

After changing shape several times, the ball eventually turned into a huge face. It floated alongside the air-car. This time instead of sending him mental message, the face spoke out aloud and the whole air-car vibrated with its intensity. "If you are foolish enough to renege on your contract, you will be severely punished. For your sake, I hope you wouldn't do such a thing."

When Tarmy made no attempt to respond, the face turned and pressed itself against the millipede-free window. A moment later, Tarmy felt the fat slug entering his mind, the sign that the face was attempting to use its powers to obtain his response by other means. But as the slug dug deeper, Samantha's cover stories began springing out of the corners of his mind. Instead of obtaining Tarmy's agreement, all that the face saw was a burning army transporter surrounded by bodies. Undeterred, the face continued its assault. Samantha had anticipated that Tarmy might come up against an adept, so the mental images of death and destruction flowed unchecked.

After failing to break Tarmy's defenses, the face removed the slug and tried reason. "You can't win, Mr. Tarleton, so why don't you do yourself a favour and cooperate? It will be better for you in the long run. Now, where is the miniature pulse drive engine?"

Tarmy realized why the millipedes hadn't been allowed to attack. It was obvious that the Great Ones were hoping to retrieve the engine. When Tarmy didn't respond, the face said, "I am prepared to overlook your desertion if you agree to tell us where the engine is and also honour your contract by showing us how to convert the engine into a bomb."