.

They walked into the office, Fuzzy sitting behind the desk and Nick in a comfortable overstuffed chair facing him.

“Here” Fuzzy said as he handed him the tobacco tin “still sealed”.

Nick took the tin and examined it “Pipe Collectors Club of America, VINTAGE 5100” he said as he examined the bottom of the tin “Tinned 2006 F.A. That’s a re-tinning of McClelland’s #5100, Red Kake. Very nice, from the First Age of Man on Old Earth!” he exclaimed. “I have never seen a tin of this tobacco. I don’t even know if Emperor Leopaldo has any of this tobacco in his cellar, although I expect he does!”

“Go ahead and open it.” Fuzzy suggested.

Nick took off the plastic top, pulled off the aluminum inner seal as he heard an inrush of air and a most delicious aroma arose to his nostrils.

“Looks good and smells great” Nick said, “You know that this is the Emperor’s favorite Old Earth Tobacco, Fuzzy.”

“Yes, I know” Fuzzy replied. “But he has not done me any favors” he said rather bitterly.

“Well you do now his sense of honor, fair play, and his high ethical standards,,,and after all, you did have that little problem, er....” Nick responded.

“Yeah, well that’s all in the past” Fuzzy replied.

Nick took out his Old Earth Charatan Executive straight grain pipe and began filling it with the tobacco. “This pipe is a companion pipe to one that my, ah, so-called girl friend Lu Jo was given. The pipes were given to us by Helen Chamberlain, Robert’s widow and the Emperor’s friend.”

“Yes, I remember Robert and his terrible demise. Very tragic it was. I hope Helen is doing well.” he said.

“She is” Nick responded while lighting his pipe, “And we have all taken care of her.”

“Well, they are very beautiful Charatan pipes” Fuzzy said as he filled his own pipe and lit it.

“What’s the story on this package that I am to deliver?” he asked.

The pipe smoke enveloped them and hung heavy in the room as they smoked. Fuzzy showed Nick the note and told him all he knew about the matter. He concluded with “I have not security scanned the package nor opened it. I thought it would be best for the Emperor to receive and view it as it was received by me. Other than the letter denoting the contents to be a pipe, I have no idea as to the ‘mystery’.”

Nick opened his briefcase and removed a flat panel screen. It was placed next to the package on the desk. “A fluro-screener and sniffer device” he said “It will let us see the contents of the package and using gas chromatographic methods, detect any potentially hazardous chemical, biological or radioactive materials.”

A green light lit on the top of the fluro-screener. “Its clean”, Nick said”And look at the screen”. The screen showed the contents of the box to be a single briar pipe.

Nick put the Fluro-screener back into the briefcase along with the mysterious package. “I’ve a flight to catch” he said.

“Here!” Fuzzy said as he tossed the tobacco tin to Nick, “Give this to our Emperor with my regards and ask him to rescue me from this forsaken hell hole!”

“Will do!” Nick replied as he closed the door behind him.

The men were in formal dress and the ladies in the gowns currently en vogue for the time period. They had just sat down following a fantastic repast. Helmsford, Leo's manservant had just passed around the after dinner brandy. Leo, Varten von Eckman, Helen Chamberlain, and Lu Jo were filling their pipes when Helmsford passed a message to Varten.

"Nick landed an hour ago at the spaceport. He will be joining us soon. He has the package and note. It passed our EIS security screens, so it should be safe. There just appears to be a pipe in the package." Varten reported.

"I've know Dennis O'Malley for many years." Leo said as he lit his Old Earth Pre-transition Barling fossil stacked billiard. "I do recall him once mentioning that he was conducting research on a very unusual Old Earth pipe. I do recall referring him to Chuck Stinyon for information on Old Earth pipes made in the European political subdivisions. He never said anything more about it, nor what he had found." He continued.

"I like mysteries" Helen replied. "Once centering around a pipe would be most interesting." She said as she puffed on a Rathenbert sitter pipe filled with a wexel virginia tobacco.

Lu Jo, now a full fledged EIS agent puffed on her Charatan Executive straight grain, the companion to Nick's pipe which Helen had given them and remarked "I wonder why he waited until he passed to send you the package?"

"I don't know" Leo replied "I do know that the suspense is killing me!"

They all chuckled. The door opened and Nick joined them carrying his briefcase. He opened the briefcase and took out the package. It was placed on the coffee table which was in the center of the circle of overstuffed luxurious chairs in which they sat. Nick took out his Larenzetti pipe and filled it from Leo's tobacco jar.

"Oh, I almost forgot about this" he said with a wink as he took out the PCCA Vintage #5100 tinned tobacco "A gift to you Leo from Fuzzy with a plea for you to release him and let him return to your good graces!"

Leo picked up the tin "Ah, PCCA's tinning of McClelland #5100, second tinning if I am correct around 2006 F.A. I have a couple of tins in my collection but have never opened them. How is it? he asked.

"It's excellent" Nick replied "It is definitely better than some of the Old Earth bulk I have had of the same version. OK, let's see, here is the infamous letter" He handed it to Leo who passed it around.

“The package has passed all of our security tests and is safe. It appears to contain a pipe. The letter suggests that there is some mystery that surrounds the pipe. I guess we have to open it and look at what is inside in order to figure out what this is all about.” Leo said.

Varten took out a pocket knife and gently cut open the box. The lid was lifted off. He took out the pipe and handed it to Leo. Leo examined the pipe.

The pipe had a briar wood bowl and a vulcanite stem. It was a poker shape with a flat bottom so it would sit. The shank of the pipe was square and around the end was a silver band. The bottom of the stem and the bottom of the bowl were flat and matching so that the pipe would sit. The stem was stamped “CP”. The pipe was stamped “CHARATAN’S MAKE”, “LONDON, ENGLAND”, “SELECTED”, and had a script ‘L’ inside a circle. The Silver band had four lines of stamping; ‘K&P’, three hallmarks consisting of a clover, fox, and tower; ‘PETERSON’; and ‘DUBLIN’.

The top of the bowl had a small gouge into the surface. The grain was vertical and covered almost the entire bowl. The pipe had been well smoked.

“The pipe was made in the First Age of Man by Charatan, an old, well respected pipe maker located in the political subdivision of England, specifically in its capital the city of London. The circled script ‘L’ means that it is a ‘Lane’ era pipe made for sale in the United States between 1950 and 1980 F.A. A selected grade is a high grade indeed. It looks like the pipe has an aftermarket silver band to fix a crack in the shank” Leo said as he passed the pipe to Varten.

“Yes, but look” he pointed to the silver band “the silver band has the Peterson stampings and hallmarks. K&P stands for Kapp and Peterson, the originators of the Peterson brand of pipes, which from the Dublin markings means that it was made in Ireland, another political subdivision of Old Earth. I wonder what an English pipe is doing with an Irish repair band, a Peterson one at that?”

Leo took the pipe back and removed the stem. He stood under a glow light and looked down the shank of the pipe. “Now that is interesting, why would one put a repair band on a pipe that does not have a shank crack?”

Nick examined the pipe “I guess a third question would be ‘Why keep and smoke a pipe that has a gouge in the top?’ and ‘How did it get that way?’”

Helen and Lu Jo both examined the pipe. They verified the comments made by the men.

The aroma of pipe tobacco filled the room. Their pipes had gone out. Leo passed around the tin of PCCA #5100 that Fuzzy had sent. They all set out fresh pipes for a second round.

After their pipes were filled and lit Leo finally spoke “Fuzzy has set us a mystery indeed! Varten, contact administration and have Mr. J. Robert Fuzzman transferred back to work at the EIS Academy. Tell him that indeed he is back in our good graces and that his past indiscretion has been forgiven, but warn him to be on his good behavior.”

“Done” Varten replied.

Leo continued “It looks like we have three questions to answer to solve the mystery behind this pipe. One, why is there a Peterson silver band, which is Irish, on a Charatan pipe, which is English? Two, why is there a silver band on a pipe when it does not merit one? And finally, what is the significance of the gouge on the top of the bowl?”

They all agreed to the questions. “But how do we get answers that may lie many years in the past?” Lu Jo asked?

Leo answered “I think we should do three things. Lu Jo, You should go to PittPenn University and interview our old friend Ike McCane. Find out what he knows since this pipe is from his time period. Nick, you go to Tarani and speak with the O’Malley children and check the records of the Irish Hypernia Society. Finally, I want Varten and our EIS research teams to use the Empire Computer system and historical databases to check any Old Earth records regarding the Charatan and Peterson companies, the O’Malley family and so forth. We will reconvene when you have completed your investigations but I want you to send us reports as you complete your missions.”

The rest of the evening was spent examining the old Charatan pipe with the Peterson silver band, enjoying good drink, pipes and tobacco, and companionship. Varten left early to go home to his wife, Martha. Lu Jo and Nick left for their quarters, together. Leo and Helen left together after remarking how the youngsters just can’t keep up with the oldsters.

-5-

Lu Jo had risen early leaving Nick asleep. She headed towards the spaceport and boarded a needle ship to travel to PittPenn University. It was a fast ship containing one of the new hyperspeed drives. She looked forward to seeing Ike McCane, her old friend. Ike was born and had lived in the First Age of Man, the late 20th Century and early 21st Century. He was a noted pipe collector with one of the most famous collection of Castello shape #84 hawkbill (or donkeynut) pipes then in existence. His wife and her lover had him placed into a state of suspended animation, put into an interstellar space craft, and launched into space. He and his ship were found adrift. He was brought back to life by the infamous Dr. Sohei Witz, Leo, and his friends. Ike was the Conservator of Leo’s pipe collection and held a lecture position at PittPenn University.

She had communicated with him from the spaceport using the planetary version of the hyperwave communicator. They decided to meet at the Leaf and Bean pipe bar. An

aircar had taken her directly from the spaceport. As she walked into coffee bar, she saw Ike sitting in the corner smoking an old Castello searock hawkbill shaped pipe, which in common parlance was called a donkeynut. He welcomed her.

“I have ordered us a pot of the new Hapswell House neer-coffee. My friends tell me that it is excellent and goes well with a latakia blend. A neer-coffee is always better than that synthetic swill they provide in the supermarkets. I have a new blend from the Morton Frog Tobacco Company called ‘Sultan’s Delight’ which I hope you enjoy.”

The coffee was delivered. Lu Jo filled her black Group 2 Dunhill tanshell with the Sultan’s Delight, lit it, and explained the mystery of the Charatan pipe with the Peterson silver band.

“An English Charatan Selected Pipe from the American market with a Peterson Band!” exclaimed Ike “A mixture of English, American, and Irish. I have not heard of that before, and with no structural reason for having the pipe banded in the first place. It is a most unusual story.” Ike continued “Charatan pipes were made in England from the 1860s to 1980. A man named George Lane became involved with the company in 1950 and eventually bought it. The ‘Lane period’ was from 1950 F.A. until 1980. Lane era pipes shipped to the United States generally carried the scripted ‘L’ within a circle stamp, although the presence or absence of the stamp proves nothing. A Charatan pipe in a Selected Grade of this era is definitely a high grade pipe.”

Ike continued “Peterson pipes are an old and respected name in pipes from Ireland. Although of a lower grade than Charatan pipes, they were a good all-purpose pipe. Their ‘Sherlock Holmes’ series is probably their most famous line of pipes. Peterson was known for their silver work. The ‘K&P’ stands for Kapp and Peterson, the original founders of the Peterson company. The three hallmarks are just stampings that Peterson used, they are not hallmarks in the sense used to date the silver band and attest to its content. Dublin is where the band was made in the Republic of Ireland. But why combine the English pipe and the Irish band?”

“I don’t know if you realize that the United Kingdom was a combination of Great Britain, Scotland, and Ireland. In 1922, F.A., twenty-six of Ireland’s thirty-two counties were separated from the United Kingdom and became the Irish Free State. Eventually the south became the Republic of Ireland and the north became Northern Ireland, a part of the United Kingdom. During my time, there was much strife in Northern Ireland between the Catholics and Protestants, two religions. English troops were placed between the warring factions and were, in some cases, hated by both. Belfast is the capital of Northern Ireland.” Ike had ended his little political lecture.

“No, I was not aware. You think there must be some political connection?” Lu Jo enquired.

“I guess anything is possible. I would look into the O’Malley family history and maybe check out some of the pipe-related literature from that time period, such as The Pipe

Smokers' Ephemeris, Pipe and Tobacco Magazine, and so forth. I'm sorry I can't be more specific or of more help." Ike replied.

"You have been a great help. I have some ideas that we can check out. The tobacco and coffee were great as was the company. I will pass on your regards to Leo and hope to see you soon back at Castle Pesaro" she said and left Ike to finish his coffee.

After her needle ship had cleared the spaceport and local solar system, while smoking her Charatan pipe, she composed her report and sent it on to Castle Pesaro via the hyperwave communicator. "Politics!" she thought "I'll bet there is a political connection in this story."

-6-

The indentation on the bed where she had lain was long cold when Nick finally got up. He saw that Lu Jo had left early. He borrowed a new hyperspeed drive needle ship from the Bureau of Ships and headed out towards Tarani. He read the computer printout while smoking a pipe en-route. Ian and Sara O'Malley would meet with him at the ParisHilton hotel located at the spaceport. There was not much information on the two other than that they had liquidated their father's entire estate, pipes, mansion, and all. The proceeds left them very wealthy, especially due to the amount of money received for the Old Earth pipes and tobacco from his collection. Just prior to landing he received a copy of Lu Jo's report from her interview with Ike McCane.

Upon his arrival at the spaceport hotel, he was shown into the Emperor's suite. 'A bit cheeky' he thought as he surveyed the luxurious contents. The manservant left him in the sitting room. He was about to fill up his pipe when a female voice said "WE would rather you wouldn't smoke".

As he turned around he saw a rather thin man that looked much older than his age, and an over-the-hill female that could only be described as looking like an old crone. "I am Sara and this is my brother Ian" she said in a rather stern voice. "We do not abide smoking." Nick slowly put his pipe back into his pocket. "

She continued "We received a communications from Castle Pesaro asking us to meet with you concerning one of our father's possessions, which I might add, that is illegally in your possession. We are here."

"I am not here to discuss the possession of the pipe other than to inform you that the instructions left by your father were for it to be sent to the Emperor, my employer. We are trying to determine factors in the history of the pipe."

"We will tell you what we know" she said in a rather bored manner.

Nick described the pipe to the O'Malley children in great detail and showed them a hologram.

"We have never seen that pipe" she said "In fact we saw little of father's pipe collection. He was a fanatic about that damn collection and once mother passed, his only interest was the pipe collection and not us!" she continued rather emphatically.

"WE GOT RID OF EVERYTHING! EVERYTHING!" you understand?

"I quite understand" Nick responded "I understand that you are quite proud of your Irish ancestry. You are one of the last of the pure Irish stock. The ancient bloodlines run true in you."

"Yes, the blood runs true in us. Almost too true, look at Ian. He is twenty-four years old but looks like fifty. Modern medicine can do nothing for him. I have electronically prepared for you the genealogy of our family going back to the First Age of Man. As you will see, at that time there are four related families; the O'Malley, O'Donnal, Murphy, and Sands families. The O'Malley and Murphy families were from Dublin, Ireland, and the O'Donnal and Sands families were from Belfast, Northern Ireland. That is about all we know: she answered.

Nick concluded the interview with some small talk, thanked them, and left the depressing couple as fast as he could. He also stopped at the local office of the Irish Hypertonia Society. They agreed to check their database for information on the O'Malley, O'Donnal, Murphy and Sands families, specifically in regards to political affiliations, and any connection to pipes. They agreed to forward the information to Castle Pesaro.

After leaving Tarani, Nick filled up his pipe with some Old Earth Esoterica Stonehaven tobacco. 'I want the strongest tobacco I've got. Geeze, that was one of the worst interviews I have ever had. I'm glad I am not Ian O'Malley. He never said a word' he thought as the needle ship's cabin filled up with the aroma of heavy pipe smoke. He was pondering the interview as he sent off his report to Castle Pesaro.

-7-

It was early evening when they had reassembled in the Emperor's dining room. Leo, Varten, Nick, Helen and Lu Jo were joined by Fuzzy. Helmsford had served drinks and they were passing around the tin containing the last of the PCCA tinned McClelland #5100. Earlier, Leo has presented Fuzzy a freehand John Eels pipe to go with his new assignment. John Eels was a pipe carver from the First Age of Man. Fuzzy received a promotion and an assignment at the EIS Academy. "No more indiscretions, Fuzzy" Leo cautioned.

"No, no more. I've paid enough for the last one and I'm just getting too old, and I hope smarter" Fuzzy replied.

The room was heavy with pipe smoke. “I think we are close to solving the mystery of the Charatan pipe with the Peterson band” Leo stated.

Helmsford walked in with a large envelope that he gave to Leo. He opened it and looked at the contents. “That clinches it!”he said.

“I can trace the line of logic that got us here tonight. Lu Jo came through with the political angle. Nick with the four family names. Varten and his staff performed a lot of computer records research, and with the help of the Hypernia Society, came across a long forgotten document. The document is from a longer description of the funeral of one Bobby Sands. Although he was not a member of Sinn Fein or the Irish Republican Army, they certainly had his sympathies. Bobby Sands died on May 5, 1981 after a sixty-six day hunger strike while in a British prison. Over 100,000 people attended the funeral. There were massive riots in Northern Ireland. Let me read from this document.

They killed him. The damn English bastards done him in. Even though he chose a hunger strike. My cousin, Bobby Sands is dead and in the ground. He wasn't even IRA. The funeral was glorious! I've never seen so many of the pride of Ireland so assembled. Riots all over the place and I was with them. They fired on us. Bullets just missed me, but luckily for me I had my pipe. Damn Brit bullet put a gouge in the top of my best pipe, the one my cousin Mick sent me from Boston. Now, I'm not a fighting man, but by God a man got to do what a man got to do. But I'll get you Brit bastards. I'm sending my wounded English Charatan to my cousin Tom Murphy to take to the Dublin Peterson shop. Put a good Peterson Irish band on the good English pipe. Let the Irish band surround the English pipe, just as we will one day surround the English and defeat them and have our freedom!

Leo continued “this was authored by Paddy O'Donnal. Nick has provided us with the connection between the O'Malley family and the Murphy, Sands, and O'Donnal families. Can there be any doubt that this is not the pipe described in this document?”

“That is quite a story” Helen exclaimed “it must be true.”

“So, you established the connection between the families and the pipe. Has it been in the O'Malley family all this time?” Nick asked.

“I believe it has” Leo stated “Varten has seen the O'Malley family name throughout history tied to the history of pipes and tobacco. In fact, in the 2010 F.A., when the anti-smokers took over control of the Earth's governments, the O'Malleys were prominent in leadership positions in the smoking underground.”

“It's a shame” Lu Jo said “The last of the O'Malley family turned out to be such weak individuals.”

“It shows some of the problems with pure breeding and genetic manipulation.” Vartin answered.

Emperor Leopaldo took the Peterson banded Charatan and filled it up with the last of the tinned #5100. He lit the pipe and puffed contentedly. “Now I have a story for my collection of pipes and tobaccos. It’s a shame that every pipe can’t tell its own story!”

With that they all agreed and got down to the business of enjoying their pipes, tobacco, companionship and the remaining evening.

-END-

Author’s note: The pipe in this story is real and is accurately described. It is in the author’s collection. The tobacco is real. Bobby Sands and the situation described was real. Of course, the remaining parts of the story are fiction.