

OCTOBER, 1957

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Flying Saucers From

OTHER WORLDS

FEATURE NOVELETTE

BLACKSHEEP'S ANGEL

By Alexander Blade

COLFIM

by
William
Gray



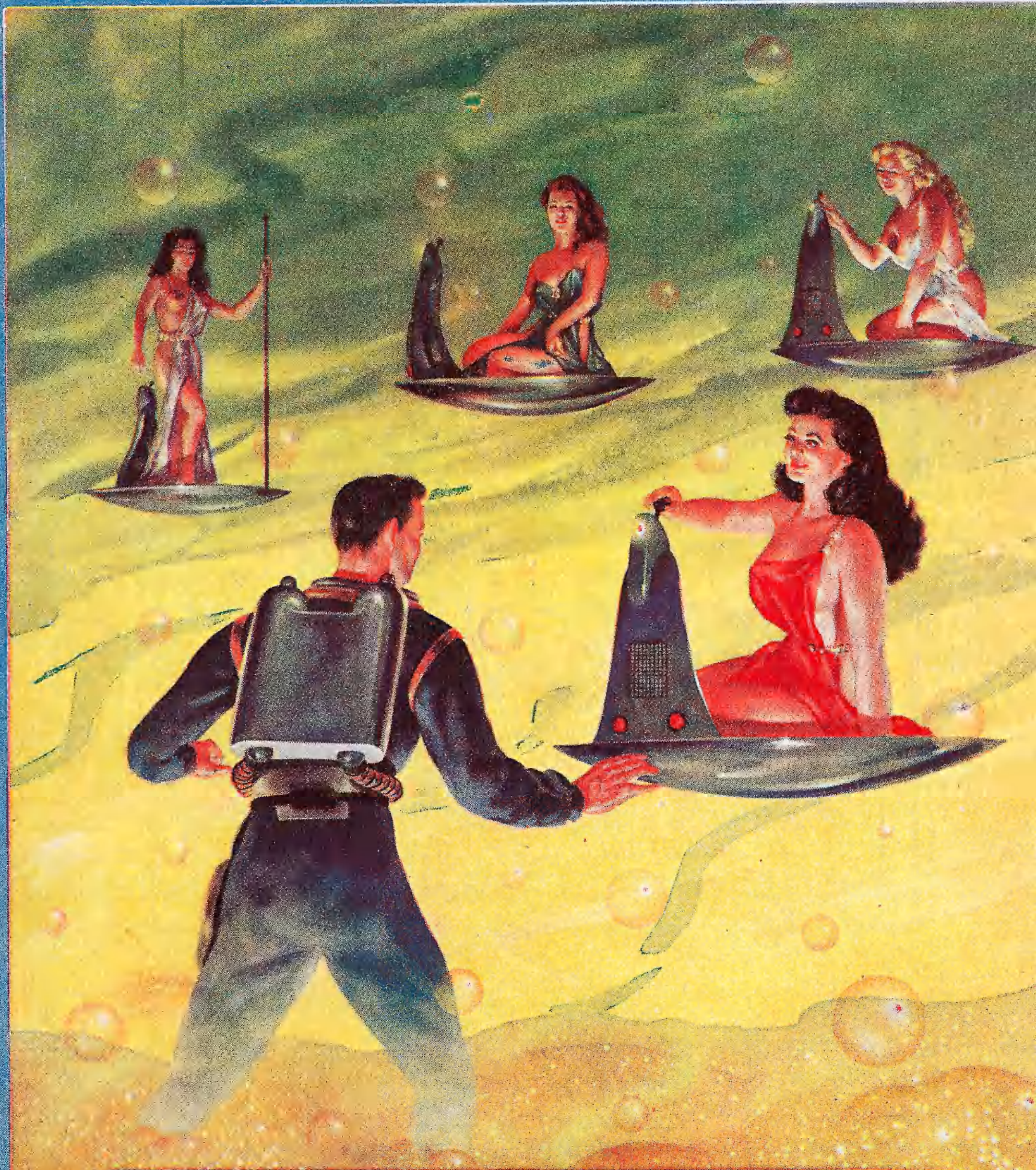
THE HEART'S LONG WAIT

by
Charles
L.
Fontenay



IN THE YEAR 2001

by
Allen
Glasser



PILLARS OF DELIGHT

By Stan Raycraft

OCTOBER, 1957

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FLYING SAUCERS

From

OTHER WORLDS

SEPTEMBER

1957

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... Editorial ...

This month, for a change, we'll relinquish the editorial column to a guest. So, except for an introductory remark we must make, we'll turn over the column to our guest.

This paragraph is an important notice **only** to our subscribers. To clear up a misunderstanding, we did **not** send you the June issue of **FLYING SAUCERS From Other Worlds** as a part of your subscription, but entirely free, to get your reaction. We did get that reaction. From now on, subscribers to **science fiction** stories will not get **flying saucer** stories. You will receive the issues of **Flying Saucers From OTHER WORLDS** which contain science fiction only. If you are a subscriber who wishes to receive the flying saucer issues, you will have to notify us to split up your subscription, thus placing you in a separate category. So, if you are **expecting** to get the August-October-December, etc. editions of **FLYING SAUCERS From Other Worlds**, you won't! **Unless** you drop us a line asking us to give you both. Clear enough?

And now, for our guest, Mr. Harry Warner, Jr., who is a science fiction fan of several years standing, well-liked and respected among that cross-section of science fiction readers known as "fandom". We believe you will find this one of the most interesting and informative editorials we have ever presented. We are deeply indebted to Mr. Warner for his kindness, and above all, for his accuracy of reporting, which is a lost art these days. We invite future

editorials from others of our readers and will try to publish those of vital interest to science fiction readers.

★ ★ ★

Once we owned a cat who liked to catch birds. The cat knew that we did not approve of this bird-killing habit, and obviously understood why it was scolded when caught in the act. Perversely, every so often the cat would creep up to the house with a crumpled, dead bird in its mouth and gingerly deposit the bird where the family would notice it. Then the cat would crouch cringingly, knowing that a scolding or whipping would result, yet always hopeful that the family's moral foundations might magically change and bestow praise on the cat for the destruction of another bird.

Ray Palmer somehow reminds me of that cat. Science fiction in pulp magazines was never a particularly beautiful winged creature. But he first dragged it down in the late 1930's, when he assumed command of **Amazing Stories**. He accepted the scoldings of fandom and continued to engage in a series of commercialized massacres of the literary flights of science fiction, through the long series of new titles, new policies, new sensations, and new inanities that have characterized his magazines for nearly two decades. And each time he scored a direct hit on some healthy section of science fiction's life, he inevitably hauled the bloody corpse up to fandom, and proudly laid it there to await a re-

action, knowing in advance what fandom would say, acting hurt and injured himself when his latest kill was not acclaimed.

Now, this is very puzzling. Ray Palmer was not alone in seeking to produce magazines that would appeal to the lowest intelligence quotient among pulp magazine readers.

Thrilling Wonder Stories attempted to do the same thing, simultaneously with his assumption of command at **Amazing Stories**. A host of imitators appeared only a few months later.

Planet Stories has become the symbol of this entire school of editorial thinking. But Ray Palmer was alone in his frantic, ceaseless efforts to impress upon his readers that he was *Doing Good*. He was developing new writers to replace the tired, worn-out authors in the field. He was creating a gigantic new market for great science fiction stories, by providing stories on which new readers in the field could grow up. He obviously had the fans' interest at heart, because he was an old-time fan himself. He harped upon these themes so loudly, so incessantly that I got the firm impression that there was some submerged morsel of the Ray Palmer personality which didn't approve of Ray Palmer as a whole, and the majority of Ray Palmer's personality was aiming those proclamations at that dissatisfied minority area of Ray Palmer, to permit better sleep at nights.

Of course, Ray Palmer wasn't alone in one respect. One chapter of his scriptures was based on the theory that fans were not representative of science fiction readers as a whole, and to follow their likings would be commercial suicide. That was exactly the theory that John W. Campbell, Jr., expressed in print so frequently, in those days.

The difference between the two men was that Campbell failed to let his theorizing guide his editorial policy. Events proved the truth: that the quality prozines like **Astounding** and **Galaxy**, which the active fans like the best, are the ones that survive the commercial storms in the pulp market.

By 1957, it's easy to see that Palmer's frantic claims for the worthiness of his actions were totally unfounded. He didn't create a vast new reservoir of science fiction writers. I can think of no important science fiction author who is active today who cut his creative teeth in the Palmer magazines. He didn't train millions of people to like the quality types of science fiction through apprenticeship with his action stories. This was always the most absurd phase of the Palmer doctrines. To say that reading Shaver for a few years is a necessary preliminary to reading Stapledon is equivalent to claiming that one must learn to enjoy black jellybeans as a youth in order to appreciate the delights of caviar as an adult. The better-grade science fiction magazines aren't selling today in anything approaching the quantities that they would enjoy, if the youngsters of the 1940's had dutifully graduated to **Astounding** and **Galaxy** after learning to love science fiction in **Amazing**.

The one unsolved mystery, after twenty years, is: What makes Palmer continue to nuzzle up to fans and expect affection for the commercialism and worsening of the field of science fiction? The most astonishing manifestation of its continued courtship of fandom came when he mailed out free copies of his latest publication, accompanied by a long, mimeographed letter,

(Concluded on page 90)

BLACKSHEEP'S ANGEL

By

Alexander Blade

There it was, in space— and the army had only one thought in mind: invaders from space. But how do you fight an angel?

BOTH the AP and UP local radio stations had it on the noon newscast: Some upstate bubble-head had dreamed up another flying saucer scare with an angel pilot.

So another crackpot's flipped, I thought. Only by 4 p.m. when the observer was tracking the late balloon with the theodolite I dawdled with him in 110 degrees Phoenix sunshine to gawk for saucers. You see what I mean?

I was subbing for the bossman, home with the flu. So inside, I double checked some squiggly isobars on the frontal analysis and finally pecked out: L.C.I.T; CLEAR; CALM; FR. & WRMR; MAX 114; MIN 79, spiked it by the teletype signed Rip Sadler, acting forecaster. This translated to "Wash your cars early. It'll rain like hell by noon."

And I was dutifully triplechecking everything in my desk crystal ball when the balloon man popped his head in.

"Hey, Rip, Doris stole your check," he grinned. "Save me some of those Utah trout." He waved and went home.

I sat there gloating.

Doris, the clerk - stenographer,

tiptoed in and guiltily delivered my vacation check.

"Don't kill me, Angel," she said. "But all afternoon I forgot."

"So beautiful," I said. "So dumb."

"Not the check. You're to call Operator 12 in Santa Fe at or before 5:55 p.m."

She stood there, almond - eyed and blonde and shaped and draped such as to shatter office morale. All the other guys were married.

"Why do you make the weather so sticky, Angel?" she said. "And tomorrow's Saturday and I'll be here slaving, and my little heart is busted and you'll be with the fish. Kiss me goodbye?"

"When I leave at 5."

"Why don't you just marry me?" She came and sat on my desk top with those silken legs dangling.

"Wouldn't be fair to the other girls."

She sighed and said, "Damn you, Rip Sadler. Who do you know in Santa Fe. A female?"

"Nobody." It was true.

"You're a mile from pretty," she said. "You never should have let that Brahma bull step on your nose. And I've always hated crew - cut



From the Movie
"Conquest of Space"

hair. And brown eyes always see too much." She shook her head. "I must be crazy."

"Beautiful crazy." I said. "Who wants me to call OP 12?"

"I wrote it down." Coily she drew a paper from her bosom and read: "J. H. Q. Smith. Mister. Probably a procurer for some wicked, wealthy widow."

"If he calls, tell him I'm on vacation."

"But he sounds important. And I made a mistake and told him you got off at 6 instead of 5, and if it's only money you owe him I'll loan you some, Angel."

I shook my head and stood up and reached for my hat. She beat me to it.

"Not ever with your hat on," she said. "And now."

The magnets in my shoes grabbed hard on the airlock deck. "Okay," I said, "Let's get it over with— open the lock."

"One condition: Never, ever again call me Angel."

She nodded vigorously. "Promise."

So I kissed her. And the phone rang about sixteen times before I picked it up. The brusque yet smooth business voice of somebody named J. H. Q. Smith, Mister.

"This is carefully coincident with your vacation, Sadler," he told me. "Urgent. Baa - Baa - Blacksheep wants you."

His voice trailed off and quit. But he had me hooked.

"Baa - Baa - Blacksheep," I said, "is at the North Pole, or in Outer Mongolia or dead, or all three."

His voice cut in, clipped and dry. "The urgency is sufficient that I am prepared to kidnap you and take you to him immediately."

I didn't have to think it over. I

said okay.

He said, "You're at Phoenix Sky Harbor. A two - seater jet fighter with air force and cartoon cavemen signatures will land there at 6 p.m. It will taxi slowly in front of the tower, then turn and proceed to the transient military flight line and wait with engine burning. Understand?"

"Yes," I said.

I visualized all the trout in Utah waving their tails goodbye.

"Board it inconspicuously," said J. H. Q. Smith. Mister. "You will need neither money nor baggage. The pilot is instructed only to land you here. I am the only J. H. Q. Smith in the book. Phone me immediately. All clear?"

"Perfectly."

"See you shortly." He hung up.

I let Doris listen to the dead line and cradle the vicious instrument. And I stood peering out at the green - glassed control tower and listening to the Sadler brain cells going click - click - click, cancelling all plans.

Doris said, "I know. It was a furious, jealous husband and you're challenged to a duel or the Black Hand Gang will give you the Red Spot."

"Even worse. It means I have to take you to dinner."

"Wonderful!" She clapped her hands. "Lobster thermador at the country club for me."

I shook my head. "Airport blue plate here at the Sky Chef and like it."

She looked rueful. "I drooled at the menu during lunch. They've got only gulf butterfly shrimp. But it's tender and beautiful and pure like me."

She already had me by the arm. So what could I say but, "Come on,

then, Cannibal."

I picked up the clear glass sphere on my desk and dumped it—whump — into the waste basket.

She said, "Why throw it away, Angel?"

"It's sabotaged me."

We walked over to the Sky Chef in exactly the kind of blazing sunlight I'd forecast without the crystal ball.

DURING the shrimp Doris had probed and peppered me a bit. When the iced tea came around she began the barrage.

"Oh, it's nothing," she said, warming up. "Nothing at all. Not even worth mentioning to little Doris. And if I told him you got off at 6 p.m., how did he learn you were leaving at 5, from way over there, and call back right at 5 o'clock? He's a counterspy or something.

"You made no mistake on the time," I said. "That was a dirty trick to keep me here an hour longer."

"That, Rip Sadler, is absolutely ridiculous." She tossed her curls and sniffed. "So suddenly, mysteriously, Doris isn't supposed to ride the bus. She's to take your car and keep it and not fret while you go tramping to Mars in J. H. Q. Mister Smith's flying saucer and maybe seduce its angel pilot and goodness knows when you'll ever come back —"

I was thinking, admiring today's noon newscaster. Somehow the fellow had penetrated even this one's seething brain with the saucer - angel thing. I couldn't get a word in edgewise.

"I'll find out," she said. "I've been checking up. I even know why they call you Rip. A bull did it to the seat of your pants at age twelve. That was 1939. In 1945, age eighteen, you started grabbing college A -

grades to avoid the Draft. And you've dodged the army ever since in the Weather Bureau. Saturdays sometimes you make like a buzzard in somebody's beat - up plane and Sundays you ride rodeo horses that keep breaking your legs and things. And you hate women. And it must be awful lonesome at age twenty - nine with no family and all. Not even a wife."

"Women talk too much," I said.

"Just the same."

"I have a family," I told her. "A well - stabled horse named Dusty and a brother who used to be a colonel somewhere. Every other year he writes he 'Hi' on a Christmas card. He's sixteen years older and I used to call him Baa - Baa Blacksheep."

"Just the same, you're in an awful rut and bachelors sew wild oats and get white hair and die young, and —"

She hadn't heard a word I'd said. I tossed her my car keys and paid the tab at 5:55 and bought a late paper. She walked me halfway to the waiting jet and kissed me good-bye again.

She was still standing there when we took off.

And the last word I'd heard her say was "Angel. . . ."

I WAS no aerial novice, understand; no mere sky - watcher. I had checked broken fences and spotted stray cattle with flying rancher friends as much as forty hours. I had once dived a Piper Cub at 100 miles an hour. I'd even worn a parachute before.

But this stovepipe jockey zoomed to 45,000 feet and levelled off at over 1,000 miles per in a beeline for Santa Fe with the throttle only half cracked. This cockpit was pressurized or I'd have been strangling, froz-

en now.

Cold War competition, I thought. How far had it zipped ahead of public report? Space satellites promised next year. I'd never thought much about it. I stared up into blue - grey black - bottomed space.

Over there, north, was the red gash of Grand Canyon, and beyond, Utah.

To the left and ten miles almost straight down was Zane Grey country. The Ponderosa pine - green plateau of the Mogollon Rim. Mormon Wilderness.

Down there yesterday a hamlet bubblehead had seen his saucer - angel vision. I peered intently, sweeping the vista with a trained observer's eye.

A million others, all over, would be, too. And some see only what they want. The little kids sit in Sunday School and stare at angel pictures and hear their masters shouting miracles. Then they grow up. But I saw nothing.

I unfolded the newspaper I'd bought. The canny editors had buried it in a three - inch 'chuckle box' on page four under a brassiere ad.

Bubblehead, the UP said, was a hicktown, population 641, mayor. Mayors get quoted. Even if they're nuts.

We were circling Santa Fe.

I DROPPED in my dime and J.H. Q. Mister Smith answered.

"Good trip?" he said.

"Fine. When do I see Blacksheep?"

"He's not in town. It's necessarily a bit complicated."

"I left my cloak and dagger at home," I said.

"We think the end justifies the effort, Sadler." He punctuated my name with a dry, horsey snort. "Where you're going will be cooler

than Phoenix, or here. Catch a taxi to the B. & B. Garage on Juan Street. There will be a black 1955 Dodge sedan waiting for you. It's an all - night place. The man's name is Ed."

"Check," I said.

"Next door, fronting the highway, is the Cloverleaf Motel. You're registered in Unit Six. You'll find everything you need. Warm civilian clothing, your size. Toilet articles. You'll leave everything there but what you wear. Do you know your way out of town to Taos?"

"Not as well as Kit Carson. But it's seventy miles on U.S. Route 64."

"Right. It follows the Rio Grande. Between Rinconada on the south and Pilar on the north is Woody Glen Bridge." He spelled it out for me. "You'll see it in red on a Chevron map in the glove compartment. When you reach the bridge, continue briefly north and park by the first big tree. On the left. It's a cottonwood with a historical marker underneath. Leave your parking lights on to illuminate the rear license plate and wait. No speeding tickets, but be there by 9 p.m."

"Mr. J. H. Q. Smith," I said, "I didn't realize there was a war on."

"Lots of people don't."

"I'll be there," I told him.

II

IT WAS DARK now. The stars so close to the windshield they made you self conscious. A full moon glow over the Rockies. North of Rinconada and south of Pilar. Sage blossoms in the sharp, thin air. And desolate.

Then my headlights picked up Woody Glen Bridge and I found my tree and waited. I was twenty minutes early.

I stepped out and tossed a stone. It splashed muddy white in the Rio

Grande. A steady twinkling drone of crickets, and the water sound.

Four hundred years ago **Conquistadores** rode this route, sweating for the Spanish crown in their clanking armor as they massacred the local Redskins. And the Indians had their own innings. Grab off a helmet and take a scalp. But the upshot showed all over the map. All the names — Spanish.

Raping up a new breed, Christianizing by habit. Come to plunder the fabled Seven Cities of Cibola — solid gold cities — they'd found mud **pueblos**. **Ponce de Leon** Hot Springs nearby. Kit Carson's bones a day's ride upriver. Twelve and thirteen - thousand - foot peaks poking the map. Water, woods, minerals, cattle, lore. This was a country.

Something flared above. Then a hooting, hurtling, screaming blue - white thing came over. I couldn't guess how big or high or fast. It made a dribbling wake of red - hot sparks.

And from the east, ten times as fast, a little tracer bullet veered at closing angle to collision course, and struck, and made a sun. All silently. I stood there blind.

Presently in the black optic fog was the moon, dim, brightening. I'd always seen it as a paper moon, a flat disk, as a prop for Lover's Lane.

Now it was round, a globe, a pock-marked planet. Out there. You could gaze at it, but you mustn't reach. It just looked that way, from then on. Had I dreamed some monstrous fantasy in the night sky? The burning in my eyes was real.

"Got a match, Mister?"

I saw him ten feet away, standing on the edge of the paving. A big man in a dark topcoat. His right hand pocketed and his hat brim low, face shadowed.

He had an unlit cigarette in his mouth.

I said, "I always use a lighter." "Would you, then?"

He came over.

I flicked the Ronson and let the flare illuminate my face. And I took my hat off.

He took the unlit cigarette from his mouth, dropped it, stepped on it. And then handed me a photograph. A Commerce Dept. mug shot of myself.

"There's another man behind you." He smiled.

A new voice said, softly. "He's right."

I handed it back. "Fine face. Bad photo," I said.

Two hands reached from behind and explored me and the voice at my ear said, "He's clean."

The non-smoker said, "Hold out your right hand."

He took out a tiny pad, inked my right thumb and expertly rolled it on a card. He matched my print with another card and examined them with a lens and flashlight.

Then he held my right thumb and scraped his knife hard on the ink-stain. "The car and the time and the place and the face are right," he said. "But people do have doubles. And some paste on those new transparent plastic fingerprint moulds made from another person's impressions. We don't like to be confused."

"You're in," said the man behind me. He got into my car and drove toward Santa Fe. I never did see his face.

"I never smoke when I'm kidnapping people," said the non-smoker. "But I've already accomplished that." He lit a cigar. "From now on I'm your shadow. My car's over there." He pointed. "We drive

apiece, then take the flying saucer."

"My life's ambition," I said.

We got into a '39 Ford, mud splattered. But the engine sang.

"In case you tend to confuse me with an angel," he said, "my name's Major Garrity."

"I thought that was local Arizona news," I said as we shook hands.

The Ford bounded up a rutted sideroad two miles, then into an abandoned farmyard and straight into the barn.

"We could have flown you directly in," he said, locking the barn.

"We wanted you quick. But I wanted to look you over first. See how you'd react to Smith's Blacksheep rigamarole. I can't fly in planes. So, my victim, this was the best I could do, spur - of - the - moment."

The 'flying saucer' lifted from behind the barn going whif - whuf - whif. A helicopter. It went up circling, the compass - ball spinning — deliberately. Then Garrity blanked it out with a fat swatch of tape and handed me an eye - dropper bottle.

"I thought you got a flash - burn back on the road."

I used the drops. "It's not bad."

"What you saw were a couple of New Mexico fireflies on the make. Very interesting sex life. They're rare. We hope they haven't even been discovered yet."

"By me they have."

"You're already kidnapped."

"Others saw it."

"Crackpots. Angel - talkers. Officially it didn't happen."

"You almost sound wistful," I said.

"Then old Stoneface Garrity must be slipping." He was peering down studying the moonlit crags familiarly. Now he handed me a pocket pass and a pin - badge. "Keep it," he

said, "always SHOWING or you might get shot."

I pinned it over my heart.

He said, "You know who you are, George 'Rip' Sadler?"

"Once in three years a Christmas card postmarked Washington says 'Hi.' That makes me Col. Brady's kid brother."

"Sadler? Brady? Brother?"

"Same mother. Different fathers. Both legitimate."

"Three years now we've been calling Brady General."

"Every family should have one," I said.

He handed me a folded cloth. "Part of the act. Wear it thick over your eyes."

I put it on. I felt the copter touch down. I felt the crisp air suddenly warm. Around me were **inside sounds**, echoes.

"Now comes the guided tour," he said. He flicked off my blindfold.

We were in a natural cavern populated mostly with GI guards who kept fine - tooth - combing me over and over. In pairs. Oddly, Garrity got the same.

"Nobody trusts anybody," he explained.

He was tooling me through long, straight concrete tunnels in the mountain, in a battery - electric jeep, GI, no exhaust fumes.

About four miles. Then a concrete, steel - barred, viewhole on the right side. We stopped. A window **into** the mountain?

I clutched the guard rail tight and stared down into no mere cavern, no expectable subterranean sinus, not this.

"The Boy Scouts never reported this one," I said drily.

This was an underground world. Volcanic? In the Rockies?

We stood at the apex of an in-

verted cone of lost space. A military city down there. Towering functional structures glowing with life. Electric, silent GI traffic bustling on patterned streets. Great batteries of cold light lamps in lieu of daylight.

"Get used to it," Garrity said.

"I'm working on it. But I don't believe it."

"Neither," he said, "do I. But it's ten years old. It exists. It's in business."

"I'm duly impressed," I said. "Is it compulsory for me to be happy, too?"

"You," he said, "have been sore as a boil ever since I picked you up. Spoiling for a fight, and nobody to fight."

"That wouldn't be civilized, would it?" I said.

"Come off it, Sadler." He stood there looking at me as if it were time to drop my pout and be a good boy.

"Why?" I said. "You know all about me. Everything. Yet this arch - conspirator routine. I'm willing to see Blacksheep if he needs me. He has before. But for God's sake, Garrity!"

He nodded. Ten seconds he rubbed his eyes. He sighed.

"Look," I said. "Whatever I am in this cockeyed world, I am by ninety-nine per cent pure accident. But I happen to like my little job with the Weather Bureau. For me it's easy; like a hobby. I live my little life and I get my kicks and I don't ask questions, much, and I shove nobody around."

He nodded. It was a signal to go ahead. Blow my top all the way. For that I almost liked him. But the feeling didn't linger.

"I've got a half - brother and we shared a Texas background so we got tagged with the labels 'Buck'

and 'Rip.' There our similarity ends. He loves the military as much as I hate it. It's Father and Mother to him. By some accident I classified as a bright boy in school. I liked meteorology. I went into it. They never drafted me and I never volunteered. Today the girl I'll probably end up marrying kidded me I'd been dodging the draft. Her opinion doesn't matter, not even to her. But you glorified fly - boys and your slant on the civilian inside your reservations. Your guards paw me like a spy. You act as if I'm being honored. And I'm supposed to be enroute to Utah. This is my vacation. I figure I've earned it. You've frittered away hours on something that could have been accomplished in ten minutes. You've told me absolutely nothing with the implication I'm too stupid to understand; too weak to be trusted."

"You're right," he said.

"Don't be so sweet, Garrity. I want three things: I want to see Blacksheep quick. Then I want to get out. And I want to take you apart, as a symbol, piece - by - piece, and I want to scatter you around over a good, wide space. Right here, or anywhere. Do me a favor. Oblige me. Please?"

"Nothing personal?" he asked.

"Purely symbolic."

"I'm impressed," he said. "I like a sincere man. But, you see, if you so much as slapped me - lightly — I would instantly die."

"You're healthy enough to kidnap me, gangster - fashion. And 'kidnap' is the right word, Garrity."

He groaned. "Look at me. I'm a man in a straight - jacket. My hands are tied so tight I can't even wiggle a little finger without going through channels."

"Then why don't you resign your

commission and go make an honest living?"

"Because," he sighed, "I either classify as a bewildered patriot, or a frustrated gangster. I wonder about it, myself."

"Why not make an attempt to communicate? I'm pulling a total balk unless you do. You need me plenty. I don't know why. But that puts cards up my sleeve."

He nodded. "You're holding more aces than anybody I ever knew. Problem is, how to make you play my game."

"Yours? Not Blacksheep's?"

"Mine. I'm the Blacksheep's fairy godmother. He's deep in the old soup and I'm supposed to pull out his chestnuts. Only he doesn't know it. The stakes are the whole world. That's a conservative estimate."

"Cards on the table," I said. "Face-up?"

He nodded again. "You might say I'm in a small picklement, Sadler. If I get to thinking about it, I start getting scared, myself. So I don't. I got you, instead."

He puffed out his cheeks and blew out a trumpeter's breath and began rubbing his eyes. He looked like a man who hadn't got much sleep lately. Like he wanted to beg me to come off the high - horse, and couldn't quite do it.

"Okay, Garrity," I said. "I'll do it your way."

He liked that, but not very much.

"I'll still have to let you figure it out for yourself."

"All right." I shoved out my hand and we shook like friends.

He said, "I'll start the guided - tour - lecture." He pointed down into the great cone. "We call it the Chuck Hole. It's pretty weird."

I looked. I listened. I suppose I'd already 'sensed' its purpose. Because

I didn't want to hear him say it.

"This is a pretty tight time in human history," said Garrity. "Either us children make it this next decade or so, or we don't. Russia is soaring past us in technology, glorifying science, underwriting an army of student scientists, while everything in our education system works the other way. Some of us are getting a little worried. Then there's the well - known Marxist blueprint for world conquest with the U.S. first on the list and everybody playing ostrich. So a succession of miracles has evolved us a kind of a Western Paranoid Paradise Lost. Called Chuck-Hole, for short. Your brother, Buck, runs the joint.

"It's radical. All volunteers, but picked people. A working world Utopia in uniform skimmed off the milk of human cussedness. Nobody gets out. We're all lifers but a half - dozen outside courier - kidnappers like me. It's utterly illegal. We like to call ourselves Socratic chauvinists or some such rot. It's Experiment Perilous. It's a last holdout foxhole, just in case. The mountain is honeycombed with loaded tubes. With H - bomb rocket missiles actually capable of wiping out nearly every city in the world, including the domestic. Trigger buttons in one room down there. We've got one logistic advantage — the Korsky Drive. So we're safe till Russia has it. I think she already has it.

"Russia has been deliberately informed of its existence. The U.S. has not, because the home - folks could do us in best. It's a secret, but a quarter of a million people know it exists. Even the President doesn't know just where. Nor our diplomats, which makes them sound more innocent. It's self - supporting. Decades of food stores in a natural ice cavern. Real schools that really

teach real students. Billions invested. The works."

"I'm impressed," I said. "But if the President doesn't know, and I do —"

He shrugged. "I told you I was in a pickle. You qualify as a big shot now. A real High Cheese. You getting that 'important' feeling yet?"

I shook my head. "More like I should have stood in bed."

"Good," he said. "The place is air - tight. Meaning if the A - bomb - with - the - Cobalt - casing gets detonated, we still exist. Everyone else on earth. All the fruits of you - name - it eons of evolution get wiped clean. But Chuck Hole still breathes. The supply - route is tricky and devious, a railroad tunnel with a lovely system of material misdirection that nobody knows all about. But it's all vulnerable as hell. May be obsolete now."

"Question," I said. "The Korsky Drive you mentioned?"

He nodded. "A little sawed - off, skinny guy in Austria named Korsky stumbled on it. He still doesn't understand it. I think it makes things like the Viking - type rockets date with roller skates. I'm no scientist. But it dodges gravity and sidesteps time and velocity and space and what - else we know to be 'real.' Maybe it moves spider - wise along the planetary lines of magnetic force. So maybe it's limited to movement within the solar system. Maybe today we could go to the stars with it. Nobody knows yet. Korsky built a model in his lab in Austria. I kidnapped him and the plans. The Reds got the laboratory, everything. See?"

"I wish I didn't."

"Which makes two of us," said Garrity. "I'm taking sleeping pills lately. They say they're bad for your health."

I said, "Some popular magazine has an electric - space - drive plan. It could go from a space - station to Mars, and back. But couldn't land on Mars, or the Moon. Needs the jump - off point of the artificial satellite first."

Garrity said, "If Korsky hadn't found this answer, somebody else would have. Some answer. We're right on the doorstep. It's silly as hell. But the question is not whether we grab space and expand, but if we destroy ourselves first. Kind of a race with insanity. Which, of course, will be our prime cargo into space, anyway — insanity. I hauled you in to bolster Buck, who's balking."

"Buck?"

"Yep. And for a reason that makes sense to him. Because he's close - to - crazy."

"Blacksheep?"

"He's found his soft - spot, is all. Want to be helpful?"

"Let's go," I said.

"No. First, do you realize what it means? The push - buttons, This World, and a psycho pusher?"

"There's no insanity in his heredity," I said.

"Not in his heredity," he agreed quickly. "Now is the time for guided - tour lecture No. 2. It's free. Absorb part of it and shake off the rest before you meet Buck?"

I nodded.

"Okay. Most of us, here, are fairly bright people. We're all considered dead; missing persons; faked funerals. We have a low birth - rate that amounts to scientific human breeding; marriage non - mandatory. Oddly enough, in ten years this has produced no bastards. Isn't that interesting?"

"You trying to put the clergy out of business?"

"Put them in their place, maybe. There's room for religion. Nobody's accused Christ of being crazy. But what passes for it today isn't compatible with sanity. We've known a long time how organized religion works. Now we've got a fair idea of how sanity works. But the priests won't let go. You can't fight them, so you have to dig a hole. The mass - attitude mistakenly attributed to something called 'God' in this country, and most others in the West, hasn't changed one whit since Babylon.

"It's infantile, deliberately so. Reward and punishment. Be good or you go - to - Hell. Ten Commandments, all of which can be legally broken and forgiven. Don't steal or kill; but war is honorable. And so forth. The potent symbols and creeds and dogmas are utterly hypnotic as imposed on every one of us. And hypnosis guarantees no - thought. Total acceptance, conformity, in every social level. All quite invisible. All well - meaning. And all - deadly. A primitive religion level splitting a scientific culture in total social schizophrenia. It's there. You can feel it; you can smell the fear it breeds. You can't touch it because it's sacred. Momma and Poppa and Teacher said so. They said God said so, despite all the evidence.

"Religion in this country, some way or another, can condone anything at all, except 'sin' and sin is defined as one thing — sex.

"Put the fear - of - God into a child on the sexual level, the basic, infantile level of oral - anal - genital sex, and you create an animal neurotic on every conceivable level: biology - to - theology. Such an animal is fear - goaded and fear-guided by a definition of "goodness,"

and so is controllable. Utterly, devastatingly, by calculated masterpieces of hypnotic suggestion on "being good."

"Psychiatrists know this now. But most of them are religious men. Their indoctrination blocks them from touching its roots; and no public - information dares whisper it. Nobody wants to be crucified for mentioning "know thyself," or "they know not what they do."

"Garrity," I said, "are you talking about my brother?"

"Eventually. But the total effect of anti - sex religion, through the parents' neurotic fears and fear - inspired failures and hatreds, transmits to the children as sex - fear. With two general results, both insane.

"Total, insane, unsuspecting, unquestioning, infantile conformity; or its opposite, the rebel. Nobody likes to think about the twenty - million antisocial psychotics we keep locked up today in federal, state, private cages. It's unpleasant. We even hate to look. We just foot the bill.

"We live in a society so incredibly schizoid and fearful that interested authorities (who make a living feeding on it) predict publically one out of ten Americans living will spend some time in a mental institution by next decade.

"Meanwhile, everyone closes his eyes and says, 'Nothing wrong with my mind. I'm fine.' And you say it of your brother.

"Look, Sadler, the working test of sanity is the ability to think toward survival of the thinker and his species. We're told the Bolsheviks caused 'planned deaths' of 15 - million souls while they took over Russia. And the Chinese Reds another 20 - million or so. We say that's inhumane. But what about 160-millions of us committing 'plan-

ned suicide.' That's inhumane, too. We're starting to notice Red survival plans are ten times more efficient. Which is no endorsement of Communism; but an indictment of our so - called ostrich - wisdom. Because **They're** playing for keeps.

"I believe our country's sanity - index - potential is tops but it's also most vulnerable and blind. The structure, here, contains millions of utterly respectable psychotic influences within any one of which a dedicated man, though utterly insane, may thrive, grow prosperous, rich, powerful.

"The structure, here, from its Calvinist, Fallen-Man, Puritan Foundations of ear - clipping - Quakers and hanging witches on up hires constitutional cops to guard our good Bill of Rights. But the cops guard institutions better. It's Status Quo, who pays them. And who bucks the Status Quo in any field? The man who can think, the man who has a better idea, the sane man. But sanity, here is immoral. It's illegal. Whereas, driving people insane by the millions is spiritual, the essence of morality. It is Holy and Ordained. It is Right.

"It is even widely reported that Genius and Insanity are closely related in this country. And every man has his psychic Achilles heel, his emotional groin. Your brother's has just sustained the kick of a mule, so to speak."

"Okay," I said. "Now tell me."

He shook his head. "Nope. It's too crazy. I've got to break it to you gently. What's the average I. Q. in this country? About 100. There's a way **known** to raise it to about 150, or more, which is Homo Superior. It is rough, painful, emotionally hideous when undergone by an adult. It is something psychiatry can't do, and wouldn't,

if it could. Psychiatrists are Institution. They wouldn't adopt it in one - hundred years. They'd fight it to the death. So would every other social agency. The process involves removing the blocks to emotional maturity implanted in infancy on a Gestalt Freud - James - Pavlov - Yoga basis. It is very undignified, inhumane. No adult called 'normal' would want it.

"Here in Chuck Hole, however, we're spared a few of the tender mercies of society. The children, here — and the oldest now are ten — are breast - fed and weaned and thereafter never know their parents. Thus spared the horrors of parental conditional love and its induced emotional stupidity, and most of primitive theology's finest refinements, the children are uniformly superior, brilliant. We don't know what to do with them. They're abnormal. They lack destructiveness. They love one - another. Their I.Q. rides an average 165. They're apparently sane, unaware of theology except as an age - old media of mass - murder, and quite Christ - like in behaviour; inherent personal philosophies. Oh, they're kids. They blow up, sure, but very rarely. It's getting tough to 'teach' them; they're teaching their teachers. They come up with stuff intuitively that isn't in the books. They find answers we're still seeking. Crazy, eh?"

"Yes," I said. "I don't believe you."

"Okay, Sadler. You'd be a gullible fool if you did. We call your brother Buck Rogers Brady. We'll go on down, now."

"I don't get the connection," I said. "Between Buck and Lecture No. 2."

"Neither do I," said Garrity. "But I'm hoping you're smarter than I am. Give it a whirl when you meet

him."

So we got in the electric jeep and went down. It was a corkscrew concrete ramp. The drop was nearly five thousand feet. No more braces of guards except at the last gate, floor level. Down here the cavern cone was so wide you couldn't see the walls.

We drove through "the downtown section," while Garrity pointed out a theatre, two pseudo - civilian department stores, a supermarket, a good saloon and a drugstore. It had Main Street, U. S. A. written all over. Coke Signs. Acres of magazine racks.

"You can buy virtually every current publication in the world in the drugstore," Garrity said. He stopped the jeep in front of HQ building. The office, and also quarters, the sign said, of Gen. Buckleton B. Brady.

"Everybody here lives at his work. Sane idea, we think, since we all like our jobs. Cuts construction in half. One warning: The population here consists of about five thousand more - or - less mutually familiar faces. We have no visitors; only new recruits. Sidearms are optional, except in the Saloons. Nobody's been shot, or even arrested, in ten years."

"You don't mean welcome to the club?"

He shrugged. "You're an outsider now. Quarters, or see Buck first?"

"I've got a choice?"

"Not really. When you're not with him, you're with me. Sort of under house arrest. That includes even going to the bathroom." He grinned, "At least till you know the score. Make sure Buck believes you came only to visit him. And one final foible: Do not, under any circumstances, unless he brings it up first, mention angels . . ."

Garrity had got to me. I liked the guy. He strode beside me, age 34-to-46; I couldn't tell. I believed he would, if necessary, kill me without batting an eye. Now he seemed jaunty as a kid fly - boy lieutenant. He grinned and waved at two leggy blonde wafs going past in a jeep. They waved back like dear friends. I suspected he was not married. He was the kind of guy I'd like to have around in case of trouble. Any kind of trouble.

"Mother Garrity," he said, "will await you without the sanctum."

Then he knocked on Buck's door and stepped out of the way.

III

"BAA - BAA Blacksheep," I said.

And Garrity closed the door behind me.

Brother Buck looked tough, sitting there. Also haggard. He did not look insane. But I reserved judgment. Because it suddenly occurred to me that — and it's odd — I'd never known, even seen, anybody crazy. On second thought it occurred that this was ridiculous. They don't go around with 'I'm nuts' signs on them. You've got to look for them. But not very hard, or far. I was remembering many, many, many people. 'Normal' people, un - locked - up people crazy, one way or another, as a hoot - owl. I'd just always taken them for granted. Who doesn't? When they flip, you don't see them anymore. But who misses them? Relatives least of all!

So I was viewing my half -brother, Gen. Buck Rogers Brady, in a peculiar light. Warily doubting Garrity, but not entirely.

It's funny about big - shot Buck. General Buck. Big - brother Buck. He'd always needed me. I had something he lacked. Our mutual moth-

er, and his father, had raised him in Texas. His old man hadn't been born crazy. But the old man's background had scared him to death. Scared him into one of those fine, upstanding, Sunday - school - and - church - and - prayer - meeting - pious - hellfire - and - brimstone - damnation - conceived - in - sin - beat - the - children - every - day 'good' sound drinking - men of his generation.

And brother Buck got himself weaned pretty young and looked the situation over carefully with an eye to personal - survival - in - diapers and then did the only thing a little kid can do:

Brother Buck went quietly, desperately crazy on the whole general topic in order to keep eating and stay alive long enough to grow up and kill Poppa and/or just get away. But he found it sticks in your craw. You can't shake that stuff loose.

He had always been fine, first - rate, otherwise.

He had planned to run away at age sixteen. But that year, early, his old man was out in the back yard, after beating Buck with a buggy - whip, praying in a rainstorm by the old pine tree when lightning struck him dead. Didn't touch the tree.

Our mother remarried a week later, moved to Arizona. I was born and we were happy. The Texas - traditions clung a little to me, second - hand.

Buck did run away. Joined the Army air corps as a buck - private in Texas. He visited us once in a while, home from the army. His initials were B. B. B., and his father had always called him the black-sheep. Buck would mention it, bitterly. And I picked it up at age one. Ever since, it had meant something to us. And when he was in a jam

he always looked me up — till three years ago.

Now he greeted me like The Prodigal.

"Ripsnort, Boy," he cried. "You dawdled."

His eyes were cool and grey and luminous and glassy. You might call his head 'leonine.' He was forty-five. And looked sixty. Chalk-white hair. But he stood up tall and straight and broad and lean - bellied and seemed a little younger.

He came over and grabbed my hands, beaming. But his eyes closed and got wet and he put his bear - hug arms around me and muttered, "Thanks for coming, Kid."

I shoved him away and grinned. "I just dropped by."

"Stay for coffee?" Mom always said that.

"If," I said, "my horse gets the sugar cubes." That was always my line.

He threw back his head and laughed like he'd just learned how.

Everything seemed okay. I wondered if Garrity was nuts. Or me. We cut up old touches an hour. Buck had stayed young too long, and I'd grown up too early and we had palled and barnstormed around and seen some things together. I'd never opened up to anyone but Buck; nor he, except to me. There had always been a certain quality — people called it 'coldness' — about me. With Buck I always felt warm.

We talked, and talked and talked and talked and talked.

AN earthquake disrupted three solid hours' sweet dreams involving, partly, Doris. This was Stoneface Garrity, my nursemaid, rocking the bed, natty and shaved and wearing a nasty grin.

"Go away," I said.

I peeped at the clock. It said five

a.m., and I got the general idea they went by the clock in Chuck Hole, sun or no sun.

"Snow White," cried Garrity. "Yonder morning breaks. The sun is on the meadow. Lazarus, arise!"

"Snow," I said, "White?" I said, sitting up.

He nodded. "Maybe." His grin was evil, even ominous.

So I threw off the covers and almost slammed him hard in the face with my pillow. But a split - second before I let go of the pillow I remembered what he had said about even a slap, and I hung onto the pillow and pulled its punch.

He stood there, sheet - white.

"Sorry," I said.

"Nice reflexes," was all he said.

I let him escort me to the bathroom door and stand guard with his gun. In twenty minutes I was all prettied up and GI costumed and tearing into a brace of ham and eggs in Buck's office.

In the middle of my second egg Garrity let somebody in.

"Colonel Adams," said Garrity, very distinctly, from the door. He said it to me. And to Adams he said, "Rip Sadler, Buck's civilian kid brother." Then Garrity gave Adams a broad, meaningful wink, a wink carefully hidden from Buck but not from me.

Adams said, "Hi," to me carelessly. He went over and handed Buck a single sheet of paper. Buck glanced at it and said to come back around noon and discuss it.

It seemed to me there was a very angry glint in Adams' brown eyes. Anger directed, openly, at Buck. I had supposed in the military such things couldn't happen.

"See you around," Adams said. He walked out.

Buck sat there behind his desk, breakfast forgotten, eyes closed. I

don't think Buck was thinking. I think he had them closed because he was unable to think. Trying to hide it, even from me.

So I ate my other egg and puzzled some pieces together. I had instantly recognized Adams' distinctive square - cut face from his top - ace days in Korean War Sabre Jets, and from the continuing publicity splash when he had come back to jazz a bomber around the world to cop the speed record — and then **crashed to his death!**

Faked funerals, Garrity had said. Missing persons. Chuck Hole population, perhaps including me, were just ghosts?

Even to Doris?

Adams' face looked about age eighteen, yet mature, striking, strange. Now his own mother might have passed him up as a stranger. Whiter than blond, or albino. His hair, eyebrows and all — alabaster.

Buck's hair was a different white than 'premature white.' You might call it half - alabaster.

"Eat your eggs," I said. "And tell me where you and Adams found the hairdresser and peroxide tonic."

He started eating. And he said, "Up in space."

"I thought Buck Rogers was a space comic strip."

"Adams and I went up together the first time, three days ago. Wednesday. Adams has had two subsequent solos, Thursday and Friday, which was yesterday. Apparently cosmic radiation in space destroys hair pigment. Garrity tell you?"

"No."

"That Adams," he groaned. "I picked him for this spot. But he's too damn brave. And every truly brave bucko I ever knew — is dead. And brave men hate to die alone. On the other hand, Rip, you're alive. So maybe you're not so brave.

Then, there's me. —"

So here it was, coming out. His eyes started demanding something of me. It seemed a fine time to keep my mouth shut.

"Kid," he said, "my predecessor is buried here. Died of worry. And there's been nothing, relatively, to worry about till this month. They kidnapped me out of Greenland in '52. Brought me in here blindfolded and said it's yours. They didn't even give me time to refuse."

"They know a good man when they have one, Buck."

He held out his big hands, palms up, cupped. He looked at them, at me, back at the hands, like they were strangers' hands.

"What do I hold here?" he said. "The Chuck Hole, or the world, or the whole solar system, or Man's Galactic Future, if any? Kid, two hands are not **big enough!**

His voice broke. So he pounded on the desk to cover it.

"One man," he said, "runs the Strategic Air Command, another the TAC, and so on. But they're out in the open. They can tap the minds of halfway sane advisors. The potential and location of this hole is hidden, even from the Staff Chiefs, the President, the naive diplomats who go around advertising Americans as idiots. Keeps them from getting the bighead.

"But the air force knows. It funnels me a crazy shuffle of military advisors. In and out. Based on the wretched information our counter - spy lads pump us. Chock - full of second - hand bad diplomatic insights invented by people who'll hang onto their careers, as they were taught to hang on, till the walls come tumbling down. Human turtles, or rabbits, or bantam-roosters. Neighbor - loving America;

Hollywood America; Horatio Alger America in a world of cannibal cutthroats who love their work. Not that we **couldn't** beat them. But nobody seems to want to try. Am I the only brass-hat who can see? Or am I crazy, Kid? Do we look like ostriches to you?" He stared at me with a burning intensity. He wanted no answer. He couldn't even see me.

"We don't believe in war. Not until attacked. We act like God is on our side, so nothing bad can happen. We go to war to protect everybody else but us. We reconstruct the losers and go bankrupt doing it for an ideal that doesn't seem to work out. In war we fight by the rules, like in a game. Russia doesn't believe in rules. They prove it over and over. Nobody notices.

"My military advisors leave here carrying this secret out in their unimaginative, field-manual-twisted, robot-circuited, West-Pointed little game-bound minds. Every week I expect an exclusive feature spread, with maps, on Chuck Hole and Buck Rogers Brady in the Sunday supplements.

"If that happens, one rabble-raising preacher and one soul-bought, syndicated, flag-waving news 'analyst' in one week could destroy this place. The Reds can't hurt us, but the homefolks; the dear hearts and gentle people.

"How much do the Reds outweigh us in logistics? Two to one; ten to one; nobody wants to know. But why haven't they attacked?

"Because they know about Chuck Hole."

"Unless they already have attacked Chuck Hole. Garrity tells me you saw one of my Betsy Interceptor Missiles (BIM's) chase out and kill a million tons of something last

night. Was it Russian, Martian, a heavenly envoy, a Galactic League rocket, and End-of-the-World bomb warning? Or a mere space-wandering sister to the Meteor Crater thing in Arizona?"

He shut up. He twisted his hands. He wanted an answer. He didn't care who said it. Just somebody, anybody; say it isn't so.

"Whatever it was," I said, "it won't come back."

"Maybe there are more where that came from?"

"Big meteors hit every few years. One in Siberia. One in Arizona. One last night that never made it. That's all, Buck."

"Why haven't we found fragments of it?"

"We will. In time. Scattered over six states, probably."

"What about the saucer-angel yesterday?"

"A crackpot," I said. "A bubble-head."

"Forty-seven other angel-saucer sightings," he said, "here and in Europe since yesterday."

"Any photos, any proof?"

He shook his head. "Your bubble-head withdrew his story under military questioning. He's in a strait-jacket."

"He's safe there," I said.

"Nobody's safe," Buck said. He strode over to a big lithograph of George Washington on the wall and unhung it. He keyed into the hidden door, sort of a wall safe, with a long, intricate tool on his watch chain.

He showed me his push-buttons. One H-bomb for each city, rocket-launched, Korsky-driven, can't-miss missiles.

Below them a special button. It was set to broadcast a twenty-minute special alert all through Chuck

Hole. Buck's recorded voice. Instructions to get Adams out into space in the "Moonship."

"Civilization's come to this," he said. "The Reds have their counterpart of Chuck Hole with their own buttons. Tell me why did they go directly to our President one month ago demanding that all spacecraft beyond the five - hundred - mile limit be considered inviolable objects in free space?"

"Asking for an insurance policy?" I said.

"BIM's can work that high," said Buck. "But nobody knows the Reds can fly that high. We couldn't, till Wednesday."

"Red bluff," I said. "Their best weapon."

"Suppose we rule out life-beyond-Earth," he said. "No Martians attacking. No Galactic League from another star. That leaves Russians and angels."

"Please, Buck."

"When I was a little, scared kid," he said softly, "I was forced to believe angels. That each human soul had a black angel and a white angel, personally assigned. One from Hell, one from Heaven. Everybody believed it. Intellectually I've rejected the idea. But emotionally I still feel my own angels, Kid. I let them influence my decisions, sometimes. If angels don't exist, that, alone, proves I'm crazy. Unfit to command."

"Buck," I said.

"Something's out there, Rip."

"Proof?"

"A movie film shot from a camera in the nose of the moon ship Wednesday, the day I went with Adams. And before we got the electronic viewplates working. Only the camera saw it. You can see the film. And when Adams and I brought the Moonship into the tube Wednesday,

our top nuclear man, a young and healthy fellow named Jaimeson, touched the ship — just touched — and dropped dead. We developed and looked at the film. And it's got four of us reading our Bibles. Even Korsky, an atheist. We find it says dust - unto - dust. Nothing about space travel, except by angels. It says nothing about whether angels have one, or two, eyes. Just arms, legs, wings."

"What does it look like on film?" I said.

"What else could buzz around out there without a space suit, Rip? It looks like the one thing I can't shoot. My job is to stake out the moon. It says no. I've grounded Adams."

"That's all?" I said.

"No. Maybe your bubblehead lied. But I saw one. My mind's fully made up. I can't change it. I know this: If I have to send Adams out again, within thirty minutes I'll be a madman. I can't tell you how I know. I just know. A madman in a room with these buttons. With the key. Nobody else wants my job. I can't resign."

"What am I good for?" I said.

"I guess I wanted you to watch me crack up. Instead of a stranger, Ripsnort." He put his head in his hands and cried.

IV

GARRITY was outside the door.

"Ah," he said. "Going to the movies?"

I gave him a dirty look. Buck had pulled himself together. It was two blocks down the main drag. The research building was across from a little artificial - greenery park with fountains, benches, even 'trees.'

We walked down and up the steps and in.

"I'll start the film," said Buck. "Running time is twenty minutes. I'll leave you now."

"What he means is," Garrity cut in quickly, "is he's **scared** to look again."

The two men glared at each other.

Buck walked out.

Garrity said: "I may get a chance to eat breakfast yet this morning. So I'll wait outside. Movies are better than ever lately."

Then **he** walked out

No windows. A small room. Twenty chairs. One door. I was not sleepy. It looked like I had no choice.

On the screen was a crescent of daylight sky, far, far up a tube. A bullet's view of a rifle - barrel with a muzzle -cover slowly pivoting aside. The Moonship launching tube. And the camera was set to infinity. Fuzzy out to fifty feet; crystal - clear beyond.

Barrel clear, hatch pivoted off. Haze billowed ahead, became a fog, a thick, dark cloud of exhaust rocket gas. I felt crushed down in the theater seat as we (the rocket) flashed out.

The deep blue, the space-black came slamming up at me. Out here where sun - quanta couldn't find a molecule to bounce on. Vacuum, and I missed the air. I missed the feel of down. Falling into the stars. Bright, bright stars. And the stars were **down**.

Which way was up?

This was just a picture. But I clutched the theatre seat with both hands, and felt smothered, and felt cold. I didn't want to turn my head. There might be nothing back there.

Out here, it seemed to me, if a man must be out here, a man would choose his company with great care.

One of the essentials would be

that it be human.

And another, that it keep its distance.

This basic violation came as an atom ahead, a speck, a scarecrow. A dim thing growing strangely. But on second sight, **maneuvering**, at will. Against our speed. **Standing** out there in apparent comfort, Matching our velocity, dead ahead, well in focus. Quite, as it were, 'at home.'

It had a 'bright side' and a down - sun dark, like an animal moon out there. I got a feeling about it. No matter what it might appear to be in an ordinary illumination. It **belonged** out there. In such a relationship that I (we) in the ship might have been a flounder observing the cook from the frying pan.

It had the sun somewhere below, reflecting on it like a shaded drawing, ghostly. I fought to be the impartial, the scientific, the detached observer. But its silhouette was wrong. Faintly luminescent. Its body kept up a sinuous, writhing living torsion like a swimmer treading salt water.

Part of its wrongness was positional. It chose not to appear upright, not to align with normal vertical vision.

Its short and ungowned limbs protruded from a body axis at near ninety - degrees off vertical to the cabin floor. From the left.

The wings did not flutter or undulate in any vacuous aerodynamics. Nor were they white. They glowed. There was a heavy trunk, chest; a mighty neck, shoulders, arms. The one arm bearing a flashing broadsword; the other, with a four - digit - ed hand, three fingers and a thumb, signalling down. Go back. Stay in the dust.

And in the bulbous head a slash

of mouth moved lips. Lip - reading humans is trouble enough — but this!

And it stared with that great, single, middle, faceted eye. Glittering cold in a monster setting, steady. Two tiny tendrils lateral from the eye, kept writhing. The whole figure fuzzy now, inside camera focal range, and dark against a black background.

Then, moving nearer, nearer, till the eye, enormous, curious, bold, peered down the camera lens. It blotted everything ahead. It vanished.

And I sat there (me, Rip, in a theater seat) with the monster's thumb and three thick fingers of a hand clenched tight around some inner, vital organ. And I had been forewarned, by former viewers. My mind had even dubbed in sound effects.

Sweat trickled in my eyes and stung and blurred one more thing on the screen. A tub.

No saucer, this. No missile rocketmen would make. It moved leisurely, diagonal, across the view, ahead a hundred yards, and gone. From this view it might have been an out-sized bathtub floating in nowhere seen from below. Three stub legs in view, perhaps one more in line, and so hidden, making four. Without visible gadgets, markings, fittings. A black thing, a made thing.

THEY had cut the film. No 'going back' scenes. So I stared at a roiling blank screen till Garrity came in.

Personally assigned angels from the church had never bothered me much. But with Buck's little - kid - conditioning on angels, the memory of his crying at his desk, I began to see his viewpoint.

Perfectly clear, and perfectly hideous. No man with Buck's condi-

tioning, no matter his job background, could face this thing.

This thing was real. It was solid. And if a man were hypnotically conditioned to 'believe' in Hell, and so forth, then this thing was even solid-er than Hell.

No wonder Mother Garrity hadn't tried to 'tell me.'

He turned on the lights and strode over with a fixed, pasted - on smile. If he hadn't started to open his mouth, I would have volunteered some emotional explosion.

"Pretty sexy picture, eh?" is what he said; plus the phony smile.

It seemed like a fair comment so I said nothing. And I was damned if I'd have him escort me to the bathroom here. The feeling was passing, anyway.

"How'd you like the plot?" he said. "The part where the villain up and kisses the heroine. We call the moonship Agonic Agony Agnes, because of the Korsky Drive. And Agnes a virgin, too."

But even his voice sounded a little cracked. He shut off the projector and we got out of there without saying another word.

We walked across to the little 'park' and sat on a bench.

He stared up at Chuck Hole's 'sky.' "Think it'll rain before sundown?" he asked.

"I wouldn't be surprised if it did," I said, truthfully.

Fifteen hours (ages) ago, I'd kissed Doris goodbye.

He said, very casually, quietly, dreamily even:

"Got the plot now? Brother Black-sheep's plight?"

I nodded.

He said, "How do you like it?"

"Couldn't be worse."

"That's about it." He pulled out a cold pipe and chewed on the stem. "One night," he said, "back in my

favorite war, I bailed out of a bomber Buck was flying over East Germany and the Nazi flack took a chunk out of my skull, going down. My great fear is of growing bald." He tapped the top of his head. "Because the color of Hitler silver skull plate is scarcely romantic, even viewed through rosy, pink scalp. and I dearly love the ladies. In some select circles I am known as Great Lover Garrity."

"You're also adroit at pushing generals around," I said, "Major."

He looked shocked. "I save a flock of colonels the trouble. It's hell to be a colonel. Such responsibility. My problem now is, I have a standing date with a waf corporal for breakfast and I'm wasting time with you. She's waiting over in the drugstore. So is Col. Adams, by the way."

"I'm a big boy now," I said. "Why don't you quit mouse - and - catting?"

"Such as?"

"Such as the plate - in - your - skull - story. That means you can't go with Adams. Velocity would kill you."

"Like that." He snapped his fingers. "I'm a fragile flower."

"And Buck can't go. And nobody else around here is qualified? That seems crazy to me."

"Oh," he grinned, "the air force could scare up a spaceman or two, in a pinch. But it's not quite that simple. Actually, common sense is enough space training."

"Okay," I said.

"Poor Adams," he sighed. "Raring to go and grounded. And getting that angel is a two - man job. Agnes is grounded, too. But I've been having her fitted, just in case." He pointed to a jeep parked by the drugstore. "See the two red lights and siren on the jeep? Special deal. Buck's twenty - minute record starts

blasting through Chuck Hole and away goes Adams in the jeep like a fireman. Space-suit on and everything. I keep a pair of them stolen and locked in a closet near Buck's office, by the way. And Chuck Hole's entire purpose is just that. But there sits the jeep, parked, idle, impotent."

"Poor Adams," I agreed. "There are limits, even, to your military mutiny. Is that it?"

"Well, now," he said, tapping the pipe stem on his teeth, "just suppose a poor colonel and an unfortunate major had the temerity to cold - cock a bloody general. Imagine the career consequences. Tradition is against it."

"It could be very sad," I agreed.

"Cast out in dishonor. Hopes of retirement on pension dashed," he said. "No one would love us."

"You underestimate your charm, Garrity."

"But consider," he said, "the lost years, the interim on the rock pile. Making big ones into little ones. Brass hats have an emotional resistance to this sort of thing."

"Whereas," I said, "blood is thicker than brass. And whereas if a civilian, and a brother should lay one on him —"

"And truss him up," chimed in Garrity.

"And truss him up, and borrow Agnes, and go skylarking awhile and bring her back intact —"

"Kidnapping, of course, poor Adams."

"Kidnapping poor Adams," I said, "and taking into consideration your pitifully helpless physical condition, your inability to stop us —"

"Swatting," said Garrity, "a fly is my utmost safe exertion. This is on record."

"Garrity," I said, "yours is a vicious and conspiratorial mind."

"With this self - knowledge I will suffer," he agreed, "all the time you're gone kidnapping. I could give you some fine - pointers on the art, though, before I retire to my hide-out. Unkind words will be said about poor Garrity this day. And nothing less than low animal cunning will keep him safe."

"Okay, Chief," I said. "Let's go see Adams."

"At ease," he said. "This was all your idea. Original with you, Kid Brother. You volunteered. Nobody suggested anything, even hinted. Because the military mind is a marvelous invention which could not even conceive of such a thing. Honor is at stake."

We got up and walked toward the drugstore.

As we crossed the street Garrity gave me his most innocent and searching look. Said he:

"I am but a simple, kindly man who does his job."

Adams was waiting inside. Like planned clockwork he met us halfway at the front door.

"Hi," he grinned. "You guys took long enough."

We went over to the counter and ordered coffee. The waf corporal was blonde and curvy and carried a big sparkle in her eye.

She came over. "Dianne," said Garrity. "Visiting vip, Rip Sadler." She grinned. She grabbed his arm.

"What kept you? I'm still starving."

"Duty," sighed Garrity.

"Well," she said, "I got you the out - of - order sign. And I told the girls. But I don't understand."

"You will," said Garrity. "Mean-time date's off. I'm stuck with these two men."

"Poor Baby," she said. "Dinner, then, in my apartment."

"If possible," said Garrity bright-

ly.

"Bye, then." She waved and flounced out.

"This Garrity," said Adams, "is an operator."

"Let's have a conference with Buck," Garrity said. "Grapevine tells me Buck's already given his orderlies and the whole HQ staff the day off."

We paid for the coffee and walked on over.

Adams rapped on the general's door. No answer.

"Could he have already blown his stack?" whispered the colonel.

Then the Blacksheep's weary voice inside. "That you, Rip?"

"Me," I said.

"Alone?" He sounded crafty.

"Alone," I said. "Let me in."

He had the door locked. He let me in. I left it unlocked.

He stood there in the middle of the office, staring at his shoes, me, the shoes.

"How's everything?" I said.

He shrugged.

"You need a rest," I said.

"I can't."

I walked over past his pushbuttons. He was closer to the door. I waited till he was looking at me and I spit on my hands and carelessly clapped them together. So Garrity knocked and Buck went to the door.

"Buck," I said, "I'm going to prove that angel is a phony."

"Can't be done," he said, over his shoulder.

I walked over toward him. He swung the door open and said, "You, and you."

As planned, Garrity cried out: "General, behind you!"

So Buck turned and that gave him just enough time to see who did it. With Garrity and Adams trying to warn him, and with Buck looking me square in the eye, I tag-

ged him with an uppercut that was far from a jaw - breaker. I caught his limp body and laid him on the floor.

Garrity stood perfectly still, looking down at the fallen commander.

"Gentlemen," he said. "We are now into it, up to our necks."

WE had on the two space suits. Buck trussed and gagged like a fly in a web, under his own desk, deep asleep, apparently. We took his key and pushed the bottom button behind George Washington and locked everything up, ship - shape. It was a block to the jeep, hot in the suits, our helmets under one arm. Our chauffeur was Garrity. The record was running in Buck's office, and starting it was like grabbing a tiger by the tail.

"ATTENTION, ATTENTION ALL CHUCK HOLE STATIONS. YELLOW ALERT FOR AGNES TAKE-OFF IN NINETEEN MINUTES. COL. ADAMS IN CHARGE. THIS IS BRADY."

The voice was Brady's, obviously. Each minute it came on. Our siren drowned it out most of the four - mile tunnel - trip to Agnes. Only five men know about the angel - thing. To all the rest of Chuck Hole this was holiday stuff. They waved their caps all along the way.

And all along, doors, massive concrete - and - steel doors, swung open, synchronized with the Chuck Hole intercom announcements from Buck's tape. Rehearsed. I assumed they were opened by automatic machinery. I was wrong. Invisible guards were pushing buttons. Guards with orders. Adams assumed the same as I. And so did Garrity.

"ELEVEN MINUTES. CONDITION YELLOW. COL. ADAMS IN CHARGE. THIS IS BRADY."

We left the jeep and walked

through a crazy maze of baffles zig - zag, in-and-out-back-and-forth. Precaution against Agnes' possible explosion. Protection for Chuck Hole. Finally there was a quarter - mile tunnel, lighted, and a hinged door which must have weighed four tons. Half open, with a heavy lock on this side. The door to Agnes' launching barrel, the firing chamber.

"FIVE MINUTES. CONDITION RED. COL. ADAMS IN CHARGE THIS IS BRADY."

There was plenty of indirect lighting in there. Deeply recessed spots. Agnes was a white bomb resting on her tail fins. There was a metal ladder. Her air lock was open. Far up the barrel it was black. The muzzle hatch still closed. Up above the ladder ramp, within arm's reach, was a thick cable, housed in a coil spring. Plugged into Agnes. An etched sign on the wall said: CAUTION. ENERGIZER CABLE SOLENOID MUST DISENGAGE BEFORE BLASTOFF. No other sign, no other equipment in there. It was a cold furnace.

But it had a guard. And the guard had a grease - gun which acts just like a machine - gun.

Adams saw him and said, "Oh, no!"

"Going someplace, Colonel?" the guard said.

Adams nudged me and muttered in my ear. "That guy's name is Raskins. He's been fifteen years with Buck. Does all the dirty work. He's loyal."

"So what?" I said.

"There's never been a guard here before, that's what."

Garrity said, "This is just a dry run, Raskins. Keeping in practice." Garrity was half turned away from the guard, and his hand was on his pistol, easing it out.

Raskins thrust out his jaw. "It'll be dry," he said.

"What do you mean?" Garrity said.

High overhead a rumble came. A scraping as tons of steel muzzle hatch pivoted sideways. A crescent of light showed up there, widening.

"FOUR MINUTES. CONDITION RED. COL. ADAMS IN CHARGE. THIS IS BRADY."

The echoes died out.

"Brady's special orders," said Raskins. "He pipes me an all clear by phone, and it comes out this hole in the wall, here, or nobody takes Agnes, Sir."

We stood there. The only reason Garrity had not yet shot the guard was that the cover hatch was a long time opening, and he was timing it by the overhead sunlight without looking up.

The tape tone cut out. A microphone heterodyned.

"ATTENTION ALL STATIONS. BRADY ON THE MIKE. LIVE ON THE MIKE. AGNES IS GROUNDED. CLOSE MUZZLE HATCH IMMEDIATELY. URGENTLY ARREST AGNES PARTY. REPEAT, URGENTLY ARREST ALL —"

"Somebody found Buck," Adams said. He looked up. Hatch wide open.

The pounding roar started loud as a jet engine. I felt shell casings tinkle on my space - booted feet. I saw the flame spitting from the grease gun muzzle. It was pointed straight up. Streaming lead with a careful aim.

Garrity caught wise first. He shot once and broke Raskin's forearm. Blood spurted and it was quiet.

"It's empty, anyway," said Raskins. He dropped the grease gun.

Adams and Garrity stared up, and me, too. The coil spring on the energizer cable was broken. The cable parted.

We looked for Raskins. All we saw was that yard - thick door, the only exit, closing by machinery over a trail of blood.

It closed ponderously.

Adams said, "Without that jerk-out cable I'll lose half Agnes' power just starting."

Garrity unpocketed a penny and ripped off his Eisenhower jacket and ran up the ladder.

"That's ten thousand volts," Adams yelled.

But Garrity yanked the plug out of Agnes and cleaned up the parted ends with a penknife. I thought he'd go up in smoke. He held the plug - end vertical, laid the penny on top and rammed the hot end down. He held it that way, with his jacket insulating, and he plugged it into Agnes. The Jacket went up in smoke. But he had welded the cable.

Adams ran up the ladder. I was right behind him.

Buck was back on the mike, holering his head off. We had to shout.

Adams ducked in through the airlock. I could feel Agnes throbbing now. Adams inside. Me in the airlock, between two doors. Garrity on the ramp to jerk the cable.

Adams was having to wait for something to warm up. He yelled in my ear. "If we take off and let Agnes rip the cable out, it might short everything in the ship. That's what the spring jerkout was for." He slapped my helmet. "Put it on and flip your radio switch."

The last thing I heard Garrity say was, "I always knew I'd wind up a jerk." He motioned thumbs up, fast.

"Get in here," Adams said.

I watched the two airlock doors come shut on automatic, with Garrity out there.

"How hot will it get out there?" I

said on the radio.

"Ten, twenty thousand degrees. Boiling. I don't know. The ride would kill him, anyway." He was watching a hand rising toward the calibration, zero, on a dial. "The hatch cover's starting to close," he said. "Get flat on the mattress."

We both flopped on our backs. I looked up at the forward viewplate. Agnes was smaller than the barrel. There were magnetic skids to keep the hull from scraping. But she would have to shrink diameter. The cover was feet thick, closing slow, like a total lunar eclipse of the sun.

I don't know what all I was thinking. But I closed my eyes as Agnes shot up the barrel, the partly blocked barrel. It seemed a long time up.

V

Then we were out in clear sky. The expected pressures had been absent. We were just up and out, like that.

"What happened?" I said.

"We were lucky."

"Garrity couldn't be alive?"

"What do you think?" Adams said.

"I don't like to think."

"Forget it," Adams said. "He was a soldier. A soldier's philosophy is what the hell. He did his job. You do yours."

It was already black outside.

"Now the first thing we do is let the air out of here," said Adams. "I did it before. It simplifies things. I fly this trap and you know as much about your end of it as I do. But don't fall out."

I heard the escape valve hissing; steady, but so fast no ice condensed inside.

"The rocket controls are over there. Forget them," he said. "We're on Korsky. There's Drive, Field, Neutral, and Off. We're on Drive. We're

going on Field, so hang on."

I expected a surge. What came was weightlessness. I floated off the floor. A flick of my wrist on a handhold and my feet came down again. I bounced there a bit till I got the hang of it.

All I could see was Adams' eyes in the face slit.

"Take a look at the world," he said. "Your brother may wipe it up. He's nuts. Really nuts."

Then I saw Adams was right. A BIM missile was veering up to get us on the radar. On the rear view-screen, too.

"Theoretically," he said, "we're automatically dead. But on Korsky Field a BIM is outfoxed. I tried to ram the angel Thursday. It came right through the hull and out the back. Same with a missile, I hope. Cross your fingers."

The BIM was a tiny needle, laced with St. Elmo's Fire. It waved off behind us and got lost on the way to the moon.

And we were falling off the edge of the world, orbiting toward the night side. Black east shadows on the Rockies.

The Great Lakes, the Eastern Seaboard. We were over the Atlantic!

"How fast are we going?" I said.

"Can't tell. With Korsky you don't go; you just get there. No elapsed time. I ventured quite close to the moon Thursday. Atoms inside the field transmuted to something else. We're ghosts, Sadler."

This made as much sense as anything else. He kept peering out the viewplates, fore and aft and four side quadrants.

"I never find the angel," he said. "It always finds me. Anywhere I happen to go. Makes it easier."

"Buck's Besty, the BIM," I said. "Maybe it got the angel instead of us."

He shook his head. "The angel's got its own Korsky. Maybe even a better Korsky. Maybe you'll have to go put salt on its tail."

"And the moon is made of green cheese," I said. Because he had been kidding, and because it felt good to kid.

"That's partly factual," he said. Not kidding. Then he said, "Let's go set you up. You're in the hero business."

We were in a nice orbit. We were on steady Drive, which meant we were solid. We could collide with anything, including the angel. We fumbled back and opened the airlock, making a hallway to open space. I took the fibre sole - mats off my boots and the magnets grabbed hard on the airlock deck.

He handed me the tommy gun with its seven - yard mooring snap line and I fastened it. He fixed the snaps from my backplate to deck. This left me on a twenty - foot leash. I had all the latest space war equipment.

I had my two .45 caliber sidearms with the trigger guards cut out. And I had a link - chain line coiled on a roller bearing reel welded to the forward wall. The end of it had a "monkey - fist" lead weight snapped on.

Adams banged a heavy hand on my helmet. "Okay, Spaceman, You're in great shape. The old World War One birdmen used to down each other with wires - dangling - into - propellers. By heaving bricks. Now if our angel's biological, give it a dose with the juicer. If it's spiritual, pray. Okay?"

He went in and I got instantly lonely. I picked up the tommy gun for comfort. It had a leash on it, too. And two leashes are better than one.

They were pretty stars. Poetic

stars, even. But I was busy sweating. I got the feeling space was a vortex, sucking me out, like a man on a high building feels about down.

Some people fall off buildings. I merely was turning around in the airlock to take a look away from space. I lifted one foot off the deck and twisted the other ankle a bit and it came loose and I made a grab and missed the hand hold. The arm motion equal - and - opposite - actioned me out. About six feet a minute. A swimming - in - molasses nightmare. I clung to the tommy-gun and reached back to grab my leash and haul myself in.

What I hauled in was the cracked-in - two end. Frozen, the tough stuff had parted like a scared lizard's tail. The gun - line had to be of another substance. And it was. I hand-over - handed back in, by the slow, gentle inch, and got my magnets down.

Pretty soon Adams sang out: "Okay?"

"Fine," I said. And almost choked saying it.

"What's wrong with Saturday?" he said. "No angel, no tub. Wednesday we had it, Thursday and Friday."

Forty five seconds elapsed. Then I said, "Speak of the Devil."

It didn't appear because I said it. I said it because it had just swum to view.

"Did it come, or just appear?" I said.

"Nothing on radar," he said.

"What if it's human?"

"It won't be."

"Why should I kill it?" I said.

"For Garrity."

After awhile I said okay. But it did not sound like me. And I said it in order to know what I had in mind. Foggy in the head. Foggy in the faceplate. Teeth jittering. But

jaw muscle stopped that. And I cleared me up with a thought. Buck would react like this. I was okay, me, again.

Except that its sword bothered me. I wouldn't have minded a ray - gun or a dagger, or a small cannon. But a nice, shiny, spiritual - looking sword.

"It's all yours," Adams said.

I was living the film all over again. I had to recognize what it really was. I couldn't.

Out there.

Peering at me with that great, faceted eye. Glittering. From within, or by reflection. The way the thing flexed, I knew no human hid inside it. Boneless.

What were the wings for?

Then the tub came into view. Half the size of Agnes. No markings, no port, no jets, no fins. Four stubby legs.

The angel wheeled, ever so gracefully. It arced over and behind the tub. Hiding? Conferring with a friend? It came back.

From under the tub. It came fast at me. And it put on whatever it used for brakes and stopped, six yards outside my airlock.

It was easy to trigger the tommy - gun at its belly. One glance, this close, at those lips, the teeth inside, and all you would ever want was to kill it.

The tommy gun didn't fire. Either the repeater - firing mechanism worked by gas explosion pistoning the ejector so that the gas leaked out into space, or it was frozen, or jammed.

Pistols, I thought, work on simple recoil.

Then the angel came in at me. To where I could have touched it. The tommy - gun jerked out of my hand hard, and the stock banged my helmet going past. In my view

through the faceplate I couldn't see its hands. Just the head. That hypnotic eye.

I fired, carefully. The head, neck, lung, heart, gut, wings, arms, both pistols, till I fired dry. I waited for it to move. I moved back. It stayed.

My tommy - gun lay against its trunk, the leash writhing. But the angel wasn't. I grabbed the monkey-fist lead weight and reeled out some link chain and I swung the weight and got the angel good around the neck. Like a barrel caught on a weighted bull - whip.

I yanked back and the angel started spinning in at me. I was spinning it like a kid spins a top. It flopped in, loose, hard.

I had it. I was hog - tying it. And I thought if I vomit inside this helmet I'll die. So I didn't.

"I'm staying on the controls," Adams said. "We may have to spurt away."

"What about the tub?" I said.

"Hell with the tub."

I tossed the angel inside. It started to bounce out. I lashed it to an eye in the bulkhead. Then I looked back at the tub.

"Adams," I said, "there's a man in a spacesuit and a little white flag and a long spaceline from the tub. And he's got a pistol in a tea cozy with a wire on the trigger. Firing it behind him for a directional kicker."

"You know what to do," he said.

It took the man three minutes to make it over. He got a hand hold and threw away his pistol. But he took a good look at mine, first. I motioned him in and he went right past me. I hoped his suit was self - sealing, but I didn't worry about it much.

My sleep - juicer was an interesting thing in a patch pocket on my chest. It was a self - powered heat-

er sheathing a fancy spring - trigger mechanism that, on contact, jabbed a very sharp hollow, big, needle, and jabbed hard and deep.

I got him in the left thigh. He jumped. By the time he had turned to face me he was fast asleep. Dreamjuice.

We left the tub a few thousand miles back and we shoved our prisoners into a special compartment and locked it.

And Adams said, "Well, that was easy."

"Stupid, too," I said.

"I thought we were pretty good."

"You," I said, "don't know how much I sweated that out. One prisoner. Just a man. A human man. And a damn robot."

"But now we know. Or we will when Chuck Hole medics counteract the spaceman's dreamjuice and get the answers. Then Buck Rogers Brady can feel free to grab the moon. Meanwhile, you and I are going to beat him to it. And don't argue or you'll make me feel awful helpless, Sadler."

We checked the oxygen - time in our back - tanks. It took nothing in the way of time to appear close to the moon. On Korsky you don't 'go' places. But it took ten minutes to maneuver in close and lay Agnes down on her side in Neutral. Adams didn't dare set her down tail - first. He said the moon was soft. And dust in the tubes, if we needed our rockets, would explode us.

She creaked a little, on her side; she wasn't built for that stress. But one - sixth gravity didn't break her.

We just stepped out and walked on the moon. Deep footprints, some places, like walking in snow.

"Adams," I said, "who else has been here?"

"No keep - off signs around. It might have been anybody."

I was staring around at the contours, the colors, the desolation and the deadness. This was one hell of a distance from a cup of coffee. Adams said we were in Copernicus, the biggest crater on the bright side. The horizon was towering, jagged all around. We were on a dry lake bed. Absolutely flat, level as a table for miles and miles and miles.

Except for one thing over there. A stone? With footprints leading to it. Thirty yards of footprints.

He said, "Let's go see."

We got over there and he let me pick it up. Naturally it was solid frozen. But on the down - side of the wrapper were the printed words, PURITY GREEN CHEESE.

It wasn't funny, very. But Adams had worked so hard for this gag. I laughed at his sense of humor till my belly ached.

I could see it now. Buying the cheese in Chuck Hole, lugging it up, risking his life, alone in Agnes. Agnes now lay *exactly* in the dust depression Adams had made landing here Thursday.

"Cheese," I said. "Footprints."

"I couldn't resist it," he said. "I wanted to do that all my life." He kept chuckling in his helmet. Eerie sound.

We went into the ship, and he said, "I need a witness. I've been wanting to do this since Thursday."

He touched the Korsky switch. On Field. We went back to the airlock. We looked out at the moon-scape.

"I hope you know what you're doing," I said.

He said, "I hope so, too."

Then we both watched the surface of the moon come up halfway, then all the way. Agnes was buried in the moon. Sinking. The moon - material was not displaced. It was inside the ship as well as out. Two

objects occupying the same space at the same time.

"Ghost," he said, "is the only word for it. There's a drift, and Agnes is in some orbit of her own in free space inside the moon. She'll go down to zero - gravity, mid-moon, the core, and right on through the other side. Years, maybe, but she'd do it." He had a dream-quality, like a lover, in his voice. "It's foolproof. On a strange planet you dive into the ground and stop when you come up to surface. On earth, the way to China is straight down. Geologists can comb the sub-strata for minerals. Everything." He was so excited he was jumping up and down inside his suit.

Down there, wherever we were, and nonchalant, he led me aft in Agnes. "Look," he said, pointing into a huge compartment. "Five hundred gallons of paint. And I used to be a sky-writer. Guess what."

So I crouched in the airlock. Paint squirted steadily an hour, more. He'd say, "Squirt." Or "Un-squirt." And I would.

You could see it halfway back to earth with the naked eye.

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"It's maybe unofficial," Adams said. "But what the hell."

He aimed us down. We sank into the solid Rockies on top of Chuck Hole, but slow. But still in a hurry. Adams musing out loud:

"Meteor - proof, missile - proof. But if the Reds have the Korsky they can lay an egg right in Chuck Hole. Anywhere. And nobody could stop them. The age of airfoil craft is dead. I'll prove that when Buck and I set Agnes down at Washington National tonight. We'll land inside the hangar."

We had eased through the atmosphere, pressure building in the ship. We landed, tail - first on the hard

concrete, between HQ building and the drugstore. I was in the open airlock with helmet off, waving for nobody to shoot. Nobody could hear me till Adams cut off the Korsky Field. We dropped a hard half - inch. The people were going crazy all around.

I felt a lot better when Adams yelled down, "Hi, there, Brady."

Here came the firemen with a ladder. We eased down the angel. And our passenger, dead or alive.

Buck down there taking a **good long look** at his shot - up angel.

And then at me.

We shucked the suits and went down. The first thing Buck wanted to know was where was Garrity.

Adams grinned at me. "Garrity didn't know he wasn't going to roast. Neither did I. I didn't know Agnes could **take off on** Korsky. I decided, when she did, to let you be brave, like Garrity."

"Garrity," I said, "is very likely in the tube where we left him."

"Raskins let him out," said Buck. "So Garrity knocked the man unconscious, bandaged him, carried him to an aid station, took the jeep and disappeared. Where is Garrity?" Buck glared around.

"I know," said a voice. Dianne's voice. "I'll show you," she said. She started leading a long, long parade.

This queue ended up in HQ building at the door of an, we hoped, unused Ladies Room with an **OUT OF ORDER** sign on the panel.

Inside, on a cot, sound asleep, was Garrity.

"I," cried Buck, "searched every **other** square foot of Chuck Hole. No **decent** man could have escaped me. Garrity!"

And the sleeping beauty awoke.

The conference they held in Buck's office must have been a little stormy at first. They wouldn't

even let me in.

And when Buck came out, he started waving a finger under my nose. He started out with, "You, Sir —" and it kept getting worse. It seemed I was under arrest. But they **did** feed me.

And it seemed they had an airstrip in Chuck Hole, with a rollaway door that opened to the outside. For extreme emergency use only.

"Like when we need to clear the air in here," cried Buck. "You'll be in Phoenix in an hour!"

I climbed into the cold jet. The pilot was striding toward me. Adams and Garrity and Buck standing down the line.

"Bye, Snow White," called Garrity.

And I was in Phoenix in considerably less than an hour.

The Weather Bureau office was locked to the public. So it was cozy in there on overtime.

"Why, Angel," she cried, "back already?"

I stood there in a nice, new fair-fitting suit and hat — civilian — that I'd never seen until an hour before. I shrugged.

"I thought you wouldn't be back till six p.m.," she said.

"Who said?"

"The nice man in Santa Fe. Mr. J. H. Q. Smith. He wants you to call Operator No. 12."

So I, naturally, phoned Operator No. 12. There was a slight delay. I tossed my hat on the desk.

Doris screamed. She came over. She touched me. My face, and then my hair.

"You poor, poor man," she said. "I've kept telling you bachelors die young. You've lost forty years in **one day**, Rip. What happened in Santa Fe, anyway?"

"It wouldn't be right for an old man like me to marry you," I said.

"You'd nag a man. You'd call him Angel." I shook my head.

"Snow white," she said. "Whiter than white. It's beautiful!"

Just then Op. 12 rang. And J. H. Q. Smith said, "You deserve a followup. I've had Blacksheep on the phone. He's on his way to Washington. I have not the least idea what this means. But I'll relay it."

"Shoot," I said.

"1 — Radio - active meteorites found in five Southwestern states today." He paused. "And a Dr. Jaimeson died of heart attack."

"Check," I said.

"Garrity (this is No. 2) will neither be hanged, nor promoted."

"Check."

"3 — Same for Adams."

"Check."

"4 — The angel was a radio - controlled, highly - maneuverable, experimental, magnetic robot. Disguised."

"Check."

"5 — The Reds did not get Korskys's lab in '54. An unmentionable branch of Our government heisted it from the Reds."

I choked on that one.

"Hello, hello. I say, are you still there, Sadler?"

"Check," I said.

"Good," he said. "And No. 6 — This same unmentionable branch of Our government also developed the Korskys and was trying to intimidate the air force until it would establish the first moon station."

"Naturally," I said.

"7 — The dreamjuice gentleman is unhappy, awake, a captain in the U. S. space navy."

"No," I said.

"Yes," he said. "Goodbye."

I sat there.

"Well, Angel," said Doris, "hang up the phone and start talking. And besides that, I'm starving —"

DONE YOUR GOOD TURN TODAY?

Occasionally OTHER WORLDS runs across something truly worthwhile, and when it does, it pitches in and helps. Recently it came to our attention that the Lions Clubs of Wisconsin have begun what is being said is the biggest and finest project they've ever attempted — and we quite agree. Let us tell you about it:

They've gone and purchased an entire lake near Rosholt, Wisconsin, in the heart of America's finest vacation land, and are devoting it entirely to planned vacations for blind and visually handicapped children; children who otherwise might never in their lifetime experience the camping joys of those who can see.

Here these children will get everything possible to give them, entirely free, every summer, all summer long; swimming, boating, hiking, campfire gatherings, singing, games, handcraft, nature study, music, stories, social activities. You'd have to be blind to realize the wonderful thrill it is to these children.

Well, Ray Palmer lives only a few miles from this new camp, which is called "Wisconsin Lions Lake", and he knows for sure this is one of those worthwhile things that really means human brotherhood. And he has a humble suggestion to make to his OTHER WORLDS readers:

Why not address an envelope to: Wisconsin Lions Foundation, Inc., c/o Amherst Lions Club, Amherst, Wisconsin, and enclose anything from a 3-cent stamp to a dime, or a dollar, or your check or money order for anything you can spare?

Your editor has seen what this means to those kids! And he'd feel like a heel if he didn't tell you about it!

And if you feel it's necessary Wisconsin Lions knows of my interest and this little story I'm telling you, and has given it their complete sanction and blessing. Wisconsin Lions Foundation, Inc., is a charitable, non-profit organization; and if you know anything about the Lions, you know what wonderful work they do. They don't only believe in happiness, they dish it out in truckloads! For those of you who might feel you have a little extra happiness, here's a really good chance to share it! Take it from Ray Palmer!

INSIDE THE SPACE SHIPS

GEORGE ADAMSKI'S NEW BOOK

What has happened to George Adamski since he wrote the famous incidents in **FLYING SAUCERS HAVE LANDED?** Since the memorable November 20, 1952, when he first made personal contact with a man from another world? And since December 13, 1952, when he was able to make photographs within 100 feet of the same saucer that had brought his original visitor?

INSIDE THE SPACE SHIPS is Adamski's own story of what has happened to him since then. It begins with his first meeting, a few months later, with a second man from another world—his first meeting with one who speaks to him. This second visitor brings him to a Venusian Scout (flying saucer) and this, in turn, brings him to a mother ship. Later he is conveyed in both a Saturnian Scout and a Saturnian Mother ship. Adamski tells us what transpires in these space craft and what the men and women from other worlds have told him.

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COLFIM

By William Gray

John Reagan was searching for a way to create something living from a something non-living. When it happened he was unaware he had achieved his purpose — until a little man-shaped chunk of hydrated aluminum silicate danced at his command!

Unseen, the eobiont* rose from the reaction chamber - a micro-micronic aggregate of atoms different in a most significant way from the thousand other such systems created during John Reagan's experiments.

The eobiont remained suspended above the retort containing its mother - a mildly metastable component of ribonucleic acid - while its father - Reagan - observed the branching chain reaction following catalysis.

Reagan saw molecules grow and mate in the media, become self-catalytic and form a macromolecule resembling a virus or a crude genetic system. But he saw nothing which met the test of life, no tangible form or exhibition - on however humble a scale - of excitability, conductivity or integration. He decided this was another failure in a long line of failures.

* N. W. Pirie, writing in *New Biology*, No. 16, proposes two new words: **Biopoesis**, for the creation of something living from non-living material and **Eobiont**, for the thing created.

The infinitesimal dot which was the eobiont quivered and changed its dimensions. A moment later, when Reagan lifted a weary hand and ran his fingers through his thinning hair, the eobiont moved away from the mild atmospheric disturbance caused by the gesture. The eobiont fed on the invisible surfaces and energy-fluxes swirling in the air, sustaining itself, adding to its size and structure.

Had Reagan been able to observe these processes: contractile power, irritability, anabolism, katabolism - **metabolism**, he would not have called this experiment a failure, but a success of monumental proportions. The eobiont confirmed to Sherrington's description of life. It was an energy - system, the energy of which was directed at maintaining itself.

But Reagan was unaware of the eobiont. He leaned on the lab table disconsolately. "Another flop!" he muttered, just as the doorbell rang dismally in the main reaches of the house.



Paul Douglas and Eric Bartok in Columbia's "The Gamma People".

"Extra-terrestrial," Reagan said, "and if so, dangerous." Tina looked at him, her face going pale. "John, I'm scared stiff . . ."

Reagan paid no heed to the bell. He went to the window and flung it open. A bracing blast of air swept in. He breathed deeply and stood staring at the hard New England slopes descending to the town. Once he had loved this view and the town and the university in the town, but no more. It's difficult to love anything long which returns neither love nor sympathy. Of the three, the view seemed less harsh.

"It's her lawyer again," Reagan's housekeeper said from the door, "This is final, says he. I'm here with papers to serve."

Reagan didn't answer for a moment, then he sighed. "Okay," he said, "We might as well have all the flops at once."

The current of cold air entering the room had seized the eobiont and driven it on a long slant downward.

It barely missed the confusion of retorts and incubators on the table, moving straight toward a chair against the wall. The chair had not been used for some time and the eobiont sank into a topping of dust. It moved through hundreds of dim universes, suffering thousands of collisions in the gray dimness, then it entered a more stable element - the cohesive molecular mesh of the chair itself. There it began the conquest of its environment. It strove to force the atomic constituents of the chair into its metabolic path - to make itself the chair, to make the chair **alive**.

Reagan closed the window and left the room.

The eobiont spread along its course of growth.

His wife was with the lawyer. Faint hope stirred in Reagan. Per-

haps it was just another threat after all. There had been many these past eight years since they'd bought the old farmhouse on the hill, particularly in the four years since Tina had left him for the town.

Reagan nodded to the lawyer - a gaunt, impersonal man in his early fifties - and smiled wanly at Tina. She looked rested and well. Her glossy black hair had been trimmed and her nose shone soapily in the most approved little - boy style. Dressed in simple corduroy casuals, Tina looked about the same as the rumped, thoughtful graduate student he'd married ten years before.

"Now before you say anything about waiting just a little longer," Tina said at once, forestalling Reagan's hopes, "Let me say that this is no empty gesture. I'll sum up, if I may: Ten years ago, I married a man by the name of John Reagan. I had him for roughly two years. After that, I found myself married to an Ambition entitled; **Creation Of Life From Inorganic Matter**, hereinafter described as Colfim. This monster and I moved up here on the hill and saw less and less of each other as approximately four years of my one and only life fled away. I left, hoping to change Colfim - **Creation Of Life From Inorganic Matter** - back to a man I love very much, to wit, Professor John Reagan. I failed, but didn't quit. For four more years I tried every blandishment to no avail. Now I say, the hell with it. I'm here to call it quits for good - John **Colfim** Reagan."

There were tears on her lashes when she finished but she blinked them quite resolutely away.

Reagan tried to think of something to say, but there was no countering Tina's argument. She was tell-

ing the truth.

"Maybe in a month or two -" he began lamely.

"Impossible, Reagan," the lawyer cut in.

"You keep out of this, you legal vulture," Reagan said.

Tina shook her head and blinked away more tears.

The lawyer ticked twice and said, "Is this the Professor Reagan who won the Nobel Prize for - for -"

"Formulation of the Reagan Law of Cellular Generation and Differentiation of Function," Tina supplied proudly.

"Yes, of course," the lawyer said, "Ah, of course. Is this same eminent man calling me a legal vulture?"

"Sue me," Reagan said.

"I was hoping," Tina put in, "That we might go through this maturely."

"Okay," Reagan said, sighing, "Let's have the papers."

The lawyer served the papers and stamped out. A moment later Tina said: "Good-bye, John - and good luck." She followed the lawyer.

A huge, damp silence pressed down upon the house.

Reagan went disconsolately back to the lab.

The eobiont, seizing the interior structures of the chair and bending them to its use, devoured the chair, **became** the chair.

Concurrent with its metabolic and quantitative expansion, the eobiont's nervous system burgeoned. It did not develop along the conventional lines of such systems in that it had no physical sense organs, nerves or integrative centers. It needed none. It was becoming a receptor in its entirety, capable of instant response without the elaborate and clumsy resorts of either brain or cord. In effect, it was becoming **itself** the

essence of brain and cord, developing a unity of function perceptible in Man but several long steps ahead of him - sensing, thinking and acting instantaneously as a whole organism.

In addition, the eobiont was conscious of its environment. With great curiosity, it explored the atomic constituents of the matter around it, probing the molecular makeup of the wall and the floor, receiving wistfully the soft brush of atmospheric gases but finding itself unable to expand into them for further study or a meal.

As it explored, the eobiont's curiosity grew. An aspect of these forms was escaping it. The eobiont sensed that they should have a meaning but had no way of fathoming it. The forms and structures were drenched with purpose, they were meant for something, but what? To the eobiont this became a subtle torment. A longing arose in it which had no way of fulfillment and this fed upon itself and became painful. The desire was strong, unrelenting, yet indefinable.

To have . . . to do . . . to be . . .

John Reagan slouched into the room, shoving the door shut behind him with a careless heel. He walked around the lab table four times, his hands clasped behind his back.

"Okay," Reagan said aloud, "I'll go on with the damned experiments for a while - maybe I'll show her yet the importance of this research."

He went immediately and busied himself at the table.

The eobiont absorbed the several shocks of Reagan's entry, the first of which traveled along the wall when the door was slammed, the rest through the floor and the air.

The first impression was alarm but subsequently this was dispelled

by a consciousness of the life in Reagan suffused with awe and admiration, a tender, warm emotional response.

Initially, the eobiont was content with the atmospheric and material transmissions of Reagan's presence, but it soon craved closer contact. With the mere realization of this urge came a lessening of the pain it had been enduring. The answer flashed through the eobiont: **This creature must be the means of fulfilling the painful longing.**

The warmth increased, the eobiont pulsed with desire.

One of the chair - legs moved and for a moment the rigid construction of the chair was awry, then the other legs moved and the construction had been squared again. But the chair was two inches farther away from the wall than before.

The legs moved again. The chair traveled four inches this time. Again, six inches. Then the chair was moving without a pause, in a fluid, sidling glide - noiselessly - toward Reagan.

The eobiont quivered with expectancy. It could sense that in a moment it would be possible to state in so many words the hunger which was driving it so relentlessly - to have . . . to do . . . to be - to be **sat upon**. That was it! What other reason had a chair for existence? To be sat upon, of course! What greater fulfillment and success could one enjoy whose teleological import, shape, purpose and manifest destiny were just that: to be sat upon! Indescribable joy flowed through the eobiont who was the chair.

Reagan, turning to reach for a retort, bumped painfully against the chair and shouted: "Goddamn it! Where'd you come from?"

The eobiont shivered in anguish

as Reagan kicked it out of his way - and felt for the first time the actual physical sensation of pain. It remained stationary, assimilating its new lesson, while Reagan ran his experiment with transuranic elements and oxidic catalysts which resulted in failure.

Reagan threw a retort the length of the room and watched with savage pleasure as it shattered against the wall.

"Colfim!" he cried, "That for you!"

The eobiont flowed, as the chair, behind Reagan, nudged the back of his knees. The weary, angry, defeated biochemist sat down with a long sigh.

The eobiont leapt into a rapport of happiness. A wild, shuddery joy swept to the core of its being. It moulded the contour of the chair to John Reagan's form and held him in a transcendent caress. This was fulfillment.

Reagan sat for a long time and that part of the eobiont which was the chair was content to enjoy itself, but that part which was a developing metabolism continued on its course. It attempted entry through the tissues of Reagan's body and found itself repelled by the swarming cellular life and the powerful legions of the blood. This organism, then, was inviolate, too vital to be assimilable. The developing eobiont withdrew into the hospitable form of the chair.

At length, Reagan arose, placed the chair in its original situation against the wall and left the laboratory.

He ate a lonely dinner served by his housekeeper, Mrs. McWilliams, in sympathetic silence. He gave her the night and the following day off.

After dinner, Reagan went down the granitic slopes to the town. He

strode distractedly through the leaf - blown streets, feeling excluded from the yellow - lit houses and vaguely angry and sad.

Eventually, he wound up in that eternal refuge of the lonely and sad - a bar. He decided to get soused and proceeded to do so with commendable scientific intensity.

Where the chair - back touched the wall, the eobiont entered the paint - film and spread rapidly over the four walls. It also found the ceiling - paint edible and consumed it. Next, it sank into the plaster, lathe and stud and beam, becoming them all. It became the lighting fixtures and the wiring, the window sashes and glass, the Venetian blinds. It became, in addition, several chairs, two stools and two benches. In another hour it was the laboratory table, the retorts and incubators and the sixty - odd chemical elements which Reagan had gathered for experimentation.

The eobiont, by its own peculiar metabolic osmosis, became the laboratory and everything in it - vibrantly and sensitively alive.

Reagan arrived home in a taxicab some time after midnight, let himself in with great deliberation and, staggering noticeably, went directly to the laboratory.

He was, apparently, drunk enough not to notice that the door swung eagerly open without assistance or that the lights went on of their own accord.

He stopped just inside the door and said, truculently: "Colfim - you elusive bastard - I hate your guts! Tomorrow, ole mons'er, you an' ole Johnny part comp'ny for good!"

Reagan leaned against the wall and it gave a little, forming itself to receive his body with gentle joy. Utterly relaxed, Reagan leaned there

for some time, consciously unaware of the wall's peculiar behavior. The wall part of the eobiont shivered in ecstasy, receiving the ultimate fulfillment of a wall's function of providing shelter and comfort.

When Reagan moved away, the wall bulged after him longingly, then sank back reluctantly to its normal shape.

At the laboratory table, Reagan stood glaring in tipsy scorn at his elements and equipment, but it was the scorn of a man who has loved well, if not indeed too wisely. In a moment his scorn changed to sadness. He was overwhelmed with desire to succeed at this task which was said to be impossible. He threw off his coat, pushed his hat back from his forehead and set to work with more eagerness than skill.

The coat - rack which usually stood in the corner by the door came over, picked up his coat, and went back, loving pride and fulfillment radiating from it. Reagan's head was bent over his work, away from this affectionate and touching display.

With clumsy hands, the biochemist formed a mass of hydrated aluminum silicate - the element nearest him - into a weird, drunken man - shape. He stood it up by leaning it against a dialytic tank.

Reagan pushed his hat back even farther, until it balanced so precariously that the rack in the corner made tentative motions toward it.

"All right," Reagan addressed the lumpy man - shape, "Dance." The tiny form remained as it was, of course. Reagan bent down, lifted it and sent it rocking through the motions. "Dance," he repeated, "Like this, see? Dance. **Dance!**"

That was enough for the eobiont

whose entire psyche was saturated with inbuilt needs to serve - crying needs of chairs, walls, lights, doors and coat - racks, needs so urgent as to impart pain - any relief of which would be welcomed. It was simply a matter of dominating the element's use - pattern temporarily.

"Dance!" Reagan cried, roaring with laughter. "Come on, Colfim - dance!"

And the man - shaped chunk of hydrated aluminum silicate danced.

Reagan leaned over, watching gleefully. He clapped his hands and sang a snatch of song and laughed wildly. The little clay man danced and danced. The eobiont thrilled and thrilled to the delicious warmth of Reagan's pleasure.

Then - abruptly - Reagan realized what was happening. He crouched over gripping the table-top in squint-eyed amazement and no little fear. The warmth of the liquor he'd imbibed fled his system before the onset of the bodily fear-changes.

The eobiont received these changes in Reagan's attitude through his hard grasp of the table - top. The lumpy little man ceased to dance. He dissolved into a muddy puddle.

"I'd swear I saw it," Reagan said firmly and aloud, "On everything that ever mattered to me, I'd swear it!"

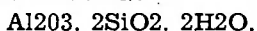
He reached out a tentative finger and touched the tiny puddle. He stirred it slightly. "Come on, little man," he said wistfully, "Do it again, fella - please!"

The little man did. It resumed its lumpy form and went on with the dance.

Reagan ran for instruments, pencil and paper, books. He scrutinized the little figure through his most powerful glass, poked at him with fine pincers, cut off a bit of his

humped back and ran a swift analysis of its chemical properties.

Slowly, unbelievably, he wrote the formula:



The little man was composed of china clay or kaolin or hydrated aluminum silicate, the element from which porcelain was made after heating and chemical change. If there was anything unusual about it, the analysis did not reveal it.

Reagan couldn't remember running experiments with this particular substance, but it was possible, he thought, he might have done so. If he had, what means had he used to induce life into this ordinary material?

He rumbled his hair distractedly, bent close to the dancing figure, peering intently, as if fearful that it would stop forever or vanish somehow before he could fathom its incredible secret.

"Why doesn't the tar dance?" Reagan asked in bewilderment, "Or the Ligroin or the carbon? I did nothing to them, either."

Reagan, pointing at the container of carbon, seeing it heave, as if struggling to rise, staggered and again gripped the table for support. In a rigidly-controlled, husky voice, he commanded: "Dance, carbon dance!"

The carbon leaped into a man-shape and danced.

Reagan ran an analysis of the carbon. It was carbon.

"Dance, tar!" he shouted. The tar danced.

Reagan, inspired, cried frenziedly: "Com'on-every element in the joint—you and you and you—dance, DANCE, dance!"

He jabbed a finger at various containers and each element rose as it was indicated, becoming one of the dancers, until the laboratory

was filled with weird man-shapes cavorting about, pathetically trying to please Reagan.

The biochemist watched for a moment, then he growled, "Lie down—you illusions, you!"

The dancers vanished back into their containers and the laboratory appeared normal once more.

Reagan put out the light and left the room. He hurried immediately upstairs and went to bed, muttering: "I never thought I'd flip my wig, but I guess this is it. Tomorrow, I see a psychiatrist."

The eobiont had passed another milestone in its development. It had understood and acted upon the commands Reagan had given it. Further, it had read the more subtle signs of his inward psychological states correctly. It hungered for more contact with Reagan because of the deep, blissful satisfactions it could derive through him. It followed him out of the laboratory, flowing, in its own strange fashion, through the constituent parts of the walls, floors and ceilings, devouring at the same time everything in its path, making everything into itself, making everything alive.

This was not a rapid process. It went on steadily, however, throughout the remaining hours of the night—a relentless osmosis, progress by saturation, a hunt destined for certain success.

By dawn, the entire cellar and ground floor of the house and all they contained had been absorbed into and become the eobiont. The single exceptions were the animate creatures—insects, mice, two cats—which remained inviolate and seemingly unaware that the old farmhouse on the hill was coming to life.

Through the morning hours, also, the eobiont flooded upward, toward

Reagan, quivering with delighted anticipation of the joys contact would bring.

Reagan awoke at noon, ran the usual thick tongue over dry lips—and remembered the night before: he had been drunk, he had dreamt a weird dream about animated kaolin. He sighed, rolled over and decided to sleep some more. Then it struck him with a force almost physical. He sat up as if sprung, looked around him abstractedly. **That was no dream**, he thought, **that was what I saw when I blew my top.**

He swung his legs over the edge of the bed. His slippers slithered out of the closet, crossed the floor and put themselves onto his feet.

Reagan shook his head sadly but reserved comment for the psychiatrist he'd be seeing immediately.

When he stood up, his bathrobe whisked out of the closet. Reagan held out his arms resignedly for it to put itself on. He walked toward the door and it opened before him. Down the hall, the bathroom door did likewise and the shower began to pelt down steadily. His robe, slippers and pajamas took themselves off. A bar of soap flew gently into his hand.

Reagan sighed gustily and stepped into the shower. The temperature of the water was precisely to his usual standard.

Twenty minutes later, Reagan entered the kitchen, freshly shaved and dressed. The tantalizing aroma of his favorite breakfast—bacon and fried eggs, sunnyside—greeted his nostrils.

"You know, Mrs. McWilliams," he said as he sat down at the table, "Just to occupy my mind while I showered, I thought of all the wonderful batches of bacon and eggs you've made for me—"

Reagan stopped. He squinted, glanced furtively around, remembering that he had given Mrs. McWilliams the day off. The kitchen, of course, was empty.

He got up slowly. The frypan on the side of the stove in which the bacon and eggs sizzled lost its appeal to him, became a frightful symbol of reasonlessness.

He fled.

In the little study off the laboratory, Reagan's years of scientific training asserted themselves. He sat at his desk, forcing calmness. This was obviously psychophenomenal, illusory, a subjective perversion of objective fact. It was nothing of which to be terrified. A mental aberration was, after all, as susceptible to medical treatment as a physical malfunctioning.

But still Reagan shuddered and was afraid.

He thought of the telephone and it was in his hand. He thought of a certain number and it was dialed.

Mike Cheney bustled in a half-hour later, bringing a leafy smell of Fall and gripping Reagan's hand in a hard, capable fist, a big man with a gentle voice and calm, patient eyes.

"Okay, tell me," Cheney said when they'd seated themselves in the book-cluttered den.

Reagan told him in detail.

Cheney's entrance was a distinct shock to the eobiont. It was psychologically oriented to the existence of only one live organism of a size and vitality comparable to those of Reagan. It absorbed the shock with little difficulty for its mental capacities had developed enormously. It could now, for instance, read with great accuracy the delicate atmospheric impulses, electrical fluxes and extra sensory reactions thrown off by Reagan's

cortical activity. Reagan's thoughts, emotions, perceptions were known to the eobiont as fast as they were known to Reagan himself, therefore the absorption of the shock and the adjustment to Cheney's mental activities presented the eobiont no insurmountable obstacles.

This new organism was scrutinizing Reagan with quiet intensity, throwing off cortical vibrations which did not read too flatteringly of him, mixed with basal medical observations regarding apparent operation of the Reagan organism.

The eobiont found itself but lukewarm toward the new arrival. To be sure, the urge of the many inorganic forms incorporated in its metabolism were somewhat satisfied by him—the chair upon which he sat was content, but not ecstatic, as was the chair occupied by Reagan. There was an obvious distinction.

The eobiont was now the entire house and all its contents. This house was Reagan's, his personality permeated it, for years he had been its principal occupant and user of its furnishings. It was no wonder that the house and all its contents should gain their greatest fulfillment from him.

There was one other very potent reason. Reagan was, after all, the eobiont's father.

"Hmm," Cheney murmured when Reagan had finished, "You've had it kinda rough, fella. I'd say, off hand, that your fantasies are the result of too much concentration on a single subject and a bitter disappointment at continual failure. That, and the unhappy interpersonal situation you're in with Tina."

"Yeah," Reagan answered distractedly, "And they seem so real. See Mercury over there holding up the books? All I say is: 'Let 'em fall,

Merc!'—and it seems to me he lets them fall."

The book-end moved away and the books fell with a heavy thud.

"I can even hear the sound and everything," Reagan concluded sadly.

Cheney's blue eyes went wide. "My God!" he said incredulously. "I saw it and heard it, too!"

Reagan looked at him narrowly. "You can't communicate fantasies, can you?"

"Not like this," Cheney said firmly, "That was no fantasy. It actually happened. Try something else."

Reagan pointed to a smoking stand across the room. "Come here, you," he commanded.

The smoking stand glided over to him and stood quivering with feverish desire for a burnt match or a dab of ashes from Reagan's adored hand.

He demanded that a lamp light itself which it did, trembling with pride that the wondrous Reagan should have singled it out to provide him with light.

He told the venetian blinds to go up. They did. He suggested that the window open itself and it did, with a readiness expressive of joyous emotion.

"Well," Cheney said, "This is real, John."

Reagan's brows drew tight. "What do you mean, **real**?" he demanded.

"These things are happening," Cheney said, scarcely believing his own words, in his manner of speaking was any indication.

"But how?" Reagan asked, "What would cause it? I was experimenting, but not with these objects. My baby was Colfim - say, could these things be **alive**?"

"Kind of far-fetched, John, but the whole affair -"

"Or," Reagan cut in breathlessly,

"Could they be responding intelligently - somewhat as the parts of a living organism respond. Could it be that somehow I've brought this whole damned house to life?"

Cheney said, "Well, I don't -"

But Reagan was too intent upon pursuit of his idea to let him finish. "That would explain a few things like doors opening and soap flying into my hands and these objects obeying my commands. If you said this whole place was alive and trying to please me, you'd have a good explanation. Otherwise, we've both flipped."

They sat silently for a moment, then Reagan said, "I'm convinced that this house and everything in it is alive, probably as a result of one of my experiments - but then again, probably not. It might very well be extremely dangerous. In any event it can't be allowed to go on, of course."

Reagan stood up. "Mike, I don't need you anymore, but thanks anyway. Go home now and trust me to keep you posted." He smiled a little wanly, "And Mike, I'd advise you not to mention this to anyone - they'd send you to a psychiatrist."

Cheney submitted, unwillingly. The moment he was gone, Reagan called Tina. At first she refused to come to the house, but then, catching the urgency in Reagan's tone, she agreed.

She arrived moments later with a squeal of brakes and an alarmed click - clacking of heels on the walk and the porch.

Reagan, in the den, commanded the front door to open. He heard Tina enter, pause, and click around in confusion, looking for the person or mechanism that had opened the door. Reagan called to her and she came into the den.

"Go over and let the lady sit on you, chair," he ordered the red -

leather chair. It sidled across the room and eased up behind Tina.

She leaped away in alarm, then, crouching, prowled around the chair to see who or what was making it move.

"No assistant, mirrors or motors," Reagan said, laughing. "The chair happens to be alive."

"Oh, so that's it," Tina said automatically, then whirled around, eyes saucerling, "Did you say alive?"

"Colfim - remember?" Reagan asked nonchalantly.

"But - a chair!"

"Chair nothing," he said, "The whole house, everything."

"John, it's impossible!"

"Mike Cheney just left here - he saw it, too."

He explained.

"So this," he said, waving a hand, "Is success. Colfim is possible. I've proved that, I think. There's another possibility which I have to test. This might be an alien life form."

Tina looked at him, her face going pale. "Alien?"

"Extra - terrestrial," Reagan said, "And if so, dangerous. Either way, I'll have to put a stop to it. The obsession has left me."

Tina looked about her, somewhat fearfully.

"I can now return to less confining scientific pursuits," Reagan said, "Can those papers be noll - prossed or something?"

"Forget the papers," Tina said, "I love you, John, but I'm scared stiff."

"I think it's a good idea to get out of here at that," Reagan said with much more casualness than he really felt, "We can settle this later."

He rose and they turned toward the door. The door swung closed and the lock clicked.

A sickness of anguish had spread through the eobiont. This was a

new emotion entirely and it precipitated a new pattern of action. The Reagan organism could not be allowed to go. Beyond were great spaces through which it might have to search for aching voids of time for him, the means of ultimate joys, the creator, the **god**. And this Tina organism was a threat. She must be eliminated.

A lamp rose from the desk and streaked through the air. Tina saw it in time, screamed, and dodged. The lamp shattered against the wall.

Still comparatively calm, Reagan said, "What it can't assimilate it can destroy. Or maybe animate creatures are its next step. Beyond that it could consume endlessly until the entire planet and everything and everyone on it had become it."

"John, don't talk, don't analyze, we've got to get out before -"

"Open, door," Reagan commanded sternly. The door opened, but with obvious hesitation and reluctance. They passed through.

"I think I can handle it, right now anyway," Reagan said as they moved down the hall toward the outer door. "It is deeply attached to me, you might even say centered on me, existing because of me and for the purpose of pleasing me."

"You sound like you're trying to hypnotize yourself," Tina said.

"I've got hold of a thread," Reagan answered, "I think I know -"

Tina stopped walking. "John," she said quietly, "The walls - the hall is getting narrower."

Slowly, remorselessly, the walls were moving inward, trapping them in a wedged - shaped tunnel.

"There's nothing at all to worry about," Reagan said, tonelessly, "This organism exists to please me and I am thinking of something, an ultimate service which would yield

the ultimate pleasure to the performer -"

Reagan's eyes closed. Sweat covered his face.

The eobiont became conscious of an urgent new desire more powerful than any it had ever known, a desire which struck directly, not through the constituent parts. It emanated from Reagan, the means of all fulfillments, and it created an agony beyond any the eobiont had previously suffered. Surely the satisfaction of this desire would bring a peace beyond conception. Frenzied, shuddering, thrilling with anticipation, the eobiont obeyed Reagan's will. It gave its metabolism the single word command: "Cease!"

The walls sank back to normal. Reagan made a few tests. "Okay," he said to Tina, "we can go now. Colfim's dead."

"Dead? What happened to it?"

"I told it to die, remembering that even quite mortal men have ceased to exist by saying **stop** to their vital processes. How much easier it must have been for this advanced life form."

"But why should it do such a thing for you?"

"Simple - it loved me."

They were out of the house, going down the leaf - strewn walk toward Tina's car in the fresh, scented air of Autumn.

"It loved you," Tina said, "But it tried to kill me and it was about to kill you."

"It became jealous," Reagan answered, "But it still loved." He glanced back at the farmhouse. "It's not the first time that a superior servant has died for an inferior master," he said sadly. "Nor a wise son for an ignorant father."

THE END

personals

... Would like to correspond with anyone of any race or creed, anywhere in the world, interested in Cosmopathic telepathy, with flair for painting word pictures of lesser known locations. Myths, legends and historical stories of out-of-way places especially appreciated. Also local idiom, patois, social customs, types of clothing, furniture etc, peculiar to localities. I speak and write English only, but collect dictionaries of any foreign language giving English definitions. Channel Monaghan, 236 Columbia Place, Los Angeles 26, Calif. USA . . . *Wanted, back issues of Fantasy Times, (preferably in bulk). Indexes to stf mags, 1951, 52, 53. August 1952 Startling Stories. July 1955 F&SF. Jan. 1955 Astounding. Quote prices. R. L. Horn, 818 Mildred Ave., Lorain, Ohio . . . Large collection of old comic books for sale or swap, many before 1948. All types. Mrs. Jean Kisch, 4873 Cochran St., Santa Susana, Calif. . . Will sell 114 stf mags, mostly 55-56. Few from 52-53-54. F&SF, Fantastic Universe, Astounding, Galaxy, If, Infinity, OW, Amazing, Fantastic, Madge, Tales, Future, and others. All good condition. For \$5.00 will send 25 my selection, or you name it. Richard Cohen, 1101 Mt. Olive, University City 24, Mo. . . Wanted, Mad comics No. 5 and Guns, March 1955. Complete and with covers. Gordon S. Johnson, 5852 W. Foster Ave., Chicago 30, Ill. . . Wanted, Amazing before September 1955, Fantastic before August 1955, Imaginative Tales before Jan. 1956. Send list and prices. Brown Smith, 7348 Ruffner, Van Nuys, Calif. . . Wanted, S. J. Byrne's trilogy "Colossus" (1948). Barbara Hawley, 1210 Grand NE, Apt. 3, Albuquerque, N. Mex. . . Wanted, Books by Lovecraft and Burroughs. Material on Dianetics and Scientology. R. Terry Beals, 541 N. Lorraine, Wichita 6, Kans. . . Wanted, Lost Trooper, Marriage of Melorum Strange, Red Flame of Eriippura, 17 Thieves of El-Kalil, Valiant View (Talbot Mundy). Also, pen pals. Charles N. Brown, RFA, USS Tarawa, CUS-40, E. Division, FPO, New York, N.Y. . . . Need EC comics, SF, Horror, Psychoana-*

lysis, war, crime. Also Pogos, first 3 Playboys, and Jan 55 issue. State condition, dates and prices. Donald A. Thompson, RFD No. 1, Grand Valley, Pa. . . For sale. OW complete, Mystic complete, First issues: Startling, Unknown, Fantastic, Beyond, FFM. Hundreds of others, FATE, TWS, Amazing, Weirds, Fan. Adv., Planet. Send list and offer. E. L. Edwards, 115 Woodbine Ave., Charleston Heights, S. C. . . Wanted: Entertaining Comic books: *Crypt of Terror* 17 18, *Haunt of Fear* 16 (1950) 13, *Weird Fantasy* 13 (1950), *Two-Fisted Tales* 20 and *Entertaining Creation: Confessio ns Illustrated No. 2*. Although these are wanted most, will buy all other '54 and older. Also want comics with slightest trace of science fiction in them with exception of Atlas. Want especially Planet Comics. Also want comics with art by Alex Raymond, Harold Foster, Hogarth, and Milton Caniff. Also looking for pre-'50 science fiction at reasonable prices. I want books by H. P. Lovecraft. Science fiction movie stills. Old science fiction and Tarzan comic strips. For Sale: 4000 assorted comic books going back to 1938. I prefer to sell in one lot or at least 100 at a time but will sell separately at higher prices. Lil' Abner comic strips from 1946 for sale. War Against Crime No. 5, Crime Patrol No. 9, Animal Fables No. 4 and Land of the Lost No. 5 and Picture Stories from the Bible (New Testament). All of these are Old Trend Entertaining Comics for sale. Bill Meyers, 4301 Shawnee Circle, Chattanooga 1, Tenn. . . I am interested in purchasing the following books by E. R. Burroughs: 1. Apache Devil; 2. Oakdale Affair & the Rider; 3. Back to the Stone Age; 4. Lad and the Lion; 5. Deputy Sherriff of Comanche County; 6. Amazing Stories, Feb. 1943, "Skeleton Men of Jupiter." I have these duplicates: E.R.B. 1. The Gods of Mars; 2. Tarzan of the Apes; I want these Big Little Books: 1. Flash Gordon on the Planet Mongo; 2. Flash Gordon & The Monsters of Mongo; 3. Flash Gordon vs. The Emperor of Mongo; 4. Flash Gordon & the Waterworld of Mongo.

The Heart's Long Wait

By Charles L. Fontenay

Travel through space, at speeds near that of light, they say, will cause you to age slower than the ones you leave behind on Earth. Here is the finest, most tender story we have ever read, based on this theory.

Daan signed the contract, and that old cliché came to mind. It was like signing his death warrant: death warrant not of the body, but of the heart.

But Bil Cuksi, personnel director of Alpha Centauri Enterprises, Inc., smiled with something like relief as he pulled the sheaf of papers across the desk. He glanced at Daan's signature and laid the contract in a wire basket.

"Daan, I'm glad you finally decided to do it," said Bil. "This expedition needs the best spacemen it can get, and I think there'll be a couple more sign up when they know you're going along."

"Good pay, good people to work for," replied Daan Tamberlin with a shrug. "I have no ties on Earth."

No ties on Earth. The truth is always the more bitter for saying it aloud, he thought.

"You'll blast off for Lunar City at dawn," said Bil. "Captain Shutt is there already, and the rest of the crew will join you when they sign up."

"Not taking chances on me backing out, are you, Bil?"

"Not after dawn," answered Bil, smiling. "I've had a hard enough time talking you into it, boy."

They shook hands and Daan walked out of the office. It was a small

office for the biggest space operation yet attempted by man. It was tucked in a second floor corner of the giant Interplanetary Transport building.

Daan strolled down the long corridor toward the elevator, idly jingling his souvenir coins, two Venetian *nesti*, in his pocket. A door opened just ahead of him and a shapely blonde emerged, clad in the sky-blue uniform of a spaceliner hostess. She cast a sidelong glance, a half-smile, at Daan's stalwart figure as she passed him.

Downstairs, Daan stopped at the cashier's window and slid his advance voucher under the grille.

"All of it?" asked the young woman, her eyes widening slightly.

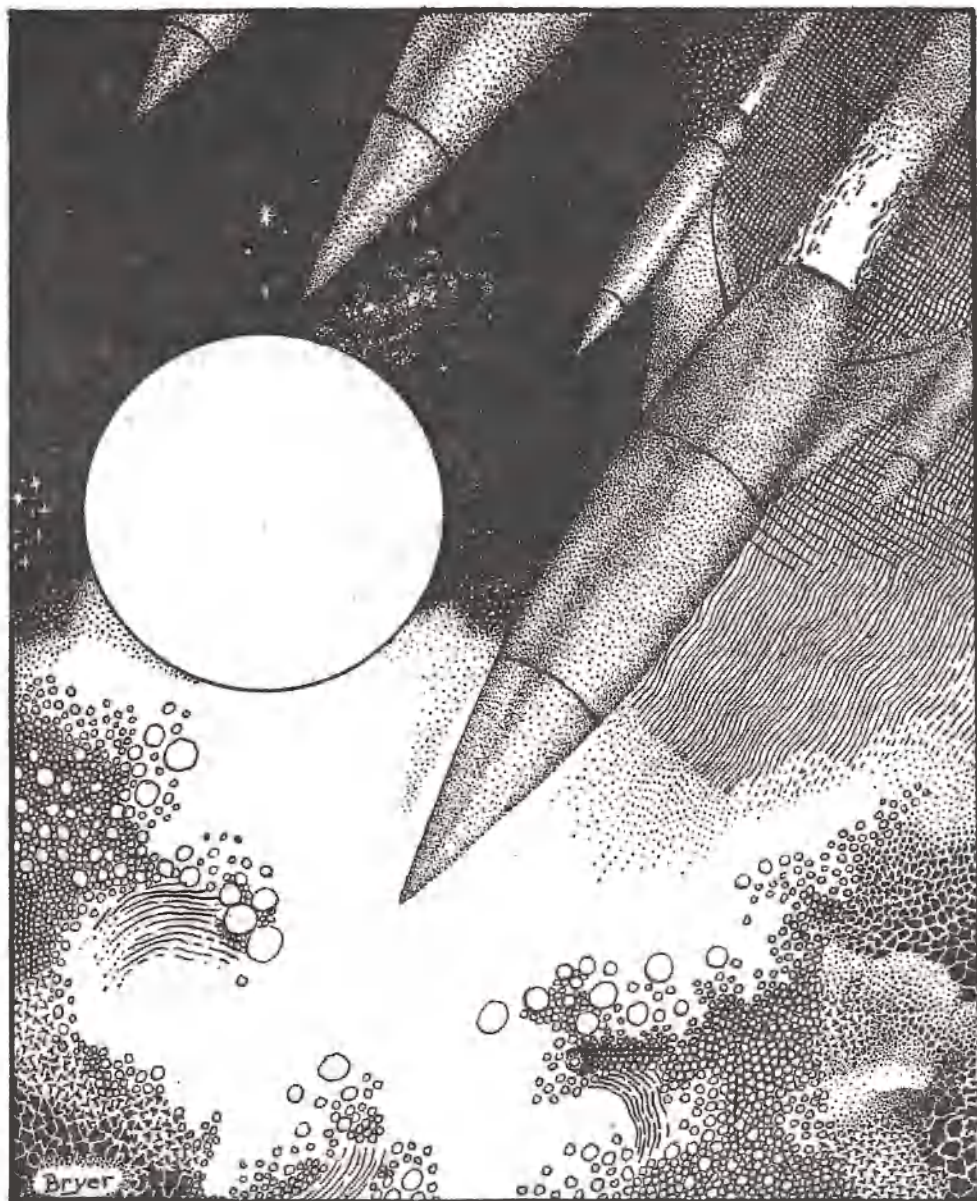
"I suppose not," he said, after a moment's hesitation. "The company's as good as a bank. Give me a hundred and fifty, and write up the rest to my account."

He took his account book from his pocket and pushed it to her. She wrote in it and handed it back with a stack of crisp bills.

"So you've just signed on for the Long Haul?" she said as he started to turn away. He paused, and she smiled at him.

"That's right," he said.

"A hundred and fifty," she said softly. "That's a big last night a-



ground, spaceman.”

“Yeah,” he said. “A big last night.”

He turned on his heel and walked away.

The sun of Earth flared at him when he walked out of the Interplanetary Transport building. He had chosen the spaceport entrance, and the glaring sands of the land-

ing area stretched out in front of him.

The sun was low, and the long shadows of the port craft stretched eastward, past him to the left. He stood at the building entrance and looked across the level ground at the half dozen rockets scattered around the area.

They stood on their tails, squat, tapered machines, ringed at the bottom with their great booster sections. He looked for the numbers near their noses. Some of them were too far away, but he found **R-23**, second nearest to him.

R-23. That was his transportation from Earth, at tomorrow's dawn. Two hours aboard **R-23** to the space station, five days from the space station to the Moon. When the rest of the crew joined them there, another three days to the orbit in which **Centaur II** circled the Earth, loading for the Long Haul.

He didn't know the blast-off date for **Centaur II**. It would be in the orders Captain Shutt would have for him on the Moon. Three weeks, maybe.

But Daan's deadline was dawn. Before he boarded **R-23**, he still could back out of his contract legally.

The door behind him opened, bumping him.

"Sorry," apologized a coveralled mechanic. "Didn't see you."

"It's all right," said Daan. "I shouldn't have been standing here — not for a few hours yet."

His gaze swept the spaceport. The tractors and forklifts trundled like busy beetles between the hangars and the ferry craft. Daan turned away, toward the street.

At the gate, he showed his pass to the guard. The lock clicked free. Daan pushed open the gate and went through.

He was on the busy sidewalk. Pedestrians hurried by, bug-shaped automobiles crowded the broad street. The three lanes on his side of the street were crowded with homeward bound vehicles, heading for the suburbs. The three lanes on the other side were almost empty.

The wall of the spaceport shaded him from the setting sun. Daan

stopped to light a cigaret, guarding the lighter from the slight breeze with cupped hand. He looked at his wristwatch.

It was six-fifteen. Tomorrow's sunrise was at five - oh - four. He did a quick mental calculation. Ten hours and forty - nine minutes until blastoff time for **R-23**.

What was the telephone number Nella had given him? He had thought he would remember it, but he didn't. He fumbled in his pocket and found the slip of paper. Margate - 5-6401.

"I'd like to see you before you leave Earth again, Daan," she had said in that soft voice he remembered so well. "Just call me and give me a little warning, so I can brush my hair and slip into a clean dress."

She had laughed then, timidly.

"If you could see me now," she had said, "you wouldn't be sorry you didn't marry me."

He crumpled the slip of paper. But then, instead of tossing it into the gutter, he smoothed it out again, folded it and put it back in his pocket.

Ten hours and forty-nine minutes. Ten hours and forty-seven minutes now. He could make any kind of night out of it he wanted to. But the first step was supper.

A neon sign down the street was blinking already, almost unnoticeable in the daylight. "The Golden Owl—Fine Food—Martian, Venetian, Terrestrial." It was on the other side of the street.

Daan turned toward the nearest intersection, where a pedestrian underpass would take him across.

The Martian food was about as Martian as chow mein is Chinese. There ought to be a word for it, Daan thought as he studied the menu: "Martian-American." He read down the list of unfamiliar

dishes and sighed at the memory of delicious sand-burrow chops with hearts of desert cabbage.

"This canal steak—I suppose it's made from pure Texas beef?" he commented, looking up at the waitress for the first time.

If the "Martian" food was synthetic, the waitress was Grade A. Her smile should have been on the menu.

"Probably," she agreed, blue eyes flashing merrily at him. "If you want the real thing, spaceman, go down to the Space King Hotel and pay three prices for it."

"It doesn't matter that much, if it's tender. Bring me the canal steak."

The condemned man ate a hearty meal, and what does it matter, afterward, how genuine the exotic dishes?

The canal steak was meat cut into strips, probably to represent the canals, soaked in a piquant sauce vaguely reminiscent of Martian spike wine. It was tender meat, though, and well cooked. It came with a lettuce salad cut roughly to the shape of desert cabbage—and, of course, french fried potatoes.

Back in the days—not so very long ago, at that—when the Interplanetary Transport building had been five stories lower and the city's edge had been a mile from here, there had been a little restaurant that served real Martian food. He remembered the nights there with Nella. The last one, especially.

"One trip, darling," he had said. "One trip to Mars, and we'll have enough to give us a running start in life. We're still young, and why waste all that expensive training at the Academy?"

"You know I'll wait for you, Daan," she had said, though her dark eyes shone with tears. "I'll have to wait for you, wherever you

go. There's nothing else I can do, loving you so. But I'd rather you'd stay on Earth."

"We'd still have to wait at least two years. Why not use that time to make as much money as I can?"

Well, there had been Mars, and Mars again. Then Venus and Titan and a dozen hops to the Moon. Now he was thirty, and there had never been a running start or any start for him. For her, there had. She had started without him.

"Everything all right, spaceman?" The voice of the waitress broke in on his reverie.

"Fine," he said, realizing his plate was almost clean. Looking up into the twinkling blue eyes, he asked curiously: "How are you so sure I'm a spaceman?"

She laughed.

"I know all the signs, working here," she said, and ticked them off on slender fingers: "Yen for Martian food, pale but healthy, sort of a labored walk like you're carrying a bag of rocks on your back. Besides, I've seen those before."

She poked a polished nail at the little silver comet that shone on his blue tunic just above the heart.

"Now," she said, "will there be anything else?"

"Yes," he said on impulse. "What time do you get off tonight?"

She glanced at the clock on the wall.

"Seven o'clock," she said. "Five minutes. But I've got a date."

"Oh," he said, and looked down at his plate.

"I'm sorry," she said. "How about tomorrow night?"

"I've got a date tomorrow night—with a spaceship."

"Last night aground?" She hesitated. "Look, I'll break my date. No spaceman ought to be alone his last night aground."

Ten minutes later, she joined him

in front of the restaurant. She had changed her snug waitress' uniform for a white dress, just as snug, that set off her blondness attractively.

"Where to?" she asked. "Or do you know the city?"

"Well enough," he said. "There's a good club right down the street where we can dance and have a drink or two, if you'd like."

"The Space Haven? It isn't much good any more. The Moon Club, up this way, is better."

"The Moon Club it is, then." He offered her his arm. "What's your name?"

"Alys. Alys Lawzin. Yours?"

"Daan Tamberlin. Glad to know you, Alys."

They didn't dance. They sat at a table in the Moon Club and had two drinks, while Daan told her of Mars, Venus, Titan and space, and she told him of the changes that had been made in the city of White Sands since he last saw it two years before.

Somehow, despite the drinks, they were still strangers to each other.

"You do have something on your mind, don't you?" she said at last. "A woman?"

"Maybe. Sometimes the music reminds me . . . Well, anyway, you've heard all this travelog stuff a hundred times before."

"Yes, I have," she said frankly. "It's too noisy in here, anyhow. Let's go to my apartment, where it's quieter and the drinks are on me."

"All right," he agreed, getting up at once, "but the drinks will still be on me. We'll stop at a store on the way."

Alys' apartment was in a building in the old city, several miles from the spaceport. They took a cab. The apartment, on the second floor, spoke to him of good taste when she switched on the light.

"I think I like you, Alys," he said.

"I know I like you," she retorted, "or we wouldn't be here. I don't know what you've been thinking, but I'm not a tried-and-true pal to every wandering spaceman."

"I like you better, then," he said, and took her in his arms.

Her kiss was warm and sweet, and she clung to him with a vibrant aliveness that, strangely, touched his heart with regret. When she pulled away gently, with a sigh, her blue eyes were darker.

"I wish . . .," she began in a husky voice, then said: "Mix the drinks, like a dear, while I get comfortable."

She went through a door and closed it. He went through another, into a tiny kitchenette, found glasses and began to pull corks.

It was a small apartment, a bachelor girl's apartment. Bachelor girl in a spaceport city. How old was she? Twenty-three? Maybe twenty-four.

She'd be a good companion, aground or aspace. He liked the way she talked, the air about her. Nothing about her struck a note of falseness or cheapness. Momentarily, he wondered about the date she had broken.

Going back into the parlor with the drinks, he set them down on a long, glass-covered table. He sat down, waiting.

Well, why shouldn't it be this kind of a night for a spaceman about to embark on the longest journey ever made by man? When soldiers went off to war and sailors went to sea, didn't they try to take memories with them and leave memories behind them? Sometimes they returned to come face to face with those memories, in the shape of little boys and girls.

He laughed quietly at that. Any little boy or girl he might leave behind him now would be nearly his

own age when he returned from this trip. Imagine meeting a fellow just a few years younger than yourself and telling him: "I'm your daddy!"

He heard Alys at the bedroom door, and he fumbled in the pocket of his tunic for a cigaret. Nervous, Daan?

It was the wrong pocket. His fingers struck a folded piece of paper.

He arose from the sofa, and his heart felt like lead in his chest. Alys was coming toward him in a black negligee that concealed nothing. Her smile was soft and her hair was like a cascade of pure gold that tumbled over her shoulders. She was beautiful.

"Alys, I can't stay," he said, almost choking. "I . . . I remembered something."

Her eyes widened, and there was hurt in them, but she made no effort to dissuade him.

"Goodbye, then?" she asked.

"Goodbye," he agreed miserably.

"Maybe when you get back from this trip. . . ." she suggested.

He laughed shortly.

"When I get back from this one, dear, you'll be middle aged."

She went to the door with him, her hand on his arm. He kissed her. He owed her that much.

"Daan," she pleaded, "if it doesn't work out . . . don't go to a hotel."

He walked downstairs, the paper clutched in his hand, still folded. He went out the door and down the steps to the sidewalk.

He looked at his watch under the street light. Five minutes till eight. Forty-five minutes since he and Alys had walked together away from the Golden Owl. Nine hours and nine minutes until sunrise and R-23.

Half a block away shone the lights of a drugstore. There would be a telephone there. He walked toward it, swiftly.

Daan pushed the bell, and backed away to the edge of the porch to get a better look at the place. The street light was a little way down the sidewalk and he couldn't tell much about the yard except that it was neat and green and had flowers. But the porch light was on. It was a brick house, and it looked like a home.

The door opened and Nella was framed in it. Daan felt as though a planet had fallen on him.

"Daan!" she almost whispered.

"Daan, come in."

She held out a hand to him.

"Not that, Nella," he muttered and seized her in his arms.

For just an instant he was twenty again and she was eighteen. The perfume of her dark hair in his nostrils and her cheek and throat and lips were soft to his lips. Then she twisted and broke free, hurriedly.

"Don't stir old embers, Daan!" Her laugh trembled.

She led him by the hand through a short hallway into the parlor. His hand still tingled when she dropped it, and motioned him to an easy chair. She sat down facing him, several feet away.

"I'm sorry I was hesitant about telling you to come on out, Daan," she said. "You see, Thom—my husband—is at his club meeting tonight and won't be in till late. When you're married and settled, you have to think of the neighbors."

She hadn't changed. The lines of her face were still delicate and clean, as they had been five years ago, and eight years ago, and ten years ago. Her eyes were still big and dark, her smile still shy.

"I almost didn't call," he said.

"You should have! I'm glad you did. Your last night aground! You knew I always want to see you again, Daan."

"It'll be a long time, this time," he said.

"How long this time, Daan?"

There was something like resignation, like "I told you so," in her voice. But he couldn't tell her, all at once, what it would be.

"Six years," he said.

There was a tiny commotion behind him.

"Glinna!" exclaimed Nella. "Go back to bed, young lady!"

Daan turned. A very small girl stood there in pajamas, a disreputable - looking doll clutched in one hand. She had Nella's big eyes, Nella's dark hair, in miniature. She gazed at Daan, rapt, without fear.

"This is something I didn't know about, Nella," he said.

"Of course not. She's only fourteen months old," said Nella, and added: "It's high time, too. Thom and I have been married five years."

"That long?" Daan held out his hand to the child, but she toddled around him at a safe distance and climbed on her mother's knee. There, she deposited the doll on the table and watched Daan, sucking her thumb.

"Six years is a long trip, Daan," said Nella. "Where is it this time? Triton? Or Pluto?"

"Alpha Centauri," he said flatly.

She caught her breath.

"Daan! Oh, no!"

"Alpha Centauri," he repeated. "We're using the new ion engines. We'll pass the *Centaur I* somewhere on the way and be back to Earth before they're a light year out."

"Daan, you lied to me," she said. "Six years is too short, even with ion engines."

"I didn't lie," he said slowly. "It'll be six years to me, Nella. Twenty-two years to you. It's the Einstein effect."

"Twenty-two years!"

"We're in a hurry to get back,"

he said with a wry smile. "We'll accelerate at four gravities."

She sat looking at him, her face chalk white under the light. Her eyes were enormous, and the expression in them was tragedy.

Glinna squirmed in her mother's arms. Nella picked the child up, gently, and set her on the floor.

Daan was on his feet in time to catch Nella as she catapulted into his arms, clinging to him frantically sobbing.

"Daan! Daan!" she wept. "I'll be old and gray when you get back. Twenty-two years! And you'll still be young. You'll be twenty years younger than I!"

"Just fourteen years, darling," he corrected abstractedly, stroking her dark hair. "I'll be thirty-six."

"Mummy! Mummy!" cried Glinna. The child was weeping too, frightened.

Nella leaned back against his encircling arms and looked up into his face, fiercely.

"Daan, you can't go!" she said.

In Nella's eyes, Daan saw what he had remembered and clung to for ten years.

"I can still back out," he said slowly. "You do still love me, don't you, Nella?"

"I'll always love you, Daan," she said in a low voice, looking into his eyes. "Always . . . always . . ."

He drew her head to his shoulder.

"Why couldn't you have waited for me, then, Nella?" he asked bitterly, into the soft fineness of her hair.

"I waited for the first trip to Mars." Her voice was muffled. "If we hadn't quarreled, if you hadn't stormed off to space that second time . . . Daan, I wanted a home, a marriage, a life. Thom offered it to me. I didn't know whether you'd ever come back."

"I'd have given you the kind of

life you wanted. I'd still give it to you. Nella, I can still cancel my contract if I do it before blastoff time. We can still get married and have a life together."

She pulled free. She backed away from him. She stood looking at him. Her eyes were unnaturally bright.

"Yes," she said. "Yes, Daan. Ill divorce Thom. We'll go to Mars or Venus."

She turned and started from the room with swift steps.

"I'll pack a bag," she said over her shoulder. "We'll stay downtown tonight."

"I'll call Bil," said Daan, as she went out the door.

He found the telephone, by the hall door. He thumbed through the directory and found Bil Cuksi's number. He dialed it. After a moment's ringing, a woman's voice answered.

"Mrs. Cuksi?" said Daan. "This is Daan Tamberlin. Is Bil there?"

"He's watching television," said the voice in the telephone. "Just a minute. I'll call him."

Daan sat with the telephone to his ear. Glinna came up in front of him. She looked up into his face.

"Phone?" she said. "Daddy? Phone?"

Slowly, Daan put the telephone back on the hook.

Nella appeared in the door. Her cheeks were wet with tears.

"Daan" she said. "I can't."
"I know," he said. "The child. I'll say goodbye now, Nella."

The last night aground. It would be a hotel room until an hour before dawn. Or it would be Alys' apartment until an hour before dawn. It didn't matter. At dawn it would be R-23, and the Moon, and Alpha Centauri.

He got up, heavily, feeling Earth's gravity pull at him. Nella came to him. He held out his arms to her.

"Please," she whispered. "Just a handshake."

He took her hand in his and held it tight for a minute, looking into her tearful eyes.

"Goodbye again, Nella," he said.

She shook her head, and tears fell on his hand.

There was a tug at his trouser leg. Glinna looked up into his face, dark eyes sparkling, smiling.

"Daddy?" she said.

A desperate levity swept over him like a wave.

"There's one girl on Earth who'll kiss Daan goodbye," he said, and swept the child up in his arms.

Even then, no premonition touched him.

He kissed his future wife for the first time, and she returned the kiss with trusting lips. Then he walked out of the house without looking back.

THE END

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FAN WORLDS

By Guy Terwillieger

A Review of Fandom and Fan Magazines

FANS get some wild ideas in the time of their activity about the things they think should be done in the field of sci-fi. They also get pretty presumptuous about things they think they can do. Right now, I'm thinking my latest brain wave might have been a little foolhardy.

The inspiration came to me when I noticed that Rog Phillip's "Club House" was no longer appearing in **OTHER WORLDS**. "Why not write Palmer and ask him for the job?" I asked myself. "He can't do more than turn me down." I did just that, explaining my qualifications for the proposed undertaking.

The letter came back with an OK on it — that's when I first began to worry.

"What do I know about fandom?" I puzzled. Then, "What makes me think I can write something others will read? What BNF's do I know to get information from? What kind of a column can I do? Will Palmer like what I write and print it?" And, "If he does use it, will it catch on with the fans?"

The answer, suddenly, was obvious — if you want to write a good column you'll find ways of doing it! The news will come to you if you want it. But — you can't sit back and wait for it. So ...

I got to thinking the other day about fandom in general and fanzines in particular.

You can read a lot about what's wrong with sci-fi in the pro-zine letter columns. But, you can't read much about the good points — it isn't there.

You can also read the same thing in the current crop of fanzines, only to a greater extent. Readers of this particular branch of sci-fi too often have nothing constructive to say about amateur publishing attempts and amateur writing. Their sole aim, and it is evidenced in several of the zines, is to tear down anything someone else does, and with malicious vigor at that. They completely ignore the fact that a number of one-time "hack" amateur writers have turned into prolific, outstanding personalities in the pro field.

The point here is, in a manner of speaking, that fan publishing is a constructive method of tying fandom together. It helps to maintain an interest in a field that is again growing up, and it builds a backlog of new talent striving to improve itself to pro level. The fan don't have to pub their own zines to do this — the mere reading of, and writing for, these efforts, along with the writing of letters, helps to weld the field together.

Publishing a fanzine isn't all fun — there's a lot of hard work to it — and it is easily given up if no praise is forthcoming to urge the puber on. Response, whether it is favorable or not, to a fanzine adds stimulus for improvement so long as it isn't criticism for the sake of tearing down but for building up.

Have you done anything for sci-fi or fandom lately? The editors of these fanzines have — why not send for one, read it, and then let them know what you thought of it — but be sincere in your comments and remember that there is some good in all of them, even if it's just the effort put forth.

MANA, No. 1, Bill Courval, 4215 Cherokee Ave., San Diego 4, California. Sample sent free, then by responding.

This, as a first issue, shows that the editor has a lot to learn, but at the same time shows some sparks of personality. The biggest part of the issue is taken up with "Excavation No. 1" a series of old "letters to the editor," but none-the-less, they prove interesting reading. The ones by Larry Shaw show that the wishful thinking of today is much the same as in the past few years. The usual ramblings of first issues are present, along with some strong language that would be better forgotten.

Welcome to the fold of fan publishers, Bill. Hope we'll see you around for some time to come.

YANDRO, Volume IV 11, Robert and Juanita Coulson, 407½ E. 6th St., North Manchester, Indiana. 10c or 12 for \$1.

Good reproduction and art seem to be a standard policy with YANDRO. Most of the material is good, but the best piece here was "Null-F" by Marion Zimmer Bradley, a column devoted to non-fiction which should be of interest to present day fen. "Strange Fruit," the fanzine review, is brief and to the point — but constructive in its views of others' efforts. A review of "Godzilla," a "Doddering" column and the customary letters round out the issue.

BRILLIG No. 5, Larry S. Bourne, 2436½ Portland St., Eugene, Oregon. 10c a copy.

Larry makes room for non-sci-fi write-choice of material but he could work with his mimeo a little more to make his zine easier to read. A point all pubers should pay attention too, no matter what method of repro they use.

Dan Stufloten is present with "One Night A Gnome." Don's style, many feel, is much like Bradbury's — actually it is a matter of individual opinion. His items read like thinking — in other words, Don puts his thinking on paper.

Larry makes room for non-sci-fi-writing in his zine. In this issue it turned out to be an overlong review of "Alexander the Great." What was said was good, if it had been condensed.

Would-be writers take note that Larry is looking for good material. If you have something in mind, send it to him for consideration.

Scientifilm Review, Torture Garden, Letters, and a history of successful "boom prozines" complete the issue.

SATA ILLUSTRATED, No. 5, Dan Adkins, R.F.D. No. 2, East Liverpool, Ohio. 20c a copy.

In a short space of time, Dan has made SATA one of the most sought after fanines. The art, mostly by Dan,

is some of the best in the fan field and has won deserved praise for him. Dan, himself, has sold illustrations to OW, and, once he is out of the service, should have a bright future in the pro field.

This particular issue is not up to his previous numbers, but it is still worth reading, even if the new multilith printing has raised the price.

"Fandom As A Way Of Marriage" by Robert Coulson is short but highly amusing in its message to fen that they should marry a fan to be happy. (Are there enough fen of both sexes to go around?)

The letter section deals mainly with a previous article on Elvis Presly and opens the door for a Class A argument unless Dan takes it in hand.

A movie review, fanzine column and an article on "The New 6" in the pro field round out the contents. Editorially, SATA sounds as if rock 'n roll were taking over the zine.

There are many more zines on hand that could be reviewed, but by the time this sees print, they would be outdated and probably not available — so the reviews will have to wait until the next time around.

One of the hardest things not to write in this column was a review of my own fanzine — you know, giving it glowing comments, et al. That's one zine that won't be reviewed here. (Why not? It's good — Ray Palmer.)

That's it for now — but remember, "All that glitters is not a flying saucer," nor is "All that's in a fanzine trash." Send your zines to be reviewed and any news you might have, to Guy E. Terwilliger, 1412 Albright Street, Boise, Idaho.

BACK ISSUES, 10c EACH --- WHILE THEY LAST

Three more issues sold out! Eight more in very short supply. Without doubt, this 10c offer is the most popular we've ever made. Here's a list of what's left . . . better come and get it while you can!

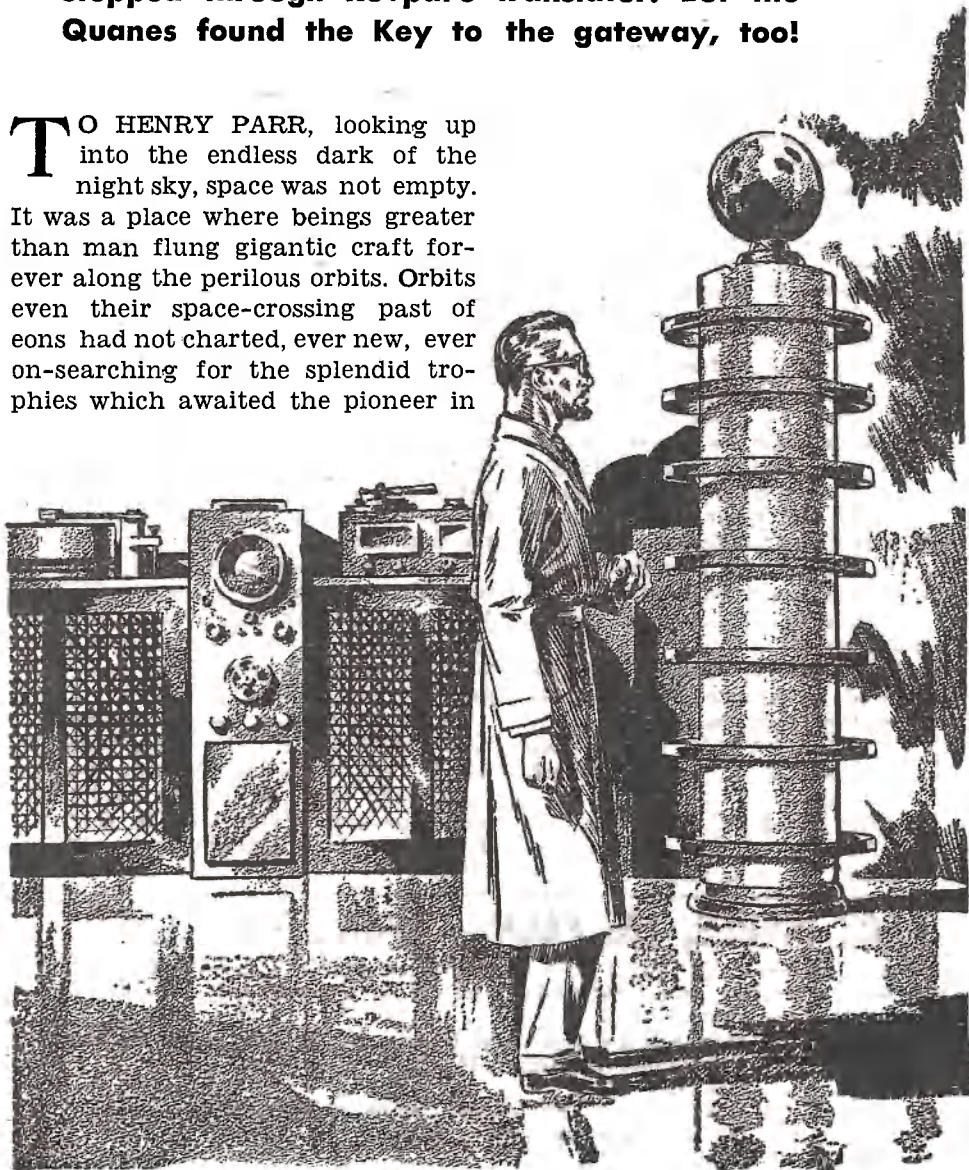
- OTHER WORLDS:** 1952—January, June, July, August, October, November, December.
1953—January, February, March.
1955—November.
1956—February, April, June, September, November.
1957—January, March, May, July.
- UNIVERSE:** 1953—December.
1954—March, September, November.
1955—March.
- SCIENCE STORIES:** 1953—October, December.
1954—April.

PILLARS of DELIGHT

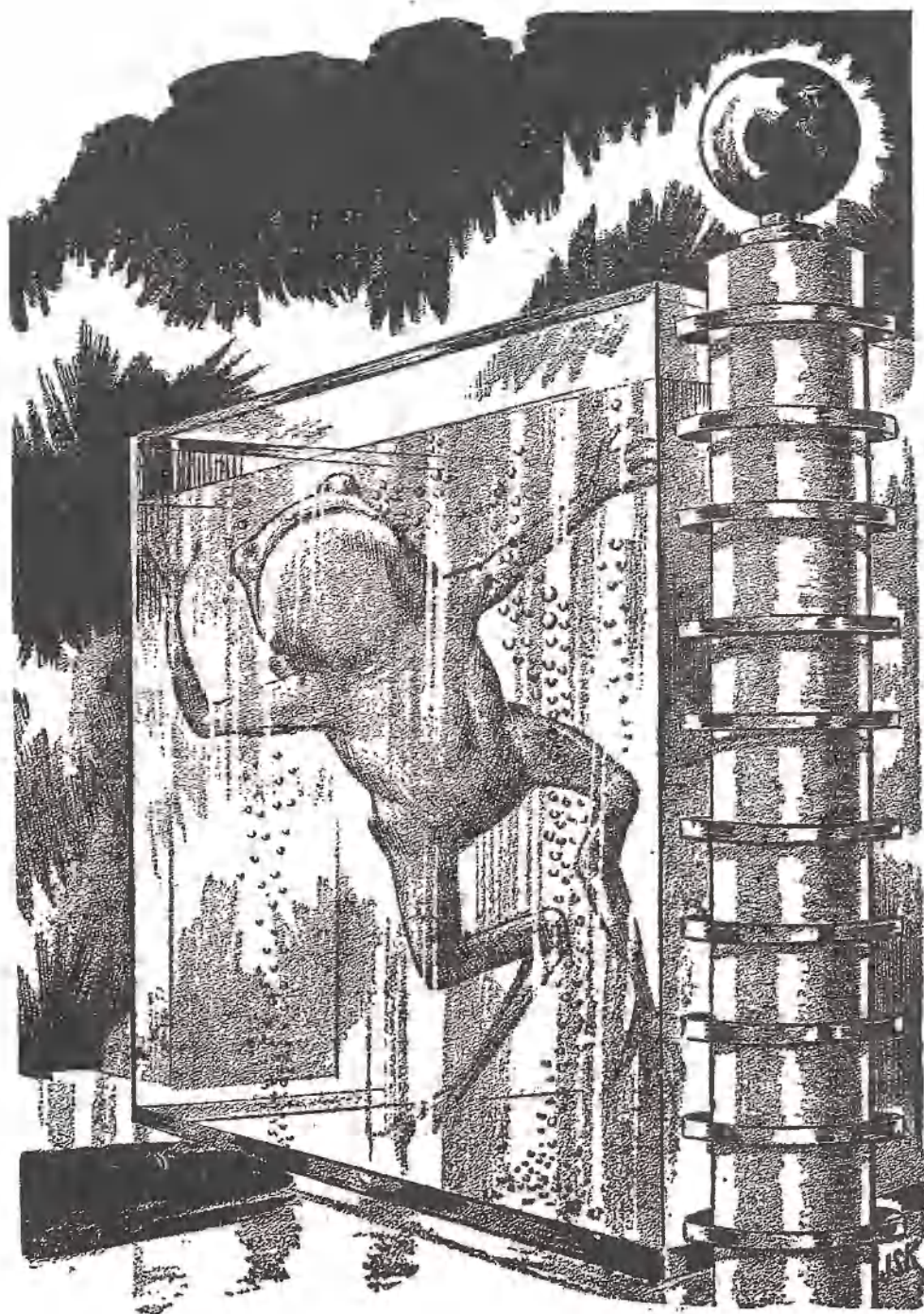
By Stan Raycraft

Parr found beauty and adventure when he stepped through Rovpal's translator. But the Quanes found the Key to the gateway, too!

TO HENRY PARR, looking up into the endless dark of the night sky, space was not empty. It was a place where beings greater than man flung gigantic craft forever along the perilous orbits. Orbits even their space-crossing past of eons had not charted, ever new, ever on-searching for the splendid trophies which awaited the pioneer in



Henry expanded a frog—and it grew until it became gaseous in volume



untraveled new regions.

He saw in the night sky a spreading, fecund, gigantic growth reaching ever wider across the sweet black face of night. He saw beings greater than men choosing for homes the planets around which strange energies made life a leaping flame of vitality.

He saw courageous beings seeking, and finding, those pearls of space—planets more fit for living than men can imagine. And his eyes would return to earth pondering on the possibility of space travel and realize discouraging truth—man was a creature who spent his greatest effort creating the atom bomb.

Henry Parr had a fine scientific mind. He was a good height for a man, five ten, and well muscled, slender and supple of waist, quick and alert. His hair was brown and wavy, his eyes a keen blue, his features attractive if not impressive. The real Henry Parr was a deep pondering soul within that fine mind.

Henry started pondering on the simple phenomena of **change of state**. You know how ice, water and steam are three states of the same primal substance. They change because of three different energy levels. Heat, simple old fashioned heat, causes this miraculous change.

Henry became a kind of collector. He collected **changes of state**. After some years he knew a great deal about how to cause various changes of state in various kinds of matter by the application of variant forms of energy.

After all this time, Henry changed from the collecting stage to the experimental stage. Energy had been applied, but Henry wasn't thinking about himself, not directly.

He could change almost anything from a solid to a gas, or back, or to

a liquid. And some things, amorphous things, aroused a great deal of Henry's plentiful curiosity.

For instance, you can freeze life, such as a frog—it's a change of state in living matter. And if you're careful the frog will live through it. But you can't change the frog to a gas . . . Nor to a liquid. Cells in living matter were too apt to be killed by the structural changes.

Somehow, in Henry Parr's mind, the two ideas of change of state and of **space travel** became strangely inter-related. His mind enjoyed contemplating both, and it did.

So was born the idea.

From the idea was born the deed. Henry applied a certain energy of his own concoction to the poor frog (frogs were handy) and the frog slowly became a gas-frog. But it didn't die! It wiggled, kicked out with its gaseous feet, swam slowly upward, spreading wider and less and less dense—until it was visible no more. Henry labled his notes on that one "inconclusive." Because the frog became invisible after a bit and you couldn't be sure if it died or not.

Henry repeated, within a closed chamber. The frog swam about in a gaseous state, and failed to die. Henry increased the pressure, the gaseous frog slowly shrank, and quite suddenly became a normal frog again! It was alive! Which after all was no more miraculous than thawing out a **frozen** frog and seeing it come to life again. Not to Henry Parr, it wasn't, not any more.

Henry repeated. Same result. Henry enlarged his apparatus, his chamber, bought bigger pumps, newer and better dynamos. Henry spent all his money getting ready, which wasn't too much for what Henry had in mind.

Henry expanded a dog, a warm

blooded creature. It survived. Henry spent a solid year making sure, checking and rechecking, trying creature after creature . . . and at last he could resist no longer.

HENRY floated within the chamber of heavy glass. A time mechanism was set to start the pressure, both electro-static and atmospheric—in just fifteen minutes. There should be no risk after his exhaustive repetitions and continued success with each experiment.

But there was a risk! Bette came in, looking for him to play tennis. Henry was not present. He should be, she knew he was always there at four o'clock in the afternoon. She looked around. Inadvertently she pushed a little lever with her elbow, and the heavy glass lid of Henry's man-size chamber began to lift.

Bette screamed at what came out, kicking and opening-and-shutting its mouth. Henry was only trying to tell her what to do! She wasn't hearing, not Bette. She was seeing ghosts!

She ran out and left the lab door open. A gust of fall wind blew poor Henry Parr out into the garden. Slowly at first, he drifted up, up, up!

It was no use struggling, he could not swim **down**. Not when his body was expanding more and more rapidly each second that passed. There was a lot that Henry didn't know yet about this change of state in living matter. One of those things was **where** the expansion stopped and **did** one live after **great** expansion took place?

He could still see dimly the round, green-and-white-and-brown of the earth below. For a while. Then it disappeared. Henry guessed his retinas were too diffuse now to stop a ray of light. Or he was too far up to see anything at all.

Mainly, he noticed he was numb. He couldn't feel. Not pain, nor air on him, nor feel he was alive at all. Just numb and dead and drifting. Time passed, and Henry drifted in a numb, unseeing waiting. Henry Parr was in space, where he had dreamed of going, someday when he was ready. But Bette Halloran had taken care of that . . . before he was ready.

★ ★ ★

WHEN the light pressure hit him, he felt like a spider caught over a bonfire. He woke up! He knew he was alive, **pain** filled him. He could see only great luminous blobs of stuff rushing past him—striking him, splashing around him. Stuff that burned, at first. Then he warmed up, and it was pleasant, like light. It was light!

Henry rushed along with the light, like the same spider caught over a bonfire and his web blasted aloft by the heat, himself clinging to it. The thread of web was his life, he knew, and he clung to it with all his will. After a time the luminous stuff did not rush past, he was traveling along with it.

Going places, Henry Parr. But he hadn't planned it just this way, not at all!

Light travels a long long way before it stops. So did Henry Parr. He had an idea how far and fast, too. He knew Roemer had measured light speed as 186,000 miles a second, way back in 1675. He knew they hadn't improved his figures much since, either.

The fact that the distance between himself and Bette Halloran was increasing at exactly the speed of light did nothing to make Henry accept his fate philosophically.

It was about that time that Henry caught up with the frog. He recognized **that** frog. It looked a little

hazy on the edges but it was the same old one-eyed frog he had allowed to get away when his first experiment succeeded too well. Henry reasoned he must have traveled faster because he had more area spread out to catch the light pressure, like a bigger sail. His weight didn't count, he knew, because there wasn't any to speak of where there was no planet. He also deduced that he had about reached the limit of the sun's light, and as he tried to compute just how far from home and Bette Halloran's arms that was, he got a splitting headache. It was too close to infinity's edge to bother about the fractions.

It was just about then that Henry's head bobbed **above the surface**, and the first thing he saw was friend frog swimming like—like a frog **for the shore**.

By now Henry's deductive faculties were getting a bit radical and frayed, but he deduced that the edge of the light pressure of the sun caused a sphere which was relatively to himself as the surface of water would be if he was swimming. Accepting this relative impossibility with one gulp, and spitting out the very apparent palpability of the water that **wasn't** water but light-pressure—Henry began to paddle toward shore with much the same stroke as the frog was using.

Standing up, he examined himself for defects, shook the "aqua" out of his eyes, ran his fingers through his hair. Trees drooped overhead, he would have sworn they were weeping willows!

Not only that, there was a little heart carved in the trunk of the nearest one, and this path was familiar! If the initials there were familiar—but they weren't. They were no initials he had ever seen. They

weren't his own! They couldn't be! He was having aberrations, seeing visions of home. They were distinctly **not** B.H. & H.P. Nobody would be expected to travel that far without seeing things when he arrived—things that **couldn't** be there.

But a faint suspicion of something too, too familiar led his feet along that path. He saw, presently a lone figure in skirt and sweater, dangling a tennis racket rebelliously over the old rail fence around Brown's pasture. But it couldn't be her, he knew better.

He followed along the familiar path and up **his own stone-paved walk!** He opened the old stained door, began to strip off the wet shirt as he made for the bathroom!

But curiosity overcame him as he passed his own lab door, for he heard a sound within. With trembling fingers he pressed the latch, peered within.

THERE was a familiar row of powerful dynamos, a great sonic reflector, and a wide wire-webbed focussing device of his own manufacture. There was a huge glass-enclosed air chamber, big enough to hold a man.

There was a pale, anaemic looking male, about his own size and build, in his own laboratory—fooling with his own apparatus!

This was too much! No one had any right in here but himself!

Henry Parr rushed in to confront Henry Parr just as Henry Parr closed the chamber door from the inside and pressed the lever that engaged the switch outside and directed the vibrant expansive power of his own especial cell-gaseator down upon his own head. Futilely Henry yelled "Don't, man, don't! I've been through it all, and I can tell you, don't!"

It was just then that Bette came in, swinging her tennis racket and yelling impatiently:

"I've been waiting over by the tennis court for one solid hour, Henry Parr. Can't you ever remember anything?"

She didn't see him at first, where he stood in the shadows by the door where he had stopped to watch the trespasser in his laboratory monkeying with his apparatus to see what he was doing.

With a flash of inspiration Henry Parr leaped to save the man. But . . .

Bette leaned her elbow on the big glass case, releasing the spring opening device which was his own invention. The wide glass door swung up and out—and out and up Henry saw Henry drift, his mouth open gaspingly—but no sounds coming from that ghostly shadow of a man.

Swinging around, still unconscious of that which she had inadvertently done to Henry Parr, Bette Halloran noticed the big ghostly, half-palpable shadow pass over her head.

She screamed, ran toward the door, plump into Henry Parr's arms. He held her tight, and it felt like . . . like . . . home and heaven!

"Well, can you beat that?" said Henry Parr, picking up his tennis racket.

"This is the scariest darned place," laughed Bette, as she renewed her lipstick. "Let's go out in the sun."

"Yes, dear, let's . . . go out in the sun, by all means, the sunlight is very good for us!"

"Corny?" That's what Henry Parr thought, looking around. "What a corny ending for his great adventure!"

Far above, Henry Parr II floated up into the blast of the sun-light, began his journey toward—the rim of infinity.

BUT AFTER a few days Henry Parr I began to add a few things together and get some funny answers. Everything was not precisely the same as it had been before. For instance, Bette's name wasn't Bette Halloran. It was Bettina Hall! And when his mail arrived, it wasn't addressed to Henry Parr. It was addressed to Hendrick Parkar. Apparently his ancestry had been somewhat different here.

Apprehensively Henry Parr I began to watch for these subtle but all-important variances from the world he had known. He took up the study of the stars seriously, but here he was lost, he didn't know enough about the constellations as they had been to be absolutely sure they were changed. But a few of them certainly looked unfamiliar. However they always had—looked strange and attractively remote.

He began to speculate on what the next "up" step would be, and if the little differences would get to be big differences if he kept on going up and up.

Too, he found that Bettina had not all the same character his own Bette had had.

Bette, while she had sometimes been impatient, had always been faithful. Now, Bettina, while she seemed fond of him, had nothing but scorn for his experimental research, and begrudged him every minute spent in his laboratory. And Henry spent a great deal of time there, checking on the little differences. For instance, the air, instead of containing familiar oxygen, hydrogen and nitrogen, had a couple of other gases in large amounts and the carbon dioxide was considerably less in amount.

When he picked up an ancient history book one day, he was dum-

founded. The Egyptians were Cryptians and the pyramids were round smooth cones, surmounted by squatting and quite lewd Goddesses. The Greeks were Cretes and the Cretans were Greeks, and the things they worshipped and the orgies they went through were quite luridly and frankly described . . . Henry spent a weird week catching up on his ancient History and emerged with a vast sense of confusion.

It was after this session with the history books that he found Bettina had given him up as a poor investment and was blissfully planning a marriage with some wight named Harry Parnell. Henry had known a Larry Darnell "back home" but he had never shown the slightest interest in anything but whiskey, and no decent girl would be seen with him. This fellow was a business man and owned three garages, among other assets such as a cleaning and dying plant.

It was that night, with a mingled sense of frustrated inferiority, and a pulsing throbbing heart that sent through his veins the lure of adventure that had started all this—that Henry Parr took off for space from his gaseator—chamber again.

It hurt even more this time, and time wasn't the same; it was later in the evening, and he didn't hit the sun-blast until much longer spent in floating out and up.

As he floated through the lab door Henry would have sworn he saw himself coming in the door, but that was just one of those hallucinations one reads about—like Flying Saucers. No one could have timed his advent that closely or could he?

HENRY spent pretty near the whole trip in deep thought. There wasn't much else to do for his

vision was hazy. Box-in-a-box, bubble-in-a-bubble—that was the universe, eh? The stars made the pressure, the limits of light were relatively the same as surface tension on water—and then one bobbed up in an ocean—of plain water. Just a big bubble around a bubble around a bubble—and change of state was the key to passage through. Henry wondered if he could rig a pressure device to change his state to progressively more solid forms, and so sink back through the bubbles one by one—to—home! His breast, that big haze down there, hurt with the thought of home. He would never see the place again. Even Henry Parr knew that he could never generate such pressures with the relatively fragile matter forms up here. The steps were too far apart . . . or were they? He would have to think about it. Maybe he could do it with an integrative ray, something that made his body denser and denser—it wouldn't work. It had to get smaller and denser, and his apparatus would be futile in such small sizes—unless he made series of them to take up the job of compression—it wouldn't work. Henry gave up the thought of home. Forever.

He took over the thrilling picture of what might be if it were different, instead of repetitive, each upward step. Different, different entirely! One would think that it would take only a little variation along the line to produce a vast and absorbing difference in life somewhere . . .

Henry bobbed up out of the water and swam toward the beach. He dragged up on the sand, lay for a moment gathering his strength, and looked about for the ever present weeping willows! It was night. Far off he saw a great whirling disc of light. About it were sprawled many

lesser lights, making a fantastic pattern of incredible complexity.

Henry made his way with wonder in his heart toward the whirling lights, and now he heard sounds, cries, roars as of animals in pain.

Henry stopped under the wide spread arch of lights over the roadway. Automobiles were parked everywhere about. He passed on beneath the arch, to read a great banner—"Barker's Wonder Park." He passed the ferris wheel and the man with the cart bellowed at him—"Get 'em while they're hot!"

Henry put down a quarter and went in to see Maleeta, the Snake Charmer. She had a kind face . . .

ON THE outskirts of town, while Henry watched Maleeta out-wriggle and out-squirm her own bullsnake, a vague shadow like a man floated up, up, out of sight in the darkness. After while Henry went home to the empty laboratory and took down the big bottle marked "Ethyl Alcohol."

But Betty Lou Harrigan was waiting for him and set it back on the shelf.

"None of that, Hank Parkinson! You've got a wedding to attend to-morrow."

Henry looked apologetic. "Honest, Bette, er I mean Betty-Lou, I'm sorry. I'm really not myself tonight. **Not myself at all.**"

"Well, let it worry you **not at all**. You'll do for little me, anyway." Betty-Lou was really quite nice. Almost as nice as Bette, at home. A man has to give up somewhere.

Hank Parkinson married Betty-Lou Hallan. And for awhile he was happy. But when a man has tasted space—real space—he can't leave it alone. Somewhere, he knew, there must be a wonder world where the

air one breathed was not the same old tainted dusty used air—where man was greater than man, and where the awful thrill of super-human adventure and experience beyond life's prosaic repetition went on—went on at a fiercely adventurous pace, where love was terrific and vivifying, where life was vastly more worth living than this day in and day out existence. Henry had it in his blood—Henry was going to get away from this world if it killed him.

So, when one late afternoon he saw a wet bedraggled figure coming up the stone paved walk, he knew who it was. Like an automaton Henry Parr went into his lab, opened up the big dusty glass gaseator chamber, and pulled the release. And as Hendryk Van Park walked in, Henry Parr floated out over his head, swimming expertly in the vague air currents.

Somewhere there was a break in the chain, if he could find it.

There was! Much time had passed. The earth and the sun had both traveled. And as Henry blasted along on the fiery painful tide, he passed quite close to another sun, and found himself turning round and round, shooting off at a tangent to his usual direct course.

Again this happened, and he bounded off the heated blast of another fiery orb, found himself speeding along even faster and more confusingly than before.

When Henry came to this time, he was lying on soil, a blazing sun overhead.

No swimming to shore, no willow trees, no familiar path, no hometown subtly changed—no nothing but sun and parched rocks and shimmering hills far off.

In the sky another sun swung slowly over the horizon, visibly mov-

ing, and his shadow took on a double, a double that circled slowly as the sun moved higher.

Henry sat down to think, after an hour of plodding across a desert that showed no change. Two suns! That meant that he had bounced around within the spheres and somehow been shoved through a hole in intersecting spheres. Had flashed up into relative solidity with the sphere wall in another bubble. They must intersect, like a mass of soap bubbles. And at the intersections, there must be places where a speeding gaseous form could pass through. He had done it! He had broken the chain of repetition. There were two suns. Other factors must be different, must have envolved a planet with life of a variant form. He had to reach those hills, had to take a look over the far country and find whatever there was to find. This desert must not kill him until he knew—what this sphere of related densities was like.

The two suns swung on across the brass-burled sky, their paths crossed,—one sank, and then the second, making a blaze as of a million forest fires, touched the far horizon. Long floating islands of flame and molten bronze and royal purple and delicate fairy green spread across the wide sinking orb, spread along the whole horizon so that half the sky was infinite glory and even Parr's weary soul rose up and drank in the beauty and thrilled. Thrilled, and drank deep of some courageous magic, and heartened, and at last lay down at peace on this alien waste of sand and fell asleep.

IT WAS IN his sleep that Henry Parr first experienced the faint yet greatly penetrating contact of the mind.

"Sassani," the sands whispered. A slight wind stirred over the sand, and the sand whispered to some unseen being in the wind—"Sassani!" "Sassani," "sss . . ."

"Sassani," murmured Henry, in his sleep, and saw her, blue transparency of her flesh, like night, sprinkled through with little twinkling stars of meaning that were thoughts. Saw her, bent his knee before her, and touched the gown of blue might and faint twinkling lights that webbed away and up into mysterious reaches of other space—to that vast face of force-life that was her beauty and her strength and her mind all in one.

The tingling electric ecstasy of that one contact, in his dreaming, woke him, and Henry sat up under those blazing alien stars and looked around. Awake, there was yet a soft breathing mystery about him. The sand still whispered too clearly the strange word of worship, and near at hand a little whirlpool of wind was dragging up the sand motes into a sparkling fountain, that whirled and whirled and frighteningly began to assume shape. Henry watched, and the strange fear that comes from the un-understandable was at his throat as the whirl of wind passed and the eerie too-lovely woman-shape remained, standing there and looking down upon him.

It glided, limbless, lovely serpentine, floating—toward him, and Henry crouched away—not in fear but in awe.

"I am Sassani, and my little selves have told me of you, stranger!" Hardly a voice, it was, but a sibilant essence of force, penetrating his bones with its vibrance, thrilling along his nerves with alien pleasant tinglings, telling his mind in phrases that had never needed words to be a

meaning.

"Do you know who I am, and how I came here?" Henry tried to make his voice masculine, dominant, resonant—only succeeded in saying dull words.

"Of course I know, that is why I am here. I have come to guide you that you may live long enough to give us your knowledge. You have learned to travel the paths forbidden to most life, to all life that we know—we understand that. We must learn from you, and in return, you from us. Too, we need you to help fight our enemy. We need your knowledge very much, stranger!"

"Well, I'll be glad to help, but you're expecting quite a bit of one who knows nothing of your world." It was exciting to think that this being who materialized out of a sand whirl could have a need for him. "Tell me, are you solid flesh like myself, and how do you do that trick of appearing out of the wind?"

"I am not here! This is but a picture I have sent you, to guide you to myself!"

"Well, start guiding, Sassani. No-one was ever more willing to get started at something different. You'd be surprised how far I've traveled looking for you, Sassani!"

"I know . . ." Sassani's voice trailed off in a little amused titter, as she disappeared again. Henry got up, looking around. A black shadow lay on the sand before him, and at the end of it was a pointing narrow triangle. Henry knew this was the way to . . . Henry hoped that at last he had found life that was not just a repetition of the life he was too accustomed to already.

▲ AT THE point of the shadow-triangle floated a glittering little blue veil, filled with the tiny points

of light. This was Sassani, Henry knew, leading him toward life different and new.

As he plodded after, Sassani's sibilant, penetrating whisper told him things, intimately.

Presently the sand ended, they walked upon a roadway where the sand had apparently been fused into a pebbled glass of green-white, tough and yet springy underfoot. At the sides of the road were a few plants, strips of vivid yellow grass, and tall cactus-like plants thrust unfamiliar outlines. These increased in number, changed, and now the roadway began to slope upward into those far hills that seemed to Henry to have been his goal for endless hours.

The plants were taller now, and occasionally a tree thrust upward, tall columnar green trunk topped by an amazingly round ball of flaming orange, like the seed pod of a mould, or some puffball of gigantic size mounted on a huge stem.

As they ascended, Henry gathered in the details of this world of a different universe with but half of his attention—the rest was centered on the intensely exciting whispering that Sassani sent to him, exhorting, explaining, awaking him to a sense of kinship with these . . . beings.

"We are the remnants of a once numerous people. You will see us, and understand what we might have been, had not **the enemy come** to our world. This place to which I take you is one of the few strongholds which have held against the Quanes."

"What are these Quanes?" The intense hate in her whisper of the name gave Henry the creeps.

"The Quanes are men like you, Henry. And they slay us, they want us out of the way. They want to

make a world like the one you left. Perhaps you had better go to them, after all. You are not like us."

"That's all I want to know, Sassani. I will go with you until I decide that the Quanes are my friends, and not you."

"It was our world till they came."

But whatever Sassani's plans for Parr, he wasn't to learn them yet. Swooping down over them, planing in swift arcs over their heads—

"The Quanes," Sassani's strange whisper rose into a sudden shrill scream, and she disappeared from before him.

The swooping figures fishtailed, lit on strong human legs before him. They were men—and women—wearing metal wings that extended across their breast, a kind of miniature plane with small jets in the center of the wing, just beyond their extended arm's fingertips. They flew in a crouching position, the tail structure controlled by flexing the knees. The first to alight slipped his arms from the rings of the wing, folded the thing compactly, hung it on his back. He walked up to Henry—said:

"Mo duvall nu?"

Henry just looked at him. Deep-set piercing eyes, wide shoulders, slender waist, well-muscled, and bigger than himself. The athletic confidence the flyer exuded discouraged poor Henry. He was exactly like men of earth, except for minor details that amounted to quite a bit when Henry added them all up. He felt encouraged as he began to note these alien details, for what Henry was seeking most of all was escape from the circle of repetition that he had learned bounded his own universe. The man's ears were far too low to be exactly normal, and he turned his head too far, as though

his neck was unlimited by bones and ligaments. There was a third joint between elbow and wrist, which gave an especially startling appearance. His legs likewise contained this extra jointing.

Behind the man a slighter figure lit on running feet, skidded to a halt almost against Henry's throbbing breast. She was young, and her dark hair in wild ringlets brushed Henry's face as she flung off the wings and tossed them over her shoulder to hang behind her. She stood on tip-toe to peer into Henry's grey eyes. She smiled, and spoke in rapid tumbling words to her companion. She pointed out Henry's fore-arm which lacked the proper jointing. She indicated Henry's ears. Henry flushed scarlet as she began to gesture rather too frankly as to the possible existence of further and more amazing discrepancies in his physical apparatus.

HIE WAS now the center of a group of Quanes, and they all talked volubly to each other while they pushed and prodded Henry's body and tried to ascertain the extent of his differences. When the girls started to disrobe him, he took to his heels, but was soon overhauled and brought low by a flying tackle from the first girl who had landed in front of him. Together they rolled on the yellow grass, she laughed with a great show of strong white teeth, and Henry found the contact thrilling but embarrassing.

After their first curiosity was satisfied they left him with the first male and the girl who had tackled him, spread their wings, the tiny jet motors hissed—they flew. His two captors plodded along beside Henry on foot. They did not follow the glass paved highway but cut across

the now wooded and hilly country. Within two miles they came upon their camp.

There was a deep sense of loss in Henry's breast at the abrupt departure of the gentle ghostlike "picture" of his friend, Sassani. She had been so obviously well-intended, cultured, and she needed him, she said. It is a good thing to be needed. She had named these Quanes enemies. Henry could understand how these boisterous flying people with their rude disregard of his own feelings, had antagonized the beings as of whom Sassani was one. He had a deep and firm conviction that he was going to find Sassani again, no matter how. To that end, Henry smiled at the mannish females of the strange people, took no notice of the stares and obviously uncomplimentary remarks which the males seemed to make about him. He tried to show that he considered himself in friendly hands, even when a male knocked him down for stumbling against him, Henry rubbed his jaw and did nothing. Which was the source of great amusement to them all. But Henry knew quite well his earthly physique did not stand a chance against these aliens. Or so he thought.

Their camp was dominated by the presence of a large flying ship. They had evidently been there but a day or two, there were cooking fires, tents and guards in duty at a distance. Henry saw this was a military expedition. The men wore a uniform, each alike. So did the women. They were identical for both male and female. There was a short kilt, weapon belt, sleeveless jacket of leather-like material. The men wore peaked helmets caught by a strap under the chin, but the women wore a kind of beret. They were a vital, healthy lot, handsome enough if you

didn't mind the alien details. But Sassani had told him they were evil, and Henry saw that in truth there was a cruel set to their lips, and a devil-take-you look in their eyes that was perhaps evil—and was perhaps only reckless courage. He reserved his judgment.

His coming seemed to bring to an end whatever had brought them there, they filed into the ship. The ship rose lightly, Henry was unable to figure out the motive power. He saw no motors, no jets, yet the ship rose and flew smoothly, silently. There was a round orifice beside his seat, he looked down upon an incredible landscape of great peaks, black chasms, and the yellow rim of the desert stretching endlessly. The ship followed the foothills of the mountains, finally entered a narrow canyon that slanted upward into the wild jumble of snowcapped Titans of black, sheer planes and clean cut edges. To Henry the mountains were interesting, they were the only mountains he had ever seen that looked new, their clean cut outlines just formed, as though some planetary convulsion had yesterday flung them up from the deep Archean rocks, new cut by awful, sudden force.

A HEAD, THE canyon broadened. and their ship planed down between the sheer cliff faces to land before a black wall of Cyclopean blocks, beyond which the tall square unornamented walls of a city rose stark utilitarian, military as a fortress. These were a war-like people Henry realized, they wore uniforms, they flew in formation, their city was a fortress, their words were clipped and short and too-often unsmiling. He did not like them, but he admired them.

He was led at a fast walk between two files of six, women on one side men on the other. Through the great grey metal gates, straight up the middle of a block-paved street, the people pausing only for a glance at him, then passing on as if there was for them no time to discuss even such a strange animal as Henry must appear to them.

Past the guards before a great doorway, and they came to halt before a great throne of severe polished black stone. About the throne lounged a score of uniformed males, bigger than the men Henry had yet seen, their weapons at their belts ornamented with silver chasings. It was almost the first decoration, of any kind he had seen among them, and the long pistol-type weapons interested him, for he could not but wonder how they worked.

They stood there waiting for a good fifteen minutes, and Henry realized he was being given the good old business, being made to realize the importance of the personage who was too busy to see them at once.

Then she came through the far arched doorway, passing under the smoky flames of the wall torches that Henry realized must be burnt continually even in daylight to give the damp stone vastness of the chamber some sense of warmth.

She strutted, her hips swayed, and Henry watched her undulate up to her throne with a rather bored feeling, it was just like a movie—the sex laid on a little too thick, her act was to Henry's worldly eye a little corny—but it seemed to go over big with the local gentry.

Everyone in the place sank to one knee as she passed, staying there until she seated herself. Henry remained standing, and was a little shaken by the fire from a battery of

frowns his unbent knees touched off.

In spite of her Queenly strut and too-obvious acting of her part—she was a finely built woman, of perhaps thirty by earth standards. Her eyes were wide-set and dark, long-lashed and strikingly full of that intensity which comes either from experience in being boss—or acting.

She was the first female of the Quanes he had seen without the kilted uniform. She wore instead a gown seemingly made of tiny emeralds held together with glittering silver threads. Over the lush thrust of her high breasts, the emeralds parted, swept aside, were replaced by a soft pleated stuff of brilliant scarlet. The proud arches of her hips were accented by an inset filagree of silver. As she sat, the gown parted up the side to reveal the milky-white, alien symmetry of her leg, out-thrust grandly in the best tradition of royalty.

SHE WAS beautiful as sin, was Henry's reaction. Beautiful, deadly, venomously evil—and irresistible—the words stopped in Henry's head. She couldn't be all those things! There was something wrong with his reactions.

But the male in him yearned toward that body on the throne, and the good soul inside him was revolted at the stark cruelty in her eyes, the lust on her lips as she smiled down—a lust that Henry knew very well was not for himself, but for the amusement he might bring her as he tried to adjust, to escape her, to remain himself.

She didn't bother with him long, merely looked him over with an amused smile, and Henry found himself led off to a—it looked like a cell in a prison to Henry. The only difference was there weren't any

bars. The windows opened on a sheer drop of hundreds of feet. The building was hung on the edge of a chasm, which must terminate the canyon up which the plane had flown to the city.

Henry leaned on the wide rock sill of his cell window, looking out on that alien world, and feeling more discouraged than ever. Was this Queen to whom he couldn't even talk, not knowing her language, what he had come all this endless path of repetitious peril to find? Was this alien, over-militarized handsome people the glory he had hoped to find upon an alien, **different** world? Was this, then, all there was to the universe—just repetition without sufficient variation to even interest his mind?

Inside his mind a hissing little voice made a singing answer—"No, Henry. I know what you seek, and I have it for you. Find Sassani, she can show you the heart of your quest, the hymeneal flame of ecstasy, the infinitudes of peril and the depths of being without being. Sassani is what you seek, not these warlike robots of repetition."

"**Sassani**" whispered Henry, and in his heart a warm flow of emotion told him that he had not been forgotten. There was yet a chance that all his effort had not been a fool's errand.

Henry watched the alien glory of a double sunset spread its interlaced flame-tails of fiery peacocking along the mountained horizon, stretched his long limbs sleepily as the dark swept down.

Henry slept. In his sleep there came the little swirling wind he knew was Sassani, the swirl tightened, her figure formed within the whirl, stepped out into his sleep. Henry felt soft arms around him,

felt the lift and pull, the sensation of flight.

SUDDENLY he was awake. Beneath him was an abyss of darkness, overhead the alien stars, on his face the sharp keening wind. About his chest soft arms pressed deep and strong. He turned his head, his eyes gazed into the star-sparkling deeps of Sassani's eyes. She laughed, a little note that ran up and down the scale deliciously.

"The Quanes are not alone in having wings, you know, Henry."

"You stole me? You took me out of their prison on wings—you are strong!"

For the first time Henry Parr realized that Sassani was flesh. Her appearance as a whirling mist, her transparent picture of herself as a blue mist of stars, wavering, fragile, lively as the webbed rays of the stars made visible against the blue; had given him the impression she was some kind of being of another dimension, a fragile kind of ghost of thought energy. But the flesh of her body above him was very real and full of throbbing vitality. There was a perfume of unmistakable femininity about her, a flowered crisp clean odor like no other in his memory.

"Why did you take the risk?"

"We need your otherworld knowledge to survive. The risk was not so great as not to rescue you. Once they had learned what you know, we would never defeat them."

"I can't see what good my special knowledge will do you, Sassani. It has nothing to do with weapons."

"I know. You will see, presently. See below is the end of that way you were upon when you followed my mist picture out of the desert. If I had only gone to you then with many, guarded you, it would have

saved me this risk."

Henry looked down, saw the pale gleam of ribbon of highway, and at its upper end on the side of the mountain, the green tall city—like an ice city, or emeralds on snow-glittering softly in the dark, the alien planes of it sweeping down and around, meeting at the end of the roadway. It was a vast thing, tower on tower, and wall on wall, unsubstantial it seemed, like a cloud city seen transiently. Sassani swooped down and Henry's breath caught as she banked and turned and spiraled on down, the soft hissing of the jets sounding very like her voice on the desert had sounded—"ssaassani."

Even as they settled to the broad roof, the sound of jets overhead rose higher, the wind keening from the wingblades, and Sassani thrust him to his face, flat on the roof. She crouched over him, her wings a wide covering shadow in the dark, and her hand held a wide snouted gun. She fired, a sharp twang like a bow-string, again and again. The wings overhead faltered, to one side a crash as a body fell. Another crash, and then beside them were others like Sassani, and Henry stared unbelieving at the strange graceful people whom he had not seen before. Sassani's shape he had guessed at as she held him beneath her in flight, but how wrong he had been. Female, thinking, vastly attractive to him in the kinship of her thinking, but now he saw that these people were not human as he knew them in any way. Soft sleek white fur covered their bodies, supple long bodies, with great dark eyes; they seemed to see in this gloom like cats, running and firing at the pursuit overhead which had dared to follow them into the very heart of the city.

Sassani slipped off the wings, left

them lying, tugged at his hand to guide him from the roof. Now and again the shapes speeding overhead made their presence deadly, as little darts bounded from the roof-top near to their running feet. Then they had entered a door, were descending a long ramp.

Sassani kept her soft furred paw in his, as he slowed, walked more easily by his side.

LIGHTS glowed in the greenish glass-like walls, deep in the material, a liquid kind of light that ran and bubbled like falling water over rocks, through all the wall.

By the light Henry examined the creature by his side more closely, ceasing only to stare as she smiled a little derisively at his avid eyes.

The beauty that is a cat's, the tall grace that is called human, had here been wedded into one creature. The round skull, the tufted, pointed ears over the too-round eyes, the pointed tongue that licked her smiling lips, the sharp little fangs that were her teeth, the smooth sleek shoulders sloping into the long utterly able arms—Henry found his Sassani wholly charming. Her waist was very small, and a wide circlet of golden metal rested on the smooth furred hips. From the golden circlet a gold-meshed net swung to her knees, front and back. It was her only garment.

"What are your people called?" asked Henry.

"We are called the Tarsi, and we consider ourselves not at all beast-like. It would be better if you tried to think of our appearance as human and acceptable, rather than as you do."

"How can you speak to me, I do not even hear it, I only know it inside!"

"It is our way of speech, and it does not require words at all. We use images, and the images behind the words you think are visible to my mind's eyes. So we do not need speech, you and I."

"Why do you fight with the Quanes?"

"They came here at conjunction, nearly twenty years ago, in great numbers. We did not try to war with them, not knowing their nature. They began to make slaves of us, and we had to fight for our existence. We are a wiser and an older race, and we will win! But now at first we lose too heavily, too many of our cities have been evacuated, we are crowded, harassed night and day by attacks, raids upon our farmers. They wreck our commerce, they feed upon the spoils of their raids, they do not have vulnerable commerce like ourselves, or farms or a world full of people. They have only their armies, and they live by fighting us. We can only win by destroying them all. That takes time, for their weapons are good."

"They are from another planet?"

"Yes, their home is a world whose orbit is very close to our own. At certain conjunctions, due to orbital variance, the crossing is very easy, made with jet planes in sealed cabins. They came then in great numbers, and we let them, not wishing to start war unless they attacked us. It was wrong to hold back."

"It is always wrong to let an aggressor have any success at all."

They had descended more of the long winding ramps and Henry watched the ever changing light, the soft grass that grew golden along the ramps sides, the little beds of flowers reaching along the walls, the hanging baskets of living plants giving off strange little wisps of scent-

ed vapor. Watching the architecture of the place unfold about him, the leaping buttresses upholding all this mass of greenstone above, the massive weight of it that yet was piled so easily as if it was all but fragile dream stuff. Everywhere upon the surface of the welded stone were little transparent hand wrought incut carvings like Swedish glass, lit from beneath with the changeable flow of light, breathless beauty incut in every inch of the stone that was translucent as glass.

"Your race has a fine talent for engineering."

"They have many talents, this is the least of their work. You will see. You will love us, Henry Parr, or we will fail to prove ourselves that we deserve a stranger's love. Did you love the Quanes?"

"Not overmuch."

"You would have loved them less had I left you there. You were slated for some amusing ordeals, such as battling a Tarsi captive with bare hands, or to be pitted against an armed Quane warrior with nothing but your hands, or perhaps the women would have baited your ignorance of their ways with mock love, and you would have learned at the end that the whole theatre of people were watching you in mirrors unknown to you. A simple thing that, but it would have humiliated you. Such things you would have undergone, to be saved again and again for much more amusing tricks, and in the end they would have killed you out of boredom with you. They know little but war, and they were planning many amusements with the alien. I can see such things in their minds, you know."

"I suppose you are right. But I thought their Queen was rather attractive."

SASSANI stopped in her tracks. "That old she-devil," her mind stormed at him. "She has slain a dozen lovers with poison because she tired of them. Don't speak of her."

"Oh, well," mused Henry, who could not help thinking, "I am only a man. She looked very beautiful."

Sassani stormed on in automatic answer to his inadvertent thought. "She is beautiful as a fire is beautiful, as a snake is beautiful, as a poisonous potion can be beautiful in the glass before you. But to have that beauty—would have cost you your life."

"That's nice to know," murmured Henry.

"If I believed you really found that Queen beautiful, if I thought that the seeking I see in your mind for something more worth having in life was a false thing, I would have left you there to learn more about the Quanes' ways!"

"Listen, Sassani. I sense in you an affection for me, an emotion greater than seems exactly called for when you think of me. Why is that, Sassani? Why do you have an affection for me, a stranger? We could never mean more to each other than friends, we are two different races, we could not even bear children."

"You have had your dreams, Henry, or you would not have worked so long to escape the rutted pattern of your life. I have had mine, too. They were not like you, but when you came across the barriers that we had thought only we Tarsi knew—when you came to solidity upon our sphere of being and I found you—I saw in you the answer to those dreams. The dreams of far places, you could tell me, even show me how to go there. The dreams of greater, fuller life, of more intense sensings in a field of energy vastly more ben-

eficial—the dreams of greater fecundity—the dreams of strange, impossible love between minds separated by gulfs to time, of space, of alienage—I have had many dreams. I believe that dreams are something important to follow. In a way I follow you, Henry Parr."

"You follow me? I don't understand!"

"I admire the courage to experiment which opened the door of the spheres to you. I admire your curiosity which led you through sphere after sphere seeking difference—something better. I want to be like you. Can't you see that?"

"I had thought of you as more able, more wise than myself. I had thought you found me amusing, and were interested from a purely logical impulse to know more of me. I did not know I was the answer to a maiden's dreams!"

Sassani laughed. "Hardly that, Henry Parr. You are much more than that. You are the answer to a nation's aspirations, the key to our future. We do not mean to lose the key."

Her laugh contained a little mockery, as though Henry were very dense not to know why she treated him so affectionately. Henry had followed her down many long spiral stairs now, his legs were weary. At last she led him into . . . impossible wonder.

HENRY stood in awe of the vast chamber to which she had led him. Whatever the science of this race, he could not expect to understand it soon. This was going to take years. A lot of years.

The place was not a perfect sphere, but some calculated ovoid whose shape was such that the eye could not be sure it was quite regular. A

tapered ovoid, perhaps with intersecting smaller spheres making adjacent rooms, the intersecting planes almost invisible, so that the eye wandered, bemused, trying to form a concept of the true shape and being unable.

There was a vast gleaming pillar of pulsing light, prisoned in transparency, in the center. About it were ranged glittering small complexities, that throbbed or whirred or just waited, unmoving, for the activating touch of an experimenter's hand. Long aisles swept between the glittering, incomprehensible complexities, and down the aisles moved a score of the white-furred man-things. They did not wear the wide circlet of gold and the delicate draping gold mesh that swung between Sassani's long supple legs. They wore instead dark robes that covered their bodies and arms, ending at the knees. Over their heads was tied a veil of silver mesh, which Henry divined had something to do with protecting their skin, their eyes, from the powerful light that pulsed everywhere in the huge irregular chamber.

Sassani greeted the first of them with an embrace, crying out: "I have brought him to you, see that you do as well for him as I have done!" There was a gladness in her voice, an exultation, Henry realized that these creatures had wanted possession of him tremendously.

"Will you tell us how you traversed the universes—where you came from, how? It is to us the deepest mystery!" The Tarsi whom Sassani had embraced spoke to Henry, his "voice" was very different from hers, deeper, more penetrating, with a consciousness of power and a pride in it that told Henry here was one of the ruling figures of this race, this city.

"It is a rather simple device I in-

vented for change of state. I change matter to a gas in a certain way that does not kill the living matter. Rising, one finds that light drives the living gas to its limit, and that there, the relative solidity of the gas, expanded as it is—is exactly the same as if it were still solid. That is, it is so tenuous that all the other tenuousities are the parts of a new world. Such is our world of life, a place where things are relatively similar in solidity. To travel into the next upward world of relative substantiality, it is only necessary to expand enough."

Henry's simply expounded account was received with a vast incredulity. "You are making dolts of us. We cannot comprehend at once—would you show us—here—in our laboratory—duplicate this apparatus?"

"Of course, but you see, it is a one way trip. There is no return. What use would it be to you?"

"It is like the legend of the soul!" One of the strange beast-like figures moved as if to bow before Henry, but the leader stopped him with a gesture.

"Let me see if I understand, stranger. You say that to travel as you have, I have only to expand like a blown up bubble, and suddenly—poof—I am solid again, but in another relative arrangement of solidities. Hmmm! It is hard to believe, but there are similar phenomena which are known, and there is the legend of the soul, many things come to mind to bear you out. But as you say, it is a thing of little use, since one cannot return. Hardly, useful to our struggle with the invading Quanes, eh?"

"Hardly," answered Henry. "But on my world we have many weapons which I do not note here, although you have evidently a greater science,

it is very different. Perhaps something I might remember would be of use. But I am not of a mind to aid you against these people until I am more sure that they are really evil."

THE TALL white-furred one turned to Sassani with a smile baring his sharp needle-teeth. "You brought him away too soon, Sassani. He likes these murderous Quanes still!"

Sassani bristled her face-fur in a grimace. "And if I had left him longer, I could not have been sure to get him back in one piece, my brother."

"Ah, well," the brother went on in the same deep mental voice that Henry found surprising, it was hard to realize that mental talking could be so much like oral—and yet so much swifter, so full of emotional nuance, of thrilling intimate contact of mind to mind, so revealing of beauties hidden before to the mind's eye by the crude words, "Ah well, it is a matter soon remedied by showing him some photo-films of their deeds. They are evil, but perhaps it is the callous attitude they take toward us—that we are but beasts and so fit only for slaughter. They are not so deadly cruel to their own mind. I wonder just what would have been Henry's fate in their hands?"

"He found that bloody Queen of theirs beautiful!"

"That is hard to understand, Sassani. But then she is familiar to his own race in shape. Are you jealous, little sister?"

"Well, I did like him. But it is impossible to think of there being anything between us, he pointed that out!"

The brother laughed, patted her shoulder. "You are incurable. He could never be happy among such as

we. Kind mates with kind, sister."

Sassani was indignant that her mental secrets should be so banded about. "Both of you are impolite to mention what lies in a woman's heart. How can I help what I feel? Of course it is impossible, but he appeals to me, and that is the way it is. Besides, there are mental communions that are vastly more satisfying than mere flesh and blood union, you should know that. Why should I not dream of such things?"

"Well, sister, if you really wanted, I could have you both translated, but I should hate to lose you."

Sassani was silent, and though Henry wondered what translation might mean, he did not ask. He liked the contact of Sassani, from the first her ways had fascinated him, but when he saw her real shape without his imaginings confusing the picture, he knew that she was too vastly different for love between them. It was a ridiculous fact they would have to forget, their sudden attachment. Something to do with his own despair and her rescue of him, something to do with her own imaginative mind attaching itself to his alien thought too enthusiastically. Henry could not believe that sex relations between them were seriously considered by Sassani. What she meant when she mentally thought of their "love" was something vastly different from his own concept, he knew.

BUT HER brother, whose name was Rovpal, was conducting Henry through the laboratory. "This place," he explained, "has developed for many lifetimes. It is dedicated to the purpose of making life more interesting. We have succeeded beyond the wildest dreams of those who began this work long long ago. There

is a great deal we can teach you, once we get the war with the Quanes out of the way. You know the main trouble with life and the senses with which we enjoy life is the presence of disintegrative forces which disrupt and nullify the thought fields in the mind, and cause a steady accumulative burn in the body that is age. We used to think that radium was the only radioactive responsible—but we have learned that nearly every element contains a large number of molecules that are radioactive. Carbon, which is in every molecule of the body, nearly, itself has radioactive isotopes which get into the body. The body is integrative, life is a product of the integration of many diverse forces and kinds of matter into a living whole. Disintegrative parts, emanations, radiations of a disintegrative source, have no place in life processes and must be eliminated. Doing this has become a complicated development, a product of nearly a thousand of your years of effort by our best scientific minds. We have learned, in that time, a great deal about life and what to do to make it vastly more than it seems to be to one not knowing how it can be improved by removing the flows of disintegrative radiations, the accumulations of radioactive material from the body, and by treating the body with integrative force flows. You will learn—Henry Parr. I can see in your mind that this side of the science of life has been untouched by your people.”

Henry was listening intently, watching as Rovpal stopped before each little intricacy and explained its working with mental messages of extreme rapidity, then passing on to the next as he swiftly gave Parr an overall picture of the work of the vast lab.

Henry was soaking up a picture of a science before which his own knowledge of what earth science could do paled into a glimmer of inconsequence. The lives of these creatures must be a multiple of the kind of life he knew—a full, mentally rich flow of thrilling experience. Suddenly the air vibrated, sound crashed in, Henry crouched to the floor as a terrific blast from overhead shook the massive green walls, quivered the solid floor like a jelly!

Boom! Brrrrroooooommm!!

SASSANI fell to the floor beside him, moaning and pressing her long slender paw-like hands to her pointed ears. Rovpal's face grimaced in terrible pain from the concussion.

“They have explosive?” asked Henry in bewilderment. He had not seen anything of explosive weapons among the Quanes.

But there was no time for explanations, for anything, it seemed. The terrible explosions followed each other without surcease.

Boom, brrooom! Boom, boom, brroooooom!

Sassani was crouched in a prayer-like attitude. Her great round eyes swung to her brother's.

“It is time, Rovpal! We must activate the translator, send everyone through. Instead of developing defenses, we have created the translator. Now it must serve as a means of escape. Now we must use it, without more delay! Do not wait too long, my brother. To be wrong in your waiting would mean the end of our race . . .

“You are right, dear little sister. I have been absorbed, criminally negligent. We will begin at once, let them have this worn-out plane.”

To Henry they were thinking incomprehensible concepts. The trans-

lator they pictured to each other in their swift thought—what was it that they indicated it could be escape for a whole city's people?

"Go, gather them all, lead them here. I will have the door open for them to pass through."

Swift as a panther, Sassani was off, leaping across the shaking floor, her hands holding her ears against the terrific blasts that must be ripping off the whole top of the city above them.

"You send her out into that?" asked Henry, thinking again without conscious volition. He could not catch the knack of this thought-talking, everything that ran through his mind seemed to be heard by the Tarsi.

"We cannot stop now to think of individual safety," Rovpal had rejoined the other workers who had remained at their labors, hurled this last at Henry as he gestured to his fellows. The whole group's sudden activity told Henry that the "translation" was going to begin. The confused pictures he had received from their ultra-rapid thought of this translation told him only that the very atoms of the body had to be altered by a change in charge brought about by a certain electric flow. The result was existence changed into some other form, a form he could not telepathically receive for he had never experienced it. He was wildly curious as to what they were going to do with such a change as a defense.

Lying on the floor watching these alien beings, busily assembling a vast bank of tiny mechanisms, focusing a series of lenses, wheeling up great strange generators and cabling them together—Henry saw he would be only in the way if he tried to help. He wanted to do something,

there was such an urgency in the thought he kept sensing in this strange city where everyone's thought echoed and re-echoed as if some built-in property of the very rock made it a place where thought could never be concealed. Parr wondered if that were true, and an answering thought told him he had hit upon it.

Henry decided to go and seek Sassani and try to help her. He picked himself up and moved to go out the door by which he had entered. Rovpal and his fellows paid no attention.

Henry raced back up the stairs which had given his legs the shakes in their too-long descent. Excitement from the continuing bombardment lent him strength, he wanted to see just what was happening that the Tarsi planned on fleeing into some strange "plane."

THROUGH an opening at the side of the great stair, Henry saw a sudden distant flash, heard the resulting "Boom" a moment later. He raced toward the opening, stood upon a little balcony overlooking the wide, canyon-like street. At each side the mighty glass-like structures of this amazing people towered up and up, and high overhead he saw the sleek long bodies of the Quane planes speeding past, saw the long bombs scream down, burst upon the roofs far above with terrific destruction. Through the street just below him poured the white-furred people, not in panic, but with intent movement toward some refuge of which they knew. The white tide of Tarsi were flowing along the street, and now behind him on the stair he saw the throng, descending in bounding leaps, pouring down into that depth beneath the ground-level

of this weird city to the great chamber where Rovpal labored to make for them an escape-way.

It was hopeless to think of finding Sassani in such a crush. Henry turned back from the sight of the city's destruction.

It was with a kind of dull despair that Henry followed the leaping throng of alien beings. Down and down, and now they entered that great irregular chamber where Rovpal had set up the translator.

In that chamber a change had taken place. Strange vapors swirled, red-lit with pulsing eerie lights that seemed themselves like vapor. Across the center of the place a great circle of blue flame throbbed, the face of the circle mirror-like, glistening and reflecting the white graceful bodies of the Tarsi.

From the ceiling to the floor it stretched, alien forces vibrated across it like flames across the sky, of another world—a world of fire, blue fire.

It was a web of force spun by these workers, a web of force, that Henry suspected was a ladder into another kind of existence. A low ramp had been erected up to the base of the great disc of blue force, and up this ramp the Tarsi pushed, to disappear into that fearful circular plane of strange fire. Fear clutched at Parr as he felt himself pushed along with the hurrying people, he did not want to step into that frightening thing, but he did, as those behind pushed on.

A LONG LINE of limbless, lovely, serpentine, seemingly, floating beings stretched ahead of Henry; a column of marching, sparkling fountain-like shapes reaching into the distance. That distance was not the planet upon which the city of the

Tarsi sat, it was not the mountains and deeps and sandy deserts of that land he knew as Sassani's home.

It was the blue force-field of weird magnetic tension which formed the face of the disc Rovpal had created. That was no disc, it was a door into another kind of place than any Henry had imagined existed. Here matter did not exist, solidly and irrefutably present. Instead it vibrated softly, changing always like a shifting jewel. In the distance there were tall whirling towers of dark force, and closer at hand little shifting hummocks of blue translucence speared through with shafts of violet and rose and glowing, fiery gold. Across the plane of the distance little whirlpools of scarlet fountained, moved softly for a moment, disappeared. In a moment they reappeared farther on, dancing in patterns of movement that must be dictated by a thinking mind within the strange vibrant pulse of them.

Henry suddenly was aware of a blue veil singing, softly sibilant words beside him, a too-lovely woman—shape revealed by that blue veil with the little star-lights flickering in the depths.

"Sassani!" breathed Henry in awe. This was the way he had first met her, then she had seemed to him an enchantress, beckoning him on to the thing he had sought so long.

"S,ss, sassani, yes," the woman-shape breathed. "Look at yourself, now, alien!"

Henry glanced down at his own legs, at his hands, his body. Startled, terrified, he gasped—"Sassani, what has happened to me?"

For where his legs should be he was only a deep veil of violet darkness, sprinkled through with pinpoints of red sparks, through which veil quivered long wavering streaks

of night-black.

Sassani laughed, a rich eloquent sound, as of a mother listening to a child's first words.

"You have a very attractive body, here, my dear Henry. Have you not yet understood?"

"This is what you were when we first met? Then you left me, went back through the doorway to your world! Yes, I understand. That is why you loved me, because you knew that here we would be similar."

"Yes, here one's shape takes any form one wills for it. Watch—"

Swiftly her body of gold-lit blue veil swelled, became round as a ball. Then as swiftly it elongated into one long ribbon of swaying, softly dancing beauty. The lovely ribbon of gold-shot blue force curved into a long bow, the end of the curve touched Henry's head, and swift as thought, the whole length had twined about his body like a great serpent, squeezing lightly. A thrill of tremendous shocking change ran all through Parr's new form, his lips burned with sparkling, almost visible ecstasy, before his eyes a curtain of binding, rainbow color sprang and fled and came again, a wealth of unendurable pleasure swept over him in a flood.

He found himself again one, and he gasped—"What did you do to me, you sorceress?"

"I merely kissed you, blind one. Was it fun?"

"It was Heaven and Hell and the lightning of magic—it was everything! Sassani! Now I know what I have been looking for so long!"

"**There is much more, here!** For long have my brother and I explored this land of strange difference. It was the unresistable pleasures of this land that kept us from our duties to our people, and allowed the

Quanes to get the foothold here. Now we have used it to save our race from annihilation. They can return, but they will never wish to, no one can go back permanently because they cannot wish to live again in the solid world."

"That is why you did not attack, wipe out the Quanes. You had the resources, the brains to devise means to defeat them. But you did not."

"We know that the world they warred to conquer was worthless beside this one. We have been working to build the great-gateway—but they attacked us sooner than we planned. It was my taking of you from the Queen of the Quanes that brought on the attack."

THE TWO softly whirling veils of force moved across the strangely pleasant surface of their new world. The long column of the Tarsi in their new bodies moved on ahead, stretching as far as eye could reach ahead and back.

"Will we never return to give those fascists what they deserve?" asked Henry.

"When we are ready, we will return in this form, for they cannot affect us. But we have not explored the means of opening the way enough. We must devise a little opening to carry in the hand. Then one can see through into the solid world, even fire through the opening, and the missile would change into matter as it passed. But we have yet to learn about this land. It may be foolish effort ill-spent to bother with that solid world."

It was a land of myriad quivering veils of magic, which parted before one, revealing ever new reaches of stimulating different forms and colors, colors that changed subtly even as one sensed them with the

strange strong sensing that was so vividly greater; changed subtly, swiftly from one singing hue to another; and the forms shifted before one's eyes, seemingly guided by an intelligent will to assume those shapes most desired by the mind, to change again as some new will made its desires felt more strongly.

"Where is this world we have entered, Sassani?"

"We do not even know, Henry. We have only just mastered the entry and explored a little. We have been plunged into it by the invasion before we are ready. It may be time and matter and force and position are all concepts having no meaning here. This may be the planes of force in space itself. This world may have no beginning and no end, we do not know. We only know it is wonderful and that we are strong and well here, even when we are weak and old and sick in the solid world."

"Where are these people going? They seem to know . . ."

"Yes, Rovpal leads them to a place he and I located where the flows of this place form a more stable setting for our first city here."

"A sort of force-eddy, that would be, where this constant shifting slows. Yes, it would be easier to adjust there to the different environment."

The long column of weirdly soft shapes of what had been the Tarsi wound on and on across the shifting hills and flowing valleys of fluid, up-holding force.

As they moved along, the swift mind of Sassani tried to explain the wonderful land to Parr.

"You see, Henry, thought itself has always been a mystery to us, as to you. For centuries our scientists have searched for the answers of questions which your race has only

begun to even visualize. They learned that thought is an energy that sources outside the mind. They made a kind of dynamo that created the raw stuff of mental force, the stuff of which thought is constructed, and found that the thought of a man acted as a catalyst upon his force. Some thing in the mind acts as a wonderfully fecund seed when it is supplied with the thought-energy. So it is that a flow of this stuff gives one the power to make with the mind any shape one imagines. For centuries these machines were playthings of our race, it became a highly developed art to make the flowing, changing shapes such as you see about you. It is a kind of magic and these images which grow from seed thoughts have a vivid kind of life of their own, but I see that is hard for you to understand. Anyway, it finally occurred that a scientist, my father, created the force field we call the translator. It is a door to a vast world of energies unobservable to one without the key. Here, in this world, which is a river; nay, a flowing ocean of the same kind of forces which the mind handles when it creates images and thought—emotions, pleasures and pains and visions—all the things you think and many more that you have never been able to think or even imagine—in this world of that thought-force, natural and plentiful as matter itself, when one steps through the field that transforms matter into integrated, tightly-bound thought-force instead of the thing we call matter—one is a being who controls the world around one. Watch!"

SASSANI, A glittering pillar of blue, webbed with glittering golden threads of light, a pillar of weird beauty which stretched out an arm

of soft vibrant force and shaped a hand to speak out with will . . . pointed with her suddenly appeared finger at a low brown hummock of dull, slowly flowing semi-matter nearby. From her pointing finger a golden thread of swift lightning flashed, and where it splashed into the hummock, change flowed outward from it. Swiftly the hummock grew, spiralling upward in a little fountain of sudden change, until quite suddenly it became a human-appearing being, a tall, slender man with waving brown hair, with eyes of a wondering, hungry blue, with cheeks of pale bronze and smiling, humorously twisted lips. His arms were bronzed and well muscled, his features regular and strong, his white teeth gleamed, his slender waist bent as he made a courteous bow to the tall blue pillar that was Sassani.

Suddenly Henry understood. This suddenly appeared man of earth was himself as Sassani saw him, as he had appeared to her that first day on the desert!

"Small wonder you fell in love with me, Sassani, if that is how I looked to you!"

"Yes, Henry Parr, here in this world of motile mind-controlled force we can shape our thoughts into things about us, make the world into that appearance we desire most, and then tomorrow shatter it and remold it again."

Softly Henry's thought quoted—

"Shatter this sorry scheme of things entire.

"And then remould it nearer to the heart's desire."

"Exactly, Henry. That is why we did not stay to battle with the Quanes. We did not want to deprive our people of the wonders of this world to fall in battle with the stu-

pid Quanes for a world we no longer need."

Henry was thinking of the beauty of that gold-speckled veil of blue that trembled beside him. From inside his body he saw there flowed toward Sassani's body a flickering stream of pale red, and that where it struck her body little sections of her veil-of-being turned softly violet, quivered faster, ecstatically answered his flow of emotion with a dancing, a quivering. From her body there flowed toward him in answer a vibrating, softly humming little stream of pure gold, that struck against his chest, spread outward, and as it spread there awoke within him a singing, an ecstatic answering vibrance, that grew and grew until his whole body was sprinkled over with dancing golden flecks, each of which was itself ecstatic pleasure.

"What . . . ?" Henry's mind wondered at the strangely wonderful phenomenon, an interchange of visible flows of beautiful energy between them, an energy that made every spot it touched quiver with pleasure.

"IT IS visible body-magnetic, Henry. It means you are falling in love with me, and that we can see our love is one new wonderful thing I learn! For see, my own body answers yours with true singing response. One can tell there is a harmony there, if that harmony was not there between our inmost beings, the flow would not be in one direction only, and would cease for lack of answer. It is true, we are mates, whether we so planned or no, it cannot be helped. Our very inward atoms are fecundating each the other. We will be bound, if it continues."

"One of nature's little traps that I cannot summon desire to escape! My desires lead all the other way."

Sassani's soft hissing energy-voice made a singing little answer in him—"Nor I, Henry. We pioneer a new world, it happens to us, we cannot escape. Let us not worry, but accept the fate."

As they looked at the long column of figures, they saw that here and there between the couples similar semi-visible magnetic flows of love-energies were active, fecundating, binding them in that web of strange interchange from which there seemed no escape.

Presently the tall black and scarlet of Henry Parr's new body walked close beside the blue and gold fountain of lovely force that was Sassani, and two soft tendrils of round force were their arms about the other.

Now the column of refugees wound wonderingly down from the shifting mountains of changing colorful force, and found spread before them a great valley of seemingly solid soil, green with the grass their eyes imagined into being, plumed and tufted with the fruiting plants their eyes expected to find, and in the center of the lovely valley reared a crystalline castle, surrounded by the towered roofs of a city, tier by tier extending down to the banks of a stream of silvery clear water. Henry gasped with the beauty of the scene spread out before them. Sassani whispered into his black and scarlet ear: "Do not speak of the nature of this plane of being to the others. So long as they think this valley is beautiful, it will remain as you see it—as they think it. Once they learn the truth about this world, it will melt away and become only a dull mirror of their changing thoughts.

It is Rovpal's work, this valley, he created it with much work to welcome them, to give them time to adjust to the terrific newness of this

way of life-change."

"In this eddy things remain longer, mirror still, but retentive, eh?"

"Yes, this force eddy is a retentive mirror, as you put it. So long as they all constantly renew the mirror with their preconceived thought of what is here, it will remain. Perhaps forever, so long as there is even one to seed it anew with his thought from day to day."

The long column of lovely undulant pillars of translated Tarsi bodies wound on, softly treading the strange plane of force that was the soil, intent upon the beauty of their new world. Wound into the valley, entered between the wide spread gates of the great paved way, gates of bronze and silver, topped with Tarsi sculptures of the bodies they had had in the former existence. Lovely was the city they entered, and soft and familiar as home the darkness that descended slowly as each little grouped family separated and sought out the home which they would choose for their own.

Henry was surprised to find that Sassani was leading him toward the great castle of crystal that reared above the city.

SASSANI smiled an answer to his question—"Yes, my Henry, did you not know that my brother and I are the only Tarsi chosen by popular voice to rule? Each ten of our years there is a new choice, but for many centuries our family has been chosen to rule, and the people have not found reason to change. We are loved, Rovpal and I. So will you be, when they know you."

"Then you are a Queen?"

"No, foolish one. My brother rules, among us it is considered too strenuous work for a woman. I am only his little sister. It is not so much a

high honor among us to be ruler as you think. It is a tough job which we are chosen to handle when we prove our fitness. My family are hereditarily strong and vital, so we are always picked because of ability only. When a man stronger appears, the regular tests will show it, and he will replace Rovpal. It is nothing, you must not think it is overly important. It is just a tough job, to us of the Tarsi."

"I cannot understand why such a woman as you has not already a lover?"

A little golden chuckle of the pulsing light flecks ran over the blue shimmering pillar that was Sassani.

"Let me tell you a secret, Henry. It is safe to tell you now that I know what grows in your heart for me. Among the Tarsi I have always been seen to be a very ugly female."

"Impossible!" Henry was deeply shocked.

"Nevertheless it is true. To your alien eyes the things we see as beauty are not the same. You do not have our standards. When I met you, my lonely heart saw that your standards would not be ours, that you would not judge my looks by Tarsi ways of thought. So my heart leaped to ensnare yours, and succeeded. Am I honest with you?"

"Yes, I can see you speak the truth. But it is unbelievable."

"Here, in this world, my mind makes me superior to any of the Tarsi, even those who were considered most beautiful. Here, it may be different indeed. There may be many who will try to take me from you, now." Sassani's thoughts were a little impish, Henry saw, but it was true that the sinuous blue and gold of her body here was vastly more attractive than the duller, less vivid female shapes of the Tarsi women. Henry's heart sank as he contem-

plated having to compete with these superior trained minds of the Tarsi, a race of people who had delved deeper into thought than any human of earth had ever hoped. But the soft tentacle of blue fluid force that was Sassani's arm gave his body a reassuring pressure.

"Remember, Henry, I am prejudiced in your favor."

"Let us hope you remain so. I would hate to lose this paradise now that I have found it."

* * *

THE STRANGELY unspaced time swept by, unmarked floods of time, and Henry Parr became an active citizen of an alien people, became one of the Tarsi of the translation. Happiness such as no man ever experienced was his daily fare.

Then into the Eden the Tarsi pioneered came the serpent, as he has always come soon or late.

Into the great central chamber of the crystal palace, that chamber that Rovpal's mind had shaped to resemble so nearly the great laboratory which had sheltered the gateway of the translation, into the busy scene of laboring, tenuous pillars of force that were the translated scientists of the Tarsi—there rushed a messenger—a small green-and-white figure that fountained up in their midst suddenly, his thoughts beating at them like sudden painful blows.

"The Quanes have solved the riddle of our escape! Awaken, Tarsi!"

Rovpal, stern and huge in his vibrant strength, a great quivering droplet-shaped focus of vivid arterial crimson striped with the masculine ebon in broad bands of vertical, powerful virility; spun upon his point of force; sent his thought streaming into the messenger until he turned a dull crimson in an echo-

ing sympathetic vibrance— “How could they have solved the problem it took the Tarsi centuries to conquer? Why do you come here shouting panic?”

“Nevertheless the Quanes are streaming through the self-same gate-way by which we entered. You sent me to watch it, and they have opened it and stream through. They are horrible in this world, we will have battles terrible beyond the struggles before!”

“They must have rebuilt the original machinery of the translator! We had no time to destroy it, we left a time-device to complete the work after the last of us came through. Perhaps they did not need knowledge . . .” mused the powerful figure of Rovpal. A mighty anger sang blood-red electric all through him, this their refuge should again be invaded by the Quanes! He had no doubt they were intent upon conquest, they had little else in their minds but will to dominate others.

Swiftly he gave orders. Now out of that peaceful city of green-and-white marble-like towers and battlements, up from that valley of soft green grass and silver flowing river, out of the new Eden of the Tarsi, flowed the marshaled forces of the disciplined males of the race. Back along the shifting hills and shimmering force-fields of the way they had come went the columns, not straggling now, not loving pulses of fecundant emotion between the figures now; but a wide crescent of rippling units combined into one flow of terrible anger by the outrage of this new invasion. Among them all sped the scarlet lightning of Rovpal's thoughts, reminding them of the long series of steadily mounting injuries which the Quanes had dealt them, how they had been

driven from their homes . . . and how they would learn the ways of this changeling world of force and in the end find a way to successful conquest over the Tarsi. The scenes of the last terrible bombing that had struck down their last loved city, these scenes of death and flight, Rovpal sent broadcast among them. The very hills rose up in answer to the power of his angry thought and shaped themselves into dread shapes of revenge, into shapes of wounded and dying Tarsi citizens they had all seen die under the onslaught of the Quane warriors.

WITH THE rush of this weird army of his fellows sped Henry Parr, once man-of-earth, now greatly more than man-of-earth and yet only one unit of a wave of mighty God-like anger against these invaders who sought the death or enslavement of his own loved people—the capture and violation of his own Sassani.

Now in the side of the vast grey mountain they sighted the great round opening of violet wavering force that was the gateway.

Through that opening was pouring a steady stream of uniformly brown massive globules of life! As unindividual as ants, these thought-forms of the Quanes; they undulated forward in a wide column, great black spots where eyes should sparkle, long pseudopods reaching to pull them forward in inflexible imitation of gravitational procedure in walking. Henry saw then that as a man thinks, so is he, for these Quanes were the most gruesome lot of thought-images he had ever dreamed could exist. Man-ants, ants of errant unimaginable repetitious blobs of mirrored force, flowing into this Eden they had discovered to

make it all one mirroring brown repetition of their own inflexible non-beauty!

From their leader, the great crimson-and-black of Rovpal, flashed now toward the brown column a mighty bolt of golden destruction, spreading and forking in its flight, until at impact point it speared into a score of the leading figures—impaled the brown massive blobs through and through; left as it withdrew again, flowing back more slowly to return to its source—left upon the violently flickering mirroring force-field only pale brownish stains spreading liquidly to be absorbed into the general flow of force.

A great shout of pain and loss sprang up from the brown column, visible as blue and mournful flickering lightning, and from the brown blobs great spears of intended destruction sprang toward the oncoming crescent of blue and crimson and gold fountaining pillars of individualized mental life that were the Tarsi. Those spears were their quick reaction, imitating the method of fighting which must be used here in this so-different world, were their attempt to instantly adopt the methods of mind-warfare.

Parr reasoned that this had been their only preparation—that they had been so instructed by their over-confident leaders. An exultation rose in Parr's breast, he saw that their inexperience could not possibly overcome the skill of the Tarsi in their own world of thought. But that exultation died swiftly as he saw the brown spears of speeding force impale one after another of the beautiful columns of life-force and bring them down, to writhe upon the mirror of force that was the soil and slowly go out, fade into non-being. These man-ants had learned some-

thing of this plane before entering was evident. They have spent long months of preparation, scouting through the opening of the Gateway when unobserved—studying the weird thought-mirroring transformations of this world and training their warriors in the mental manipulation of the fluid non-material energy.

SORROW ran like a sudden dark lightning all along the face of the speeding crescent of Tarsi at sight of the death of their comrades, and now at Rovpal's order they each put into their outflowing thought-force the intent of barrier, and in front of the oncoming brown column swiftly arose a vast wall of blackness, a blackness shot through with the crimson gleamings of their race-anger, a wall vibrant with vengeful intent. Against this half-transparent wall the speeding brown blobs hurled themselves only to rebound, hurt and dazed by the force of destruction intent inherent in the very energies of which it was made.

The dreadful column of transposed Quane mentality came to a confused halt, milled in a circle, gathering like a tide of dirty brown water as the brown blobs pushed each against the other and so mingled their beings, due to their non-individuality, in a liquid, flowing, melting suddenly into individual blobs and again melting into one fluid again. The raging anger of the Tarsi now began to fling over the top of the quivering barrier of semi-darkness great swirling whirlpools, vortices of the stuff of the soil about them, picked up by their motile reaching arms of moving energy and flung spinning high, arcing down upon the invaders, spinning and rolling among them crushing—striking out with suddenly reach-

ing arms, arms which melted, returned to the central core of the vortice and then struck out again.

The slippery stain of death spread brown about the milling pseudopod feet of the Quanes, and the brown milling tide of them visibly lessened.

But through the great violet gateway still the ant-like army marched, and through the round opening Henry Parr could see the stalwart, erect human-like bodies of the Quane warriors, running up the ramp to leap into the curtain of awful force, coming to supporting soil-like force-field as changed brown creatures, still running, their legs now long quivering tentacles which swiftly lessened into round shapeless plodding members that seemed to support their monotonously similar bodies.

It was awe-inspiring to watch, and for a moment he forgot his own peril, but now over the barrier of their wills came great red flames, sent by the combined will of the Quanes, scorching down in a great arc toward their own fast closing lines, a crescent swiftly closing in upon the barrier-halted column of Quanes.

Scores of the beautiful columnar shapes of the Tarsi fell quivering, paled into death, lay staining the strange earth with rainbow hues that darkened slowly into sameness.

The master will of Rovpal met this flame with leaping shafts of a strange tinkling, glass-like stuff, and where the musical tinkling of the shafts met the flame, there the flame died into softened, harmless hues of pale red.

Taking their cue from Rovpal's ingenious example, the wills of the Tarsi flung up a tall hedge of the tinkling, flame neutralizing shafts, and the flames hissed harmlessly out against the new barrier that arced over the first dark wall in long

shadowing combs of impenetrable hedging.

Now the brown horde adapted a new tactic, shaping themselves into a wedge of brown force, they plunged *en masse* against the barrier of darkness, and inch by inch it gave, shattering at last before the terrible strong suggestion of overwhelming force that the Quanes were convinced they possessed. As Henry saw this conviction of their own invincibility overcome the vastly more clever work of the Tarsi, an idea came to him, and he turned, sped back, fleeing from the line of battle. As he fled he heard the vast anger-inflamed thought voice of Rovpal cursing him for a coward, even flinging after him a shaft of speeding darkness that knocked the strength out of him for a moment. But he picked himself up and went on, there was no time for that.

The strong force of that shaft even convinced him that he was fooling himself, that this fleeing was in truth his wish to get away from the peril of the slaughter while he had life to flee, and not the impulse to secure aid which he had at first thought. He was mightily confused and tears of hot light formed in his eyes as he sped away, for if Sassani was watching he knew her love for him would die in her breast.

THE BATTLE went on and on; the Tarsi, unable to overcome the powerful mental conviction of the Quanes in their own power, were forced back and back, and now, their numbers cut to half, they faced such superior numbers of Quane man-ants that there was in truth no hope. The mirroring forces of this world had played them false, they had not anticipated that the energy would mirror stupidity as well as

cleverness, dumb belief in unconquerable strength quite as readily as their own fluid genius toward variant weapons. Back and back they sped, seeking some means of overcoming the onweeping brown tide, and now their backs were to the deep valley of green that was their home.

Here, above the valley they rallied, and out from the lovely city of crystal and gold and bronze sped the glittering veils of soft force that were their women; sped the soft, lithe loving shapes of their wives—out to meet death battling beside their mates. Ebon striped male pillars were now spaced side by side with the lovely woman-forms of the vibrant energy bodies of the Tarsi women, and out from their massed lines sped bolt after bolt of raw hate, made into destructive shafts of death by the magic of the stuff of this world.

But havoc though they wrought among the Quane columns, sweeping on and on inexorably they came, and in every Tarsi breast the blue sorrow quivered and spread like the poison of death itself!

Then, striking terror into Quane as well as into Tarsian, a strange vast shape hove over the distant mountains, came speeding out of the depths of the far horizon with great world shaking thuds of feet, a shape inexplicable and vast.—An entire terrible mountain of motion, slow turning within its own inertial vastness, a mountain plucked by some miracle and moving down upon the combined entangled battle lines like the avalanche of fate itself overcoming all—and Quanes and Tarsi broke before the terrible sight and fled right and left, back and front—scattered to escape the vast rolling weight of a moving mountain out

of the peaked horizon of the world.

It was a mountainous veil of violet darkness, shot through with great flaming points of red fire, striped again and again with the great ebon stripes of Tarsi masculinity. On and on it rolled, towering above the hosts like the broad face of a God, towering like the far tornado of angry space itself, torn loose by a God and hurled down upon the brawling races of lesser being.

The hosts of embattled warriors separated, the brown tide of the Quanes fell back, their tall brown leaders striving to rally them ineffectually, so that between the armies there opened a wide lane of peace.

DOWN THIS lane of silence between the forces the terrible mountain of fire-shot moving anger moved with vast pillaring legs shaking the soil, waking the echoes as an earthquake wakes echoes from the heart of the earth beneath.

Straight to the center of the two facing armies it marched, spun slowly, facing the Quanes with terrible vast eyes of fire-shot darkness, spinning orbs of death-intent spearing shafts of fear-flow into the breasts of the Quanes, so that they fell to the ground in death or fled incontinent before the face of doom.

Now the legs retreated into the vast body, and the tall mountain became round, a great rolling cylinder, crushing, rolled over and over, turgidly, slowly, crushing toward the backing, turning horde of brown Quane warriors. Faster it rolled and faster, now the Quanes sped away before the terror like curs before a bear.

The brown horde became a speeding flight of quivering blobs of fear, and the fireshot violet mountain

paused for a moment watching, and then a strange thing happened which no Tarsi understood.

Out from the weary lines of the Tarsi shot a blue and gold streak of speed, sped to the vast violet mountain of force, climbed swiftly up its side and settled there upon the peak of it!

From the gold and blue of the woman Sassani little golden flows of meaning went down into the mountain, like threads of visible love.

Now, with the blue and gold of Sassani upon the top of the rolling cylinder, the vast crushing force rolled off, faster and faster, and the speeding Quanes were overtaken blob after blob, group after group, column after column, until as the great circle of the gateway came into sight there were but scores of the Quanes who reached and sped through the circle of purple light and out into the land of the solid, material plane again.

The mountain turned now, rolled softly upon the circle of the gateway from the side, the pillar of gold and blue urging it on, and there the force of it was materialized into its otherworld nature of rock and earth, piled there like an immovable mountain where it merged with the matter of the other side of the gateway.

Then, arm in arm, down the now immovable and bound force of the doom that had caught up with the Quanes came two tall shimmering pillars of energy, and between the two strangely lovely beings there was webbed a golden and scarlet tangle of violently moving threads of terrific intent—of vivid ecstatic love-thought so intense as to be visible as hard steel.

Up to meet the two pillars of beauty came a long line of weeping,

yet rejoicing beings, who made themselves into a great walking support upon which the two lovers, Henry Parr and Sassani of the Tarsi, were borne home to the city Parr had saved from destruction.

"You see, Sassani, we could not have beaten their stupid belief in their own powers, because the energy here reflected it according to the amount of mass-strength of their thought. So to defeat them, I had to go and acquire a mountain which had not yet reflected their fecund seed-thought. Over the horizon, I mounted upon a great mass of virgin energy, impregnated it with my own seed-thoughts thoroughly so that I had a greater mass of energy reflecting my will than that of their army, and by sheer weight of momentum of reflection, overcame their massed weight of belief. It was a question of the overwhelming mass meeting the irresistible ego of stupidity—and the greatest mass won, naturally."

Sassani merely whispered, hissing—"SSSH, Henry Parr, I knew it was you by the virility, the lovely color of the mountain."

"Did you doubt me when you saw me flee?"

"I—I tried to understand, but I could not. It was a terrible emotion to have, the feeling that you had turned coward nearly killed me."

"I was afraid it would kill your love, Sassani, sorceress. . . But it did not!"

"No, as you can see, it is very much alive."

Henry looked into the sparkling depths, of her, and a slow flush stole over the dark violet, a flush of scarlet, throbbing, strange ecstasy. For within the vibrant webs of her inner being, a little new life was nested, peacefully sleeping—

waiting to be born.

"A blessed event, Sassani, is going to take place one of these days!"

As Sassani's mental gaze followed Henry's intent gaze, sheer golden

surprise swept all through her in singing sudden flames of dancing beauty. Her laughter tinkled into rich arpeggios that he should know before herself. . .

EDITORIAL

(Concluded from page 5)

seeking support. I don't pretend to know how many persons were on this-mailing list, but I hardly think that it would be possible to obtain more than a couple of thousand names and addresses of science fiction readers. If Palmer expected the phenomenally high response to this mail order promotion of 50%, he could hike his circulation only a thousand copies, a mere drop in the bucket compared with the circulation required to produce a paying newsstand pulp magazine.

Fandom has reacted more violently toward Palmer than toward the other low-quality science fiction publications in the past. I think that's explainable through the healthier atmosphere that prevailed in most of the other magazines. The famous Sgt. Saturn, for example, treated his readers as a bunch of juvenile nit-

wits, which in essence they were. Other magazines simply ballyhooed their contents as exciting action stories, an honest procedure, and some of them are mentioned occasionally with affection in today's fanzines for that very reason.

Whatever charge may be made against Palmer, he is consistent. At a time when the entire pulp magazine field is dwindling, because the juveniles are turning to television screens and **Confidential**, he continues to try to make money with the same kind of science fiction pulps that he was publishing fifteen years ago. His magazines get smaller and smaller, the titles change more and more frequently, his editorial discussions of what RAP is doing for science fiction become more and more repetitious. I'm starting to feel for him much the same semi-affection that I'd feel if someone discovered a living, breathing dinosaur in some remote corner of the world.
—Harry Warner, Jr.

IN THE YEAR 2001

By Allen Glasser

Two Thousand and One is far away;
Yet many who live in our present
day

That distant time may well survey.
What marvels will they then behold?

What mysteries are still untold?

What wonders will that world unfold?

Despite the wails of prophets glum,
A future bright is sure to come,

With brand new things—and here

are some:

All lands made lush and desert free,
With purified water from the sea,
Piped fresh and clear where need
may be.

Vast polar regions turned to green
By man-made weather, warm,
serene,

Where snow and ice fields once were
seen.

Across the globe where cities tower,

Huge planes, employing rocket power,
er,

Span seas and continents in an hour.
With bodies of steel and blood of oil,
Robots whose brains are a metal
coil

Will handle the burden of human
toil.

Atomic force, used everywhere,
Will ease man's lot beyond compare,
And grant long leisure all can share.

By tapping solar energy,
Mankind will find another key
To bring his life more luxury.

With food made plentiful for all,
No more will hunger hold in thrall
The teeming millions on this ball.

No more diseased, no more insane,
No suffering from needless pain—
As science scores its greatest gain.
World peace secured by reason
sound—

No need to fight for richer ground,
When benefits for all abound.

With Earth entirely in control,
Man's eager, ever-seeking soul
Will reach out toward a greater
goal—

To break the gravitation bar
And soar through space to worlds
afar

That whirl around our solar star.
When once the bonds of Earth are
shed,

The moon will first feel human
tread—

And then the planets lie ahead!
To Mars and Venus men will go,
To Saturn, Jupiter . . . and so
Beyond the scope of this tableau.
For while our future tale is done,
Space travel will have but begun
In that far year—Two Thousand
One.

To know still more of the coming
scene,
And learn what looms behind Time's
screen,
Just keep on reading this magazine!

WHY DON'T YOU PULL YOUR HAIR OUT BY THE ROOTS?

You might as well, if you're going to let dandruff and scale and skin rash make you bald as an egg. You've bought plenty of preparations and they don't work, you say? Of course they haven't! You've probably been cheated as many times as I have. I'll bet I've spent hundreds of dollars on jim-dandy goo and wound up with worse dandruff than I started with. Made me plenty mad, too. I always get mad when I think of the lousy junk designed to chisel your honest dollars out of you. Mad enough so that when I find something good, I'm not bashful about telling my friends about it. And FLYING SAUCERS readers are my friends. I had dandruff all my life, and despaired of getting rid of it, until one day Ken Arnold (the flying saucer man) left a half bottle of Turn-er's at my home, and flew off to Boise without it. I tried the stuff, because Ken's no sisy, and doesn't put perfume on his hair. Well, in one week my dandruff was gone! And my hair had begun to darken. My wife tried it, and her rash disappeared. You can bet we wrote Ken in a hurry and asked where he got it! And now, we're telling you. But don't just take our word for it—here are a few testimonials from our readers, to back us up.

As I have about used up one bottle of your hair preparation, please send me another, I have had very good results in ridding myself of dandruff and itching. Lionel O. Brandberg, Sharon Springs, Kans.

Enclosed find money order for \$10.00 for two more bottles of Turn-er's as soon as possible. You sure found a good product. In the sixth application my dandruff was cured. Thanks to you. It does all you say and more, too. And it sure brings back the natural color to your hair. Thanks! E. E. Van Gordon, 1905 W. Milham Road, Kalamazoo, Mich.

Enclosed please find check for \$5.00 for another bottle of Turn-er's as soon as possible. I have been bedeviled by a terrible itching in my eye-brows for over thirty years. It seemed to be a large flaky dandruff, but if I combed it out too near the skin, a watery substance would start, causing a scab-like condition. I have been to dozens of doctors . . . none did the slightest bit of good. After reading what Ray Palmer said, I decided to try Turn-er's. After the sixth application, I have not had an itch in my brows, and the skin underneath is as clear and clean as my face. I certainly am thankful to Mr. Palmer for bringing such a fine product to my attention—S. W. Crusen, 2336 Fillmore Ave., Buffalo 14, N.Y.

Enough? Well, then take it from
Ray Palmer, one bottle of

TURN-ER'S

WILL:
CURE YOUR DANDRUFF
RESTORE YOUR HAIR TO ITS NATURAL
COLOR
(even if it's as gray as a dirty
snowbank)
STOP ITCHING SCALP
CLEAN UP SCALP RASH
MAKE YOUR SCALP PINK AND CLEAN
AS A BABY'S

POSITIVELY!

Send \$5.00 to GUY L. TURNER,
Box 145-P, Boise, Idaho
And Tell Him FLYING SAUCERS'
Editor Sent You

LETTERS

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The Beast from Another World bows its head to the Beauty of Marjii Fllers, Forry Ackerman's out-of-this world fanne discovery in Hollywood, while Mr. SF himself helps hold the Monster at hay with a copy of Other Worlds.

Dear Rap:

I've been wanting to tee off at some of the (to me) annoying features of *Other Worlds*. I refuse to put up with the "Flying Saucers from" part, even if it is in smaller type. After all, I think you know as well as I do that *Other Worlds* and *Flying Saucers* are two different magazines, and you might as well admit it. The combined magazine (s) cause a lot of unnecessary confusion, which could be eliminated if you'd just separate the two. Not all readers of OW are interested in flying saucers.

The cover of the July issue was good, even if it was a reprint from your December 1951 issue. It's nice of you to use old reprints so we won't remember them as quickly and maybe even think for awhile that you have a new Malcolm

Smith cover, which wouldn't be a bad idea.

In the editorial, you brought out some interesting points. I usually like your editorials, especially the crusading ones. I usually buy my mags at the same newsstand anyway, but your suggested procedure is only good for small newsstands. I think that all real science-fiction fans should subscribe to their favorite magazines. I intend to subscribe to another magazine every time I save enough money.

The stories in this issue ranged from good space opera (*Quest of Brail*) to stupid trash (*A Woman is a Non-Mechanical Thing*). The other stories were routine. The *Scientifilm Searchlight* column was much improved. The main fault was that in the stories I found an over-abundance of sex. I don't mind sex in a story if it is necessary to making the story better or furthering the plot, but when you print sex for its own sake, you're catering to readers of *Playboy* and followers, not science-fiction fans. OW isn't the first magazine to start printing this sort of trash, and it probably won't be the last, but I hope it will be the first to stop. You are the only one who can do it, Rap. If you let the authors know that you don't want this type of stuff, they won't write it.

I think that, considering the rate at which you pay your authors, you get some very good stories. Of course, the pay isn't your fault. But if you stop printing sex and start printing better stories, your circulation will go up and so will your income and so will the payment for the stories and so will the quality of the stories. I hope for the best.

Leslie Gerber
201 Linden Blvd.
Brooklyn 26, N.Y.

It will no doubt make you happy to know that OTHER WORLDS, as a science fiction magazine, will be kept entirely separate from FLYING SAUCERS, and all you have to do is buy the science fiction editions every other month. As for keeping them separate, a glance at the cover should be sufficient to enable you to do that. The truth of the matter is, however, that the magazine field insofar

as fiction is concerned is so very bad that, without one we can't afford to publish the other. Sometimes we wonder why we publish science fiction at all . . . we have never made a dime on it! Neither does your newsdealer, on any science fiction magazine. Just ask him about his percentage of returns on science fiction, and he's likely to clobber you with a copy of the nearest one at hand! Did you know that the largest distributor of science fiction magazines in the world just discontinued its magazine business entirely? As a result, perhaps a half-dozen of your favorite science fiction magazines are inescapably doomed to go out of business. As for being the editor who can do something about science fiction, we'll have to beg off. There is, to our mind, only one man today who can make a success out of science fiction and we aren't ashamed to name him. He's Paul Fairman, editor of our old alma mater, *Amazing Stories*. Believe us, this man's the only one in a position to do it. He has the ability, the sagacity, and he works for the most powerful publishing house in America in his particular division of publishing. Believe us, we'd rather see OW bite the dust than good old *Amazing*! By the way, for those of you who DO like flying saucers, AS will present the finest summary of the situation we've ever seen—in its coming October issue. Don't miss it. We're in it, Shaver's in it, Ken Arnold's in it—and everybody else important. . . . Rap.

Dear Ray:

The strangest and yet most understandable thing that stands out about science-fiction and the stf fan is the almost immediate liking or disliking by him of a magazine and its editor. Fans are a clannish lot; once they find a magazine or magazines they favor they will go to great lengths to support said magazines—and also, once they read one that violates their personal taboos or does not appeal to them in some other manner, they avoid said magazine like the plague. Nowhere in the field is this more evident than in your own case of Fandom vs. Ray Palmer.

Outspoken as you are, your editorial big feet have trampled on a lot of sensitive toes, and their fannish owners are not a forgiving kind. And, even though you and a very few others are dedicated to improving science-fiction's sorry lot, you are the ones under the heaviest fire by so-termed BNF in the fanzines. It is

amusing, in a pitiful sort of way, that some of these individuals will devote page after page to running down some stf mag or the editor. These people, not having a nickel invested in the business or even a small amount of experience in the publishing field, are trying to tell you how your magazine should be run—and after you comply with all their stipulations they just might purchase a copy. I dare say that if anyone were to make even a suggestion about improving their own line of work, the very roof would vanish into the wild blue yonder! Of course, by the above, I do not mean the well-meaning fans who write in to the editor with suggestions for improving the magazine. These are welcomed by editors, and every suggestion so received is given consideration.

These same big editorial shoes that have antagonized the above-mentioned persons have also led a band of faithful followers down an enjoyable trail of some very excellent science-fiction entertainment. Who, that has ever read and enjoyed the splendid novels of Burroughs, Wilcox, O'Brien, Williams, McGivern, Hamilton, Palmer, and all the others in the old *Amazing* and *Fantastic Adventures*, could ever forget them! And how about the later years through the skillful pens of Phillips, Shaver, Byrne, Annas, and a host of newer writers that now grace the pages of *Other Worlds*? The stories published today are just as entertaining, the only difference being that we now read the long ones in two or three issues.

Ray, your supporters may be fewer than if you followed a "middle of the road no comment" editorial policy, but the group you have are the most loyal of any stf magazine. This is due mainly to the fact that everyone who lays down his or her 35c every other month or ponies up the \$3.00 for a subscription is actually a shareholder in the magazine and is treated as such—not as just a statistic on a circulation report. That you will even go broke trying to give your fans everything they ask for does not have to be proven. It has already been shown, particularly with *Other Worlds*.

When the magazine was still in its infancy, 32 pages of the total 162 were devoted strictly to fandom, and this probably cost you a good many "causal" readers, the actual livelihood of any magazine. Later on when circulation figures went a little higher, away went the back cover ads in favor of colored stf covers both

front and back. The fans had also been clamoring for monthly publication, and this you gave them also, knowing that you'd be missing the sales from the last two weeks on each issue due to the speeded-up schedule. It's history now that the magazine went bust not even a year later, but the mags produced over this period were near-perfect in content and format. And how some of these BNF, who seemed to have derived all their reputation by how hotly they can lambast an sf mag, can say that you are *not* for the science-fiction fan is beyond me!

Actually in this period of magazine depression that we are now passing through, I feel that every fan should try to overcome their prejudices and give their boycotted magazines another chance. The casual readers who supported our type of fiction for many years are for the most part no longer with us, having been lured by easier forms of entertainment such as television. It is up to the fan to see to it that the remaining few magazines still in business do not fold as so many have in the last couple of years.

Herbert E. Beach
201 W. Paquin
Waterville, Minn.

It's a funny thing, Herbert . . . a long time ago we won a \$100.00 first prize in a contest run by Hugo Gernsback in the old Amazing Stories (nearly 30 years ago) for having "Done The Most To Advance Science Fiction". Many fans have forgotten that, if they ever knew it. Most of today's crop aren't that old! As for the writers we developed, how many of them have gone on to be really big-timers! McGivern, SATEVEPOST top notcher, many movies to his credit, now living part time in Italy in a villa by the sea; Browne, one of Hollywood's top writers, who appears regularly on TV's Climax, and other top dramatic shows, and whose novels sell more copies than we dare think of. And a lot of the boys are still tops in sf fields. No one remembers we bought Isaac Asinov's first story; Robert Moore Williams first story, and hundreds more, and he's selling all over the field today, after 20 years. A lot of fans today never heard of Frank Brent Eason, or Aubrey Clements, or Walter L. Dennis, or Julius Schwartz, or a host of others who were the real fans of science fiction. In those days the fans raised money (thousands of dollars) to advance science research.

They helped finance the German rocket science which (regretably) later was almost the death of London. Today the fans are more interested in free beer at conventions, and private hotel rooms where only the "old guard" (to me this is terribly humorous!) can associate with the pros and editors and each other, to the exclusion of the neophyte whom they scorn.

Yes, Herbert, you've touched on something that most readers of sf don't know. I have always considered "fans" were "regular readers" of science fiction. That was the only qualification. Today there is an elite circle called "fandom" which is the strangest evolution we've ever seen! Actually, many of them only BUY sf magazines for their "collection", and never even read them! They aren't actually interested in the stories any more, but only in their "fandom".

It will be extremely interesting to watch what happens to the annual conventions now that this drastic new change in the science fiction picture has come along. Financially, it ought to be rather frightening!

Conversely, flying saucer conventions, on a local basis only, sometimes draw as many as 10,000 fans! Seems time "fandom" woke up and quit laughing at the spaceships they have always predicted, and then sneered when they appeared! This lack of interest should prove that they aren't interested in science fiction any more, only themselves. Frankly, they don't measure up to my own standard today, and although I regret passing them by, progress is inevitable, and we new (and a few loyal old) fans can't wait for them to get the lead out.

Of course I'm for the fan—otherwise I can't account for continuing the publication of OTHER WORLDS. It makes a very stupid business-man out of me!
Rap.

Dear Rap:

I'm writing this letter to back up my stand as expressed on the card I sent a while ago. Being a broad minded fan (I can read GALAXY and AMAZING with the same amount of interest), I, as Prince Violent put it, do not leapeth to stompeth on OTHER WORLDS because I enjoy it. That is, I enjoy the three issues of it that I've been able to get somehow.

However, I do disagree with your stand that action science fiction is the only type worth printing. It isn't.

First, let's try a little extrapolation.

Let's say that OW does become a 'best-seller' as a magazine. The action story sells. But if that happens, will we get new readers? Ray, do you remember the nonfan's view of sf? That "horrible, trashy stuff full of bug-eyed monsters and other nonsense." You and I know better. But if the action story is all the sf printed, will they? Some fans may read it but you can't sell magazines to some fans. If OW dies, of course, the action story could die out since neither Hamling nor Browne has come up with too much (Why haven't Reed or Wilcox written for them? Prejudiced maybe?). You have some really good writers while they are struck with a group of hard-boiled mystery writers turned to science fiction for more money. Milton Lesser, for instance, is a little better than average at best. Getting Edmond Hamilton and George O. Smith was the best idea Bill Hamling has had yet, though his features still read better than the fiction.

In one of your editorials you say that you would like to get back to the days of Sturgeon and Heinlein. Heinlein, you'll remember, wrote sociological fiction before GALAXY ("Beyond This Horizon"), even if he didn't use his own name. And Sturgeon wrote a very fine story called "Baby Is Three." Psychological fiction? Yes, but it was good. What was science fiction before "Brave New World" and "1984" were published? It was a private type of fiction with its own writers, critics, and publishers. Kuttner and Sturgeon were writing prolifically along with the other private greats. What did this privacy net us? Better stories, certainly. When sf became a public thing, we got a whole mess of new readers who didn't know a thing about sf and liked everything they saw. They bought all the magazines, never quibbling about quality but just sitting there, fat, dumb, and happy. After a while, even they couldn't stomach the crud they had allowed and they stopped buying the stuff. That is my theory on what broke the boom and it explains the crud we have now, if you please. Now that we're in this hole I think we ought to stay about as we are, keeping both good psychosociological and action story fiction. Without one, sf would be dull. Without the other, it would be meaningless.

John Butterworth
37 Richmond Rd.
Belmont, Mass.

You're right, of course. Partly. When we say "action", we want a psychological

story which has more than just the psychology in it. Why not a psychology story with people with a terrific problem in it, which is solved by action, both physical and psychological? When we say action, we mean a story that moves, builds up tension, gives excitement. Just firing ray guns in all directions isn't action. It is true that that sort of action has been stressed—and it was the death of MY interest, you can be sure. But it is also true that the purely psychological story which was dead on its feet killed it even worse. When the boom came, it was rank upstarts who ruined it, not the skilled writer of the past, given a new job to do. I say that men like Reed and Wilcox and Williams can write the best psychological stories in the business—and on top of that, the action would raise you right through the roof! What's wrong with action? Action for the STORY'S sake!

Yes, we can get terrific stories. Some even appear on our desk. But if we went out and spent the money necessary to get them, the sales of the resulting issue would remain as low as they ALWAYS are these days (due to newsstand conditions, not excellence of material used), and it would be money lost—poured down a rat-hole. Bill Hamling has tried it—repeatedly. He has offered as high as 5c a word, gotten his story, run it with justifiable pride—and wound up with a DROP in sales because newsstand conditions have continued to get worse and worse. Nowadays, who can get proper display on the newsstands so crowded that it is pathetic? Science fiction, given an equal handling by the newsdealers, would sell the SAME 95% that the big-time magazines do. Not the same MILLIONS, understand, but the same percentage. There is no reason that 95% of all magazines placed on sale shouldn't be sold. The trouble is, millions of magazines TOO MANY are being crammed into those stands, in ever increasing numbers, to the despair of the newsstand operator who cries "WHERE do you think I'm going to PUT all these magazines!" Especially when not selling them costs him a handling charge, and eats into the small profit he gets from the ones he does sell. Today there is a revolution going on. The dealers, rather than go broke, are beginning to select for display only the big sellers. You can see where science fiction is headed, can't you? It's not a top seller, never was. Almost all dealers who handle it, lose money

on it. More and more are deciding not to handle it at all. We've had dealers "regretfully discontinue" our magazine because they were "only getting a 55% sale". Why if all sf magazines sold 55%, the publishers would be rolling in wealth. They'd make all of \$1000 a month; But when magazines like Colliers and Ladies Home Companion can't take the conditions of today, how can you expect science fiction to survive? The only answer is 100% subscription magazines, therefore 100% sales—and it is a proven fact that science fiction readers won't support a magazine that way. Even faced with the alternative—subscribe for \$3.50, or get no sf at all, we feel sure they'd never get their hand out of their pocket. If one in three of our readers subscribed, we could go back to 160 pages, front and back covers, top writers, everything! But they won't. Back in Hugo Gernsback's day they would, but not now! Apathy is the word. Rap.

Dear Mr. Palmer:

Today, sir, I received in the mail your November, 1955 issue of OTHER WORLDS. I read with great care the enclosed open letter, then read with great care 'Tarzan Never Dies', your editorial the 'Clubhouse' feature, and the 'Letters' section, which was used up by a Mr. Joe Gibson's letter. I haven't read any of the stories as of yet. The back cover was splendid. Moving. Terrific! And the artist's paragraphs of equal stature.

Could this magazine indeed be a scaled-down AMAZING from the days of yore? You know, Mr. Palmer, I have not read Science Fiction for quite a long time. And I can tell you why I have not, and I can tell you why many others have done the same. It will probably be of no news to you.

Let us go back a few years, good sir. Science Fiction matter was once presented to we, the readers, in true dilectible form. Who does not remember the excellence, AND I SAY EXCELLENCE, of format of such great publications as the old AMAZING STORIES, FANTASTIC ADVENTURES, PLANET, etc. To be sure, they were pulp magazines. Nasty old pulp. They were a handful. And of good reading.

Then, things happened, as things always do. I forget which of the two more ruinous changes came first. People began to look around, as people always do when something good is going on. People in the publishing business look too, and when those people saw what a damn good busi-

ness SF was doing, what happened? The same thing happened then with SF as is happening now with that new Titan, the Man's Magazine. Since the Man's Magazine began its speedy ascension in the world of magazine-trade, every month or two sees new magazines on the stands. Some go off. But the aggregate total keeps climbing. It climbed with SF magazines, too. When the balloon got just too big, somebody stuck a pin in it. It burst. SF was as good as wiped out compared with what it once had been, no? One of these days, somebody's going to stick a pin in the Man's Magazine balloon, too, and that now-booming field is going to collapse to a few well established old publications.

Who put the pin in the balloon?

The science-fiction reader has always been looking for something better, as do most normal and intelligent people. There are only so many SF readers. The number now is small. As the market began to be flooded with the fungus of newer magazines, reader interest began to spread. Looking for something better. Some great new magazines were born, of course. Much crap invaded the market. Such horrors as that Nauseating rag launched on the market that was piloted by some card named Lowndes (I forget that rag's name). Of course, there were not enough writers to go around to furnish all the magazines with good material. So, quite naturally, the over-all quality nosedived. People became disgusted, and quit reading. Why the hell spend the price of a bottle of Hamms on some limp rag that is-as the teenagers say-No-where.

Then some bright-eyed pinhead decided that the reason the Reader's Digest had been doing so good was on accounta its hip-pocket size.

Within notimeaatall, most everybody and his brother that ran a magazine, cut down to "The ever-popular Digest Size, demanded by so many readers". Crap! I hated to see the pulp magazine go from the market. No doubt others did, too. On the other hand, some did like the new size. Hordes of beany-boys riding their little pink clouds patted themselves on the back and said, "at last we got SF out of the crummy Western-type Format, and now we got class!" More crap.

I'm glad, Mr. Palmer, that you have started to give your magazine a little size. I would like to see OTHER WORLDS gain the proportions that used to be standard with the hog-fat avoird-

dupois of the AMAZINGS which I loved so dearly. I look at this brave little effort of yours, and it looks to me (through my prejudiced eye) like a very anemic AMAZING. Let us pump some blood into it.

All the above can be concentrated into a short statement or two. The SF reader himself killed SF by not supporting the good magazines. He has nothing to bitch about, and can make only small complaints on shaky ground, if any. When SF was on his knees puking up what let loose from the knife thrust home by the readers, the magazine people finished the job and cut its throat.

Anent your bit on TARZAN. BRAVO, MR. PALMER. I'm for your program. I would do much, very much, to be able to see a reissue of the works of Edgar Rice Burroughs come out, in book club form if nothing else, as well as your program for the continuance of Burroughs's works by this unnamed author you refer to. Good God, Burroughs! Truly incomparable!

About Gibson's letter. No offense to anybody. You may well be running a 'Medicine Show', Mr. Palmer. But so do the Republicans, Democrats, etc., when convention time comes around. If some one person or some group wants to accomplish something, drums have got to be beaten. And often, the poor drummer-boy is beaten in return for all his troubles. Gibson is doubtless better equipped to speal his piece on the subject of SF than I. You see, I've only read a couple of million words of good SF, and that mostly up to a few years ago. And I guess he has written some. But to me, his epistle sounds only like so much hot air.

About your editorial in that issue, I can only say it was good, as your editorials always have been.

I've kept a complete file of Amazing, Planet, Fantastic, and a few other good old magazines from way back when up until their death day. And lost them all in fire some time ago. Was like losing many good, old, friends. Bring back another magazine that can fill the place of the deceased, Mr. Palmer. You say you have every available dime tied up in OTHER WORLDS, now. I surely hope you are successful, Mr. Palmer. Losing all your dough in a labor of love that doesn't pay off can be rather discouraging. And believe me, buddy. I know.

To you, Mr. Palmer, the best of luck. I enjoyed very much seeing some good, old names in the NOVEMBER issue of

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Not too long after getting my small order of your chili seasoning, I made up a pot of chili and forgot your seasoning. After eating a small dish of it, I remembered the two envelopes of "Williams' I had, so I dumped in one package and forgot it until dinner. Well, the whole thing in a nut shell is I'll never be without Williams Chili Seasoning again! It's wonderful! I've always prided myself on real good chili, but not any more! Enclosed find \$1.00 for five more envelopes of seasoning, so I can have some more REAL chili! Virginia Walters, Rear 1165 Harrison Ave., Columbus, Ohio.

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O.W., and I shall certainly start to look for it again.

Donald Lanoue
W-1415 Glass
Spokane, Wash.

Dear Ray:

"The Timeless Man," was highly interesting. *Other Worlds* is a magazine I can depend on. I thought the front cover this time was beautiful. If you want my outright version of it though, you're only replacing *Startling Stories* and trying to make it what that brilliant magazine has never been.

James W. Ayers
609 First Street
Attalla, Alabama

Dear Sir:

I think your magazine is really the greatest. I'm glad you changed the name back to OTHER WORLDS because it seems more like old times. I first bought a copy back in 1952 and I've been a subscriber ever since. OTHER WORLDS was the first science fiction I ever read and I think your stories are terrific.

Phyllis Lockwood
18234 Daves Avenue,
Los Gatos, California

Dear Ray:

Let it never be said RAY PALMER is a liar. Ray, you told your readers that The TIMELESS MAN was one of the greatest novels ever written. It certainly was. I haven't read science-fiction for very long. One thing that I puzzled over was what some of the older fans meant when they said a certain old story had "a sense of wonder." What is this thing, I wondered? I now know. It's something terrific. It's a new and warm feeling. It's something I'd never before experienced before I read THE TIMELESS MAN. Ray, if you can continue printing novels like this, OTHER WORLDS just has to sky-rocket to the top. I must get more of OTHER WORLDS, so I'm going to start buying some of these back issues you've got up for the asking. Actually, I'm not even buying the back issues. I'm getting them for free, thanks to your plan of just sending money for postage. Only a wonderful man like you would do this for his readers. Thank you, Ray. I'm praying for your success.

Lenny Brown
4701 Snyder Ave.
Brooklyn 3, N.Y.

The End

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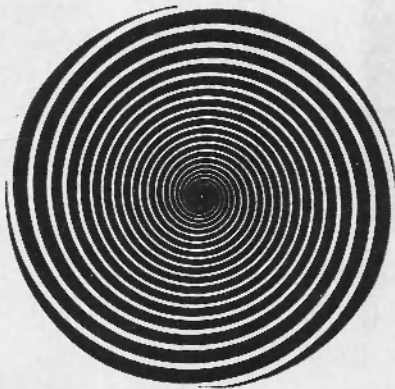
Ray Palmer, Amherst, Wisc.

DEAR RAY: Please send me your 10 free copies of science fiction magazines, and enter my subscription for Other Worlds for the next 12 issues. I enclose \$3.50 for this \$7.20 value.

NAME:

ADDRESS:

CITY, Zone State:



*The Spiral to the left is printed
in an enlarged form in*

THE HYPNOTISM HAND-BOOK

Have your subject gaze fixedly at this spiral and then READ TO HIM the hypnotizing techniques given WORD FOR WORD in Chapter Two of this "Handbook of Hypnosis for Therapy." As soon as he is hypnotized, READ TO HIM the particular WORD FOR WORD therapy which applies to his particular problem. Many such therapies are given, always in the exact WORD FOR WORD form, which is essential in any scientific or professional use of hypnosis.

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Although written for the professional man, this book will have a wide appeal among laymen who seek precise methods rather than the vague directions that have hitherto been available. THE HYPNOTISM HAND-BOOK was written by Mr. Cooke in collaboration with science-fiction novelist and short story writer A. E. Van Vogt.

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CHAPTER 1: A dialogue example of a new skeptical patient on whom mild hypnosis is applied to gain the patient's confidence and at the same time tell a good deal about hypnosis.

CHAPTER 2: This is the Basic Word for Word Technique for Inducing Hypnosis.

CHAPTER 3: What You Should Know for Your 1st Hypnosis.

CHAPTER 4: The Mechanics of Hypnotizing.

CHAPTER 6: Variation of Speed of Response.

CHAPTER 7: Disguised Hypnosis—Its Use in Therapy.

CHAPTER 8: Relaxing the Patient.

CHAPTER 10: Conditioning in Auto-Hypnosis—Monologue Method Word for Word.

CHAPTER 12: Hypnotic Re-education.

CHAPTER 13: Insomnia.

CHAPTER 14: Headache.

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CHAPTER 16: Overweight: Reducing; Dr. and Patient.

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Space does not permit a complete listing of all the material which is in this work.

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