

# Travis Hisstoe



After rescuing me from my fall into the chasm, The Sharlatan escaped with our prize. I guess I should have questioned why he was helping to find the X.

“Sorry friend! You’ve been shenag-igot by the Sharlatan!” Though he’d grabbed the X of Aeronautto, I was too focused on it for him to simply stow it in his “Wherewithdrawl”. But he’d found something on his “Lack-lister” that would carry him and the X away. “This device does not belong in a mu—“... Purple powder sparked and flamed, and I was alone, empty-handed after my adventure with The Sharlatan.

I was furious we'd lost the item that would've certainly drawn life back into our museum; that would've ensured my son a career right here in our town.

But then the treasures started trickling in. Unmistakeably, the lost treasures I'd told Travis about. Believed to be far out of reach in distant parts of our world.

They had been found by explorers. New explorers equipped with new flying machines. Made possible by the powers of the X of Aeronautto. One day, when all the treasures were restored in our museum, the Sharlatan returned. I caught up with him, relax-

ing on the shores of our beach.

“You were right to steal it,” I said. “I’d have never allowed you to take it. I’d have never gambled that the other treasures would be found, or that the explorers would be good enough to return them.”

“Plus, if the X had been lost, I didn’t want you to feel responsible for it.” He lazed back in his folding chair and sipped his drink. His bare toes tapped at the sand.

“Is that a snake head?” I asked.

Sharlatan peered over his sunglasses at one of his big toes. It gleamed gold-

en in the sun. “The Hisstoe,” he said. “It’s where I get my name—Travis Hisstoe.” He got up and stretched. “It’s like a thread, weaving and wending, trying to darn the universe back how it was. Repair it. That’s why I was after the X. It won’t do much in your museum, but it’s going to help people to make all sorts of ships. Interplanetary ones, eventually. Your museum is going to connect your world to tons of others.”

We sat a while and made plans for his short stay. When it was time for him to go, I noticed that he made no sound in the sand as he walked. A side effect, I guessed, of his golden toe.