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The Conquest

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IT IS BEGINNING

The winter quiet of the woods fades as the small animals begin to move with spring in their steps.

Overhead the birds are gracefully swooping by with bits for building their nests to be ready for babes.

The calves and colts struggle to stand on new legs, as the little lambs bleat, and the young chicks peep.

The rains are gently falling as proof of the green grasses and buds that are bursting open.

The sky seems clearer, clouds prettier, and the earth warmer as spring is here!

— Sara Beth Marshall

YOU

*sensations soothing the soul
stirred by the memory of you
sweet energy vivifying life
caused by the thought of you
powerful harmony flowing love
set aflame at the hint of you
exploding intensity beautifying
triggered by the dream of you
magic attained much more so
simply in love with you.*

*releasing rhythm rolling ride
ah the joy of knowing you
rainbow fire forever warmer
memory of you you you
enhanced enchantment singing song
in the innocence of you
smiling softly radiating charm
all caused by you
mellow resurrection rising
us*

— Edward Franklin

OH YEAH

*way high upon the golden throne
he generates good life true.
the angels resound his triumphs,
singing love, love, love, do, do.
the master plan is being enacted,
he steps into the physical —
the earth quakes, sky storms:
he stand now with us.
while still
way high upon the golden throne,
he generates good life true.
the angels resound his triumphs,
singing love, love, love, do, do.*

— Corrine Hayes

THE CONQUEST

by Patrick Bond

Denny poised himself in the stand-by position, his hands placed cocksure upon the controls as the sweat began to trickle down his acne spotted forehead.

With his gaze sternly fixed upon his opponent, Denny fumbled in the front pocket of his denim battle suit for the ammunition that would initiate his afternoon of adventure. His body stood rigid as his mind raced with anticipation of the confrontation for which he had so dilligently trained.

It would be on this brisk, grey autumn afternoon that the skills which he had honed over the past several months would be put to the test.

While loading his now familiar weapon, Denny recalled the many times he had previously assumed the ready position, his endless hours of preparation, his past missions — his past conquests. Denny's mind began to wander.

There was the Jackson mission he recalled. His plane badly crippled by enemy artillery, low on fuel, and forced to use his depleted ammo reserve. Had it not been for a tactical error on that part of the Laser squadron, his wounded craft may well have not made the return trip to home base.

Equally challenging was the conflict at Miller's place. Early in the battle Denny destroyed three fighter jets. The remaining two darted about the sky eluded his every effort. The duo countered his offensives and their two-to-one advantage began to take its toll on Denny's craft. Suddenly shifting to hyperspace, Denny was able to narrowly escape a possibly fatal shelling and position himself directly behind the enemy jets. A single missile and the blue unit was history. The score was even.

Suddenly the red unit hyperspaced. Denny lost him. He frantically scanned his radar screen but there was no sign of the enemy craft. Then, with the same abruptness with which it had disappeared, the jet reappeared and pushed the mega-missile firing button on his instrument cluttered control panel. A direct hit.

The skies of space roared at they blazed in victory.

Of course there was the battle at Thompson's and the one at Bally's. Soon the countless victorious conflicts raced through Denny's mind like a film at high speed.

The past missions, however, were merely warm-ups, training flights for the mission at hand. A mission the young pilot was confident he could successfully complete.

Seeing him, his confidence, his self-assured pose, one could scarcely believe that this is the same pilot of whom so much had been proclaimed.

Denny's extensive battle experience far exceeded his age of thirteen years. His slight build was a deceptive disguise for his battle abilities. His shoulders barely filled the charcoal black shirt which blanketed his upper torso.

Initiated by a single quarter the long awaited battle was underway. Denny's enemy, "LASER PHASER," his goal 260,000 points.

Forget about the Jackson's, the Thompson's and the rest, no other arcade had a video machine as finely programmed as Chapman's Gallery of Games. Known in video circles as the modez programmer of video games.

This machine was no stranger to the likes of Denny, many have come before — all have failed. The machine showed its age in its well worn hand controls, its proud name barely legible on the chipped wooden frame, but the appearance mattered little to those who came in hopes of conquering the "LASER."

The blaring music of the smoke-filled arcade faded into obscurity as Denny's concentration narrowly focused on the mission before him. His intense eyes darted around the battle zone as the handful of spectators who had gathered around the machine stood silent.

Fourty seven minutes and 263,416 points from the time he first pushed his way through the smudged glass doors to the arcade, it was over Denny did it. He beat the best. Mission accomplished.