

## Chapter Fifteen

### A Hollow Victory

"Recipe for disaster; take the idea of the Trojan horse, add a plague, and stir with a hurricane."

- thoughts of the Professor.

The sleek little ship floated down gently, balanced on a column of incandescent superheated steam. Slowly it descended to ground below a vast pipe of condensing vapour stretching out of sight into the sky.

The thunderclap of entry had long since awakened the good citizens of Gazbriz, many of whom lined the modest battlements overlooking the muddy basin that had once been Lake Fax. More were climbing the steep streets winding up from the body of the town. Not a single soul was venturing out from the gates this time.

Jacob arrived on the parapet, gasping for breath in the wake of Caryl. Fred had already perched on the broad shoulders, and was enjoying the spectacle.

"L'ttle ship, n't many in there."

"You're right Fred. It is small! Why, I bet you could take a hundred of those, and still not be as big as the pirate ship." Commented Caryl.

Jacob, still out of breath, could only nod his agreement.

"Look, it's going to land near that ridge in the lake bed. Look at all the steam!"

"Look what's happened to all the mud that was on the ridge!" Gaspd Jacob. "It's another ship!"

"Has that been there all the time?"

"It must have been! Where do you think we got the power for the big beam we used last night."

"No, shrimp, that came from our old colony ship, up the top end of the