

About the Author: L. Ron Hubbard



With 19 *New York Times* bestsellers and more than 325 million copies of his works in circulation, L. Ron Hubbard is among the most acclaimed and widely read authors of our time. As a leading light of American Pulp Fiction through the 1930s and '40s, he is further among the most influential authors of the modern age. Indeed, from Ray Bradbury to Stephen King, there is scarcely a master of imaginative tales who has not paid tribute to L. Ron Hubbard.

About the Story



"Space Can" appears in the book *The Great Secret*

The convoy carrying the majority of fuel possessed by the Navy has been hit suddenly and hard by an enemy raiding fleet. The only US vessel in the vicinity, the *Menace*, is rushing to the aid of the convoy but already it is too late—the battle is over, the fuel ships are unmoving and without order while two Saturnian destroyers wait expectantly for the much smaller *Menace* to come into range of their guns.

Lieutenant Carter and his crew know they are going into a fight against horrible odds. Like a pebble in a sling shot, Carter knows the only way out—engage the enemy head on and hope for the best...

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Reading Discussion Guide

SPACE CAN

by **L. RON HUBBARD**

"Space Can" appears in the book
The Great Secret



1. The person in charge has the group read the glossary, a word at a time, encouraging anyone who wished to discuss any of the words to raise their hand. Once the glossary has been completed and all have been given the opportunity to discuss any definition they wish, the group is advised to note down any word he or she does not understand so they can be looked up in a dictionary at the end of the reading.
2. What image did the following create for you? "Gracefully vicious, a bundle of frail ferocity, wasp of space designed for and consecrated to the kill, the *Menace* flamed pugnaciously onward."
3. How did the description of the little space can charging ahead aid in setting the stage for the story that followed?
4. In relation to the US Navy, what does "... a tradition which took no dares, struck no colors and counted no odds," mean to you and does that sentiment ring true for you regarding today's Navy?
5. Do you think the line, "She was a terrier who had no eyes for the size of her rats," was a good analogy? Can you think of another with a similar meaning?
6. Did you notice that the "space can" was referred to as "she?" Have you ever wondered why ships, cars and sometimes airplanes are called "she" and not "he?" What would your theory be?
7. How many of the objects and actions contained in this story, which seem normal today, were physically non-existent or thought not possible in the 1930s, when this story was written?
8. There is a comment that the heat was so intense that men felt it though their spacesuits: "He had been standing there, strangling and sweating at the helm and he would have stood there until he had melted if his relief had not come." How would you describe such a person and how common do you think that devotion to duty is in reality?
9. What do you feel are the most important traits a commander must have if he is to be victorious in a violent battle such as the one described so vividly in this story?
10. The story ends with: "It amused him to think that his ship could laugh, for the fact was most ridiculous. Or was it?—he asked himself suddenly. Or was it?" What did you get from this ending and can you think of similar instances in relation to physical objects?
11. What was the main thing in the story that stayed with you after reading it?
12. Did you notice that there was no description of the enemy, what they looked like, how they were dressed or their thought processes during this cosmic battle? Did you find this omission helped or hindered the impact of the story?
13. What do you feel is the likelihood of other beings as advanced as or more advanced than we are in the universe, and how do you feel they will behave if we encounter them?
14. What left the biggest impression in your mind after reading "Space Can?"

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