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**JUNE**

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**THE SOUND OF  
THE WIND**

by **THEODORE  
L. THOMAS**



**CONSTABULARY  
DUTY** by  
**CALVIN M. KNOX**

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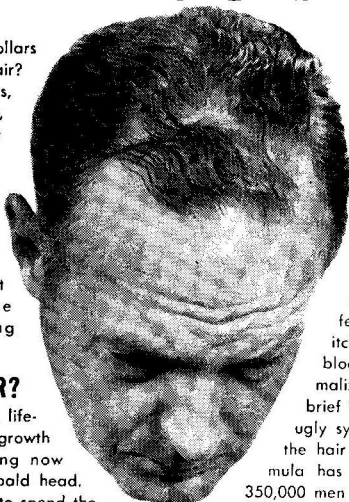
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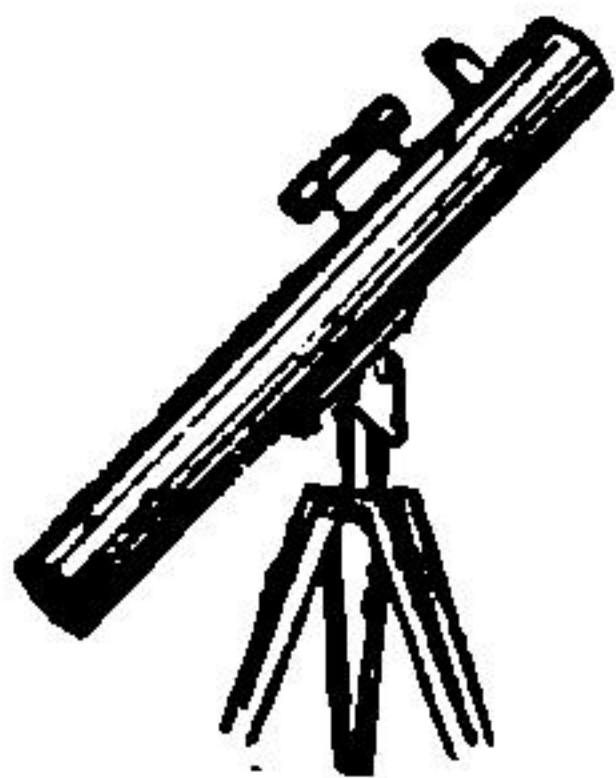
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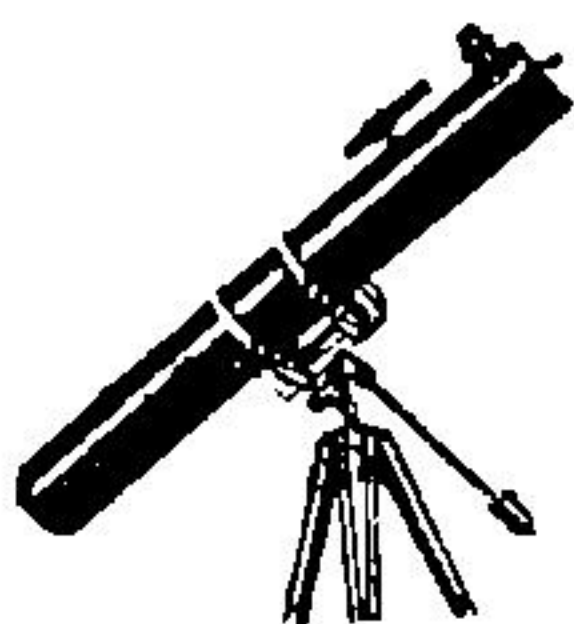
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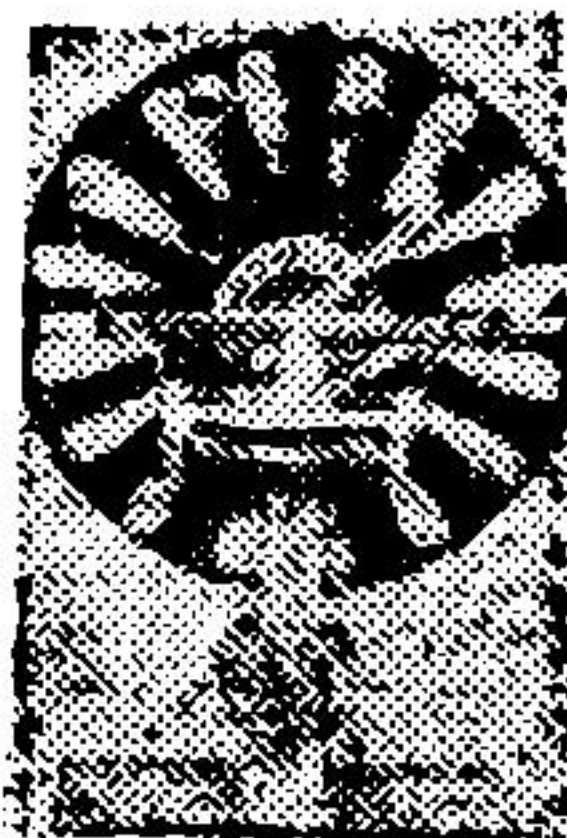
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Now  
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The Martians weren't exactly malicious — they just didn't seem to give a darn! They were also virtually indestructible. So what could be done when they killed an Earthman?

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**TO OUR READERS** This magazine has been **STREAMLINED** for your convenience. It contains the *same number of pages and words as before*, but you will find it easier to read and handle, due to the thinner paper. We would like to hear from you about this move: do you approve? Please drop us a card or a letter. Thank you. *The Editors*

## AUTHOR, AUTHOR!

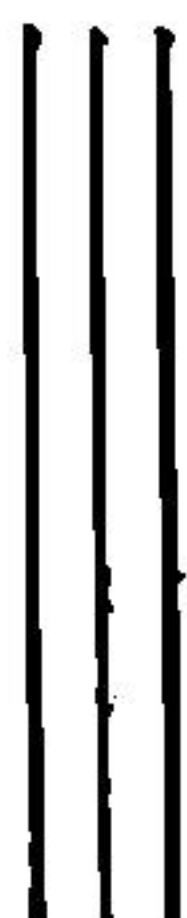
- ★ THEODORE L. THOMAS has made quite a hit with you, particularly in such stories as "The Disappearing Man" and "Mars Trial" — the latter appearing in *Future Science Fiction*. The present story fits more into the "Mars Trial" slot, although this is not exactly the same Mars. But we
- ★ do have a story dealing with a legal and social problem, the first of its kind to arise when man meets non-human, intelligent life. And I may be mistaken, but I don't think
- ★ I've ever seen another science fiction tale presenting the same situation, and offering a similar solution. It's quite different from the swashbuckling, "Captain Future" approach!

CALVIN M. KNOX, I am told, has thus far resisted the temptation to collaborate with his favorite author, Robert Silverberg. He hasn't neglected, however, to make use of what he could learn from Silverberg's manner of writing. Up to a point, this is a good thing, you'll all agree. On the other hand, if one follows admired masters too closely, one is likely to reproduce not only their virtues, but also their faults — in addition to one's individual weaknesses. So far as I've seen, Knox hasn't fallen into this deadly pit as yet. And, of course, we all hope he never will.





★  
*Novel*



# the sound of the wind

by Theodore L. Thomas

The Martians were intelligent; they had a high order civilization, in many ways comprehensible to Earthmen. But they were also aloof and virtually indestructible. What could be done by the members of the expedition when a Martian carelessly killed a human being?



**T**HE PLANET Earth hung low over the horizon, steady white, gleaming like a jewel in a river of wine. Alicia Baird tilted her head back and looked up at it, and said, "I wish I were back there." The words were bitter.

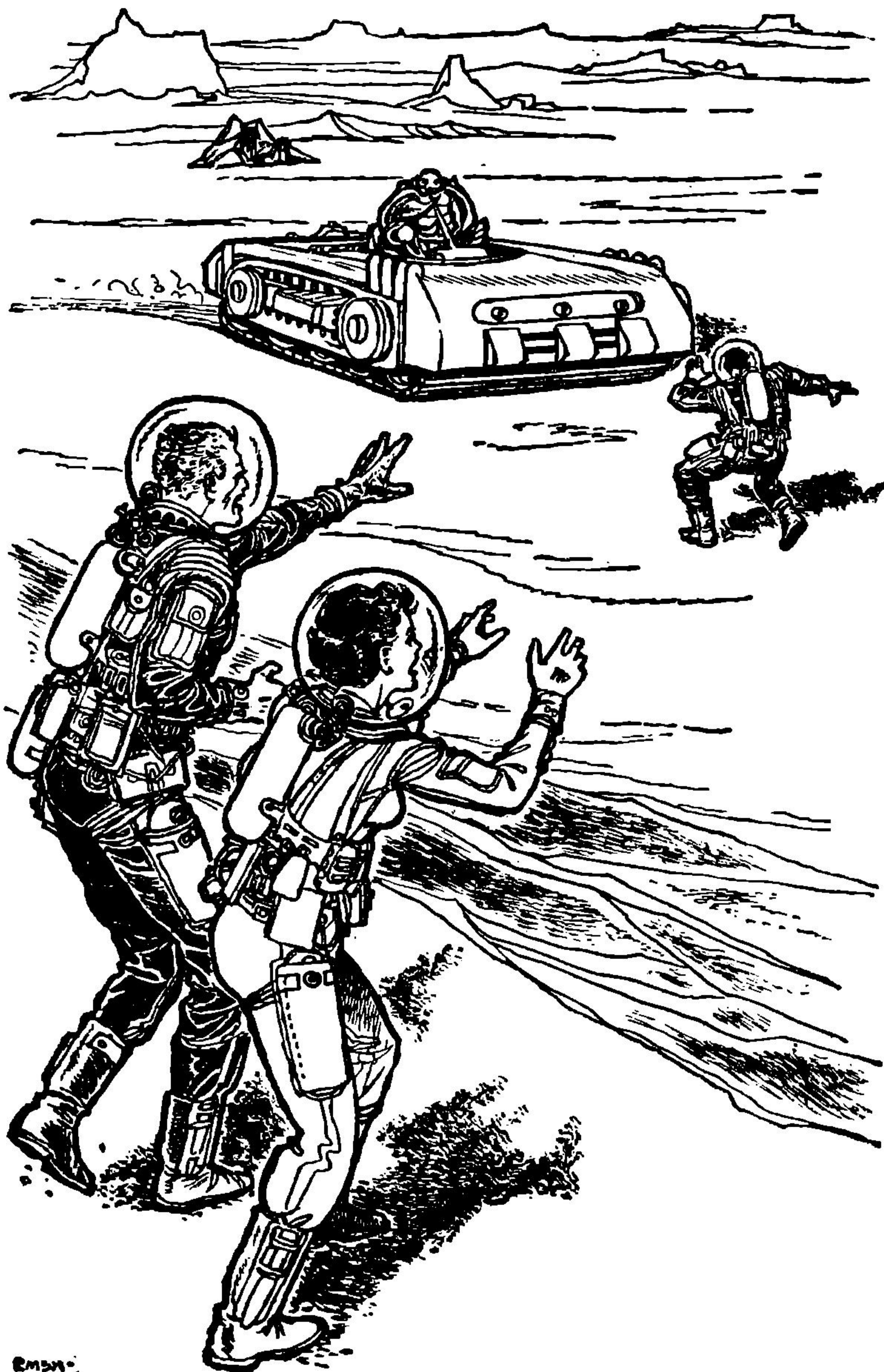
Her voice sounded tinny on the radio inside Frank Dillard's helmet. He stopped and looked up at Earth. "It looks nice all right, but we've got a big job here on Mars. Don't you want to see it through?"

She waited a long moment before answering, staring at the warm glowing spot of

light that was Earth. "I don't know; I'm getting discouraged. What is all our work leading to? How are we ever going to get close to these—these people? And even if we do, then what? I don't know, Frank; I wish I were home."

Dillard reached out a heavily mitted hand and dropped it clumsily on her shoulder. "I know what you mean, Alicia, but our work here is important." She started to protest, but he kept talking. "It is important. We are learning a great deal, even though we don't know yet where it will lead us."





RMSH

The Martian swerved and bore  
down on Smith . . .



Alicia Baird shook her head; Dillard saw her short hair fly, silhouetted against the darkening horizon. She shrugged. "The others must be in by now. Let's go."

They turned and walked. A mile away, a weak white light burned on top of a slim pole, and they headed for it. The terrain was desolate. Wind-rounded rock outcroppings protruded through the underlying strata. Behind each outcropping lay a long pointed finger of reddish sand, looking black now in the gathering darkness. Spotted over the rock plain, in depressions, sheltered behind gently rounded hillocks, lay other patches of sand large and small.

Dillard and Baird walked without talking. Their heavy, rubber-soled shoes alternately swished through the sand and pounded on the bare rock. A thin wind blew from the north—not enough to pick up the sand but enough to make them lean into it as they walked. The sound of it reached through helmets.

**T**HE NIGHT came on fast. They waded through the sand in the lee of a small hill and climbed to the summit. The light burned directly ahead and lightly above them. The light was affixed to the top of a tall pole held upright in the sand by means of guy wires. Behind the pole stood a large dome-shaped building

glistening silver in the fading light.

Alicia Baird said, "Well, I see that it is still here."

Dillard looked at her in surprise and said, "Why wouldn't it be?"

"I don't know, but I was hoping."

"Oh now, Alicia. You don't mean that."

"No, I guess I don't. Let's go in and hear the sad tale of woe."

They walked down into the large, saucer-like depression in which the dome sat and approached a portion of the building that projected out from the rest. Dillard pushed a hand against the door. It resisted. He said, "Guess they are all here; there's air in the lock."

Alicia stepped to one side and pushed a plate built into the flexible wall. The throb of a pump broke the silence. They stood and waited. Every ten seconds or so, Dillard pressed against the door; on the fourth try it opened.

They entered the lock and closed the door behind them. Alicia pushed on another plate and the hiss of air was loud in their ears, even through the helmets. Dillard reached up and twisted his helmet and exerted gentle pressure against it to lift it off. It popped off before the air pressure in the lock had reached maximum, so he breathed deeply and swiftly to compensate for the lack of



oxygen. Alicia waited until the inner door opened before she removed her helmet.

**THEY STEPPED** into a small hall and pushed through the safety door that lay at the end of it. Several voices greeted them, "Hi there," "Where you been?" "We were beginning to worry about you."

Dillard waved and turned to hang up his helmet on a rack just inside the door of the large room. He said, "Alicia was delayed at the library. Sorry to worry you." He reached over his shoulder and detached the two oxygen flasks. He stepped up to Alicia and said, "I'll fill yours."

She smiled her thanks at him as he unclipped her flasks. He crossed the room with the four flasks and proceeded to fill them at the oxygen recharging fitting.

Alicia unzipped the outdoor suit she wore and began to peel off the cumbersome clothing. She stepped out of the legs and then hung the suit beneath her helmet. Raising her hands high above her head, she allowed herself the luxury of a long sinuous satisfying stretch. Her soft curves etched sharp outlines against the tight coverall she wore.

George Prokopik put his pencil down and said with a chuckle, "If I were fifteen years younger, you wouldn't

dare do that in front of me, Alicia."

Alicia snapped out of her stretch and glared at him. "That's the trouble with us. We don't act like human beings any more. They give us hormones to suppress our normal drives. Then they put us down to study a civilization that doesn't care if we live or die. And you joke about it."

Dillard had finished charging the oxygen flasks and was stowing them in the rack. He turned and said, "Alicia's been down in the dumps today; she'll be all right when we get some hot tea into her." He slipped an arm about Alicia's waist and led her over to the large table where the other four were sitting.

**PAT TSEMELIS** said, "There's hot water ready to go. We thought you might need some when you got back."

"Good girl, Pat," said Dillard. "Anybody else want some?"

There was a chorus of no's. Dillard made two cups of steaming tea and took them to the table. He and Alicia sipped the tea, slowly and carefully, while the other four got back to their writing. The silence was broken only by the scratching of pencils, the intake of tea, and the gentle sobbing of the wind outside.

"Well," asked Alicia, "what gem of information did we



pick up today that will be so vital back on Earth?"

Dillard said, "I found out something today, although it won't make you feel any better, Alicia."

The others looked up questioningly.

Dillard continued, "Remember this land they gave us as soon as we landed?"

The others nodded.

"Well, I had a talk with what passes for the mayor or governor in the city just to the west of us. I was trying to get some idea of the kind of overall government that links all the cities together. In the course of discussing the government—it's a sort of federation, by the way—he mentioned that one of its decisions had been to make a grant of this land to us." Dillard stopped and pulled at his lower lip.

George Prokopik said, "Nice of them. We land on Mars in the morning and they give us a piece of it that afternoon."

"That's the point. They gave us the land the day we landed. But they had already surveyed the planet and decided which area was best to give us; and that decision was reached approximately fifty Earth years ago."

Alicia's cup banged into the saucer. "What? Do you mean to tell me that they've been waiting fifty years for us to arrive?"

Dillard nodded. "Looks that way."

PAT TSEMELIS said, "I don't understand it. Jed, haven't you run into this before?"

Jed Smith shook his head. "Nope. We knew that they knew Earth was inhabited by intelligent beings, but I never suspected that they planned on our arrival. How could we have missed that in the month since we've been here?"

Prokopik snorted. "Easy. We never asked them."

Dillard said, "I'm afraid that's true. It just happened to come out today when I asked them about their government. Then I asked if they'd been expecting us and they said yes; I tried to press the point but you know how they get—polite but uninterested."

"Yes," said Alicia. "Oh so polite, but completely disinterested in us and everything from Earth."

Dillard continued. "They noticed some unusual activity on Earth about fifty years ago; the one I talked to didn't seem to remember exactly what it was. But it made them think that we would be here before too long so they made plans accordingly."

"Fifty years ago," mused Prokopik. "Let's see. Yes. That would be just about the time we first started shooting the atom bomb. They could see that from here; that must



have been what tipped them off."

"Good point," said Dillard. "Anyway, this federal government sort of thing they've got is much like our own federal government, only looser and with not quite so much power. Their system of law is just like our own, right down the line. Each city has its own statutes in the same way that each state in the United States has its own statutes. Their Law of Contracts could have come from any one of the forty-eight states. It's uncanny."

"I couldn't be less interested," said Alicia. "The less I hear of their laws the better I like it. Their biology, now, is something else again; it is turning out to be pretty interesting in a few spots."

"Find out anything today?" asked Pat.

"Yes. They are ahead of us in protein synthesis. But we can teach them a thing or two in dyestuff and antibiotic chemistry."

"Figures," said Pat.

**THEY LOOKED** at her. "You know something we don't?" asked Chorn.

"Well, no. I learned today that we know more about high polymers than they do, but they beat us out in colloid chemistry."

Steve Chorn slowly raised his pencil above his head, so casually that the others did not notice. Then with all his

might he flung it against the far wall of the dome. "Damn it!"

The other five stared at him open-mouthed. Chorn swung up out of his chair and began pacing up and down in front of the table, running both hands through his hair, clenching his hands, the side muscles on his jaw standing out.

Dillard spoke first. "What is it, Steve?"

Chorn did not answer immediately. He spun to the water tap and drew a cup of water. He drank slowly in short swallows, the sound of his gulps clearly audible above the murmur of the various electric motors. He put the cup down gently, very gently, and turned to face the others. When he spoke his voice was soft; he had himself under control.

"I'm fed up—fed up to here." He moved a hand vaguely toward his throat, then went over to the table and sat down heavily. "This isn't the way it was supposed to be. My God, men have been looking forward to landing on Mars for four hundred years. We prayed there would be intelligent life here. Now we've got everything we wanted and where are we? They treat us as if we were dirt; they don't care whether we live or die, stay here or go home. What are we doing here? We already know all the answers. We're a little



ahead of them on some things and they're a little ahead of us on others. So what? Let's leave this rotten planet to those—those things, and go home where we belong."

No one looked at Chorn. They stared at the composition floor silently.

Then Alicia said, without looking up, "I thought I was the only one that felt that way. Now that I know Steve does, too, I'm a little frightened."

**A**NOTHER silence. Chorn took a deep breath and blew it out. Jed Smith rubbed a hand up and down the right side of his face. Dillard toyed with a pencil. Prokopik sat motionless.

It was Pat Tsemelis who slapped the top of the table with a clap that startled them all. "Oh, cut it out. What's the matter with all of us? We've got a job to do and it is an important job. Six people to lay the foundation for centuries of future study. That's our job and that's all we have to do. What are we getting all broken up about?"

Dillard looked up and smiled. "Thanks, Pat. I was beginning to feel it myself. You're right. There's no sense in our getting personally involved in this. Let's just do what has to be done." Dillard got up and went over to Alicia and put a hand on her shoulder. "Isn't that what we have to do?"

Alicia bent her head, pressed her cheek against his hand and held it there; then she looked up, tears standing in her eyes. "Frank, Frank," she said. "I don't feel anything, not a thing. I should feel it and I don't, I know I should." Alicia got up and ran through the door that led to the sleeping quarters.

Dillard looked after her, his eyes wide in surprise. "What's she talking about? What's the matter?" He turned to face Pat. "You know what she is talking about?"

Pat nodded her head slowly. "I think so; I feel it myself a little." Her eyes moved to Smith and back to Dillard again so fast that no one except Dillard noticed. "I think Alicia is resentful that she can't be herself. She can't be a normal woman the way she could back on Earth. Those hormones we eat, they stop a woman from being a woman." She looked frankly at Smith and continued softly, "And I guess we never knew how much we would miss it. We recognize the urge that attracts us to someone, but we just can't respond to it. Alicia feels it more than the rest of us."

**C**HORN LEANED forward and said, "What's the answer?"

"I don't know. Alicia is the M.D. and she doesn't seem to have any answers."



Jed Smith said, "Let's quit eating the hormones."

Prokopik shook his head. "We can't; you see that. Two women and four men here. We can't risk what might happen if we stopped the hormones. We may not be young any more, but I'm afraid the fires still smoulder." He smiled.

Chorn entered into it. "We could choose up sides."

Pat laughed out loud and said, "Intriguing suggestion, but it still probably wouldn't work. Anyhow, I don't know that I could get the hormone out of the food. It would take quite an elaborate procedure, and we're not really set up for it here."

There was silence.

Prokopik said, "They told us when they left us here that the solution to any personal problems that might develop was hard work. Maybe they were right."

"Yes," said Dillard. "Except that Alicia is getting awfully disgusted with the attitude of the natives. How can she lose herself in her work when she is slowly coming to hate them?"

No one spoke until Smith said, "Well, shall we include this in the radio report and ask Earth what we do about this situation?"

**A**FTER A moment, there was a gradually-increasing, uncomfortable shifting of bodies until the other four

were all vigorously shaking their heads no. "What can you tell them?" "Nothing to put your finger on." "How can they treat it?"

Smith held his hands up, nodding his head in agreement. "All right, all right; but the radio report is due soon. If we're going to give them the day's results we had better get at it."

"Right." Dillard turned toward the sleeping quarters and called, "Alicia, we'd better work up our report. Time's running out."

Alicia came out. Her eyes were swollen and pink, but she gave a wan smile. They all pulled chairs up to the large table in the center of the room and bent over their notebooks. Deep silence fell and the noise of the pumps seemed to grow louder. Outside, the increasing wind heaved great sobbing sighs and scattered sprinkles of sand over the dome. There was comfort in being inside; the six bent further over their notebooks, pulling them in closer to them, drawing themselves into themselves against the sharp and lifeless outside, huddling into six small capsules that were yet connected by the invisible waves of warmth that crept from one to the other.

And over in a westerly direction about one thousand yards away a city lay encased in the mother rock, a city where beings lived their lives



out in work and play and love and sorrow, and with never a thought of the people who sat writing in their notebooks.

## II

THE WIND was gone when the day came. Alicia was up first—up and romping. The first thing she did was draw a cup of chill water and pour it into the sleeping bag with Dillard. Dillard's roar sat the others bolt upright, bewildered, sleep heavy on their faces. Dillard had twisted away from the zippered opening of the sleeping bag when the water first hit him and he was lost inside. His floundering tipped his hammock and now he thrashed and flailed on the floor. Prokopik and Smith unzipped themselves, slipped out onto the floor, and fell on Dillard to help him find the opening. Momentarily, Dillard struggled harder, but then he realized he was among friends and he subsided. Smith found and unzipped the zipper, and Prokopik twisted the sleeping bag around and peeled it away from the upper portion of Dillard's body and sat him up. Dillard's eyes were wide, staring.

His voice was choked. "What happened?"

Alicia's laugh bubbled out and rang off the walls. "I

just poured a little water on you, Frank."

Dillard put his face in his hands and his elbows on his knees. "My God, what a way to wake up."

Alicia stepped over to him and ruffled his hair. "I'm sorry; I didn't mean to get you all tangled up."

Dillard shook his head and looked up at her. "You seem to be feeling better this morning."

She nodded and skipped over to the transparent panel in the wall. She clasped her hands behind her and looked out. "It's a lovely day and I feel much better. Look at it."

The others grouped around her, Dillard with his head tipped to one side, a finger in one ear trying to get the water out.

"Look at it," said Alicia again.

THE RISING sun was low over the horizon to their left, a sharp-rimmed white disk set against a blackish sky. A black shadow reached down into the depression in which the dome was anchored. The rock outcroppings struck by the sun sparkled bright on one side and loomed darkly on the other. The sand fingers gleamed brilliant red and somber brown where the bands of sunshine and shadow laced across.

"Well, it looks different, anyway," said Chorn.



"You feel better this morning, Steve?" asked Pat.

"I sure do, little Miss. And I'm kind of ashamed about losing my temper last night; I guess the daylight solves a lot of problems."

"It certainly does," said Prokopik. "Let's have breakfast. How do you want your eggs, boiled, fried, poached, scrambled—or dehydrated?"

Smith playfully shoved him toward the cooking unit. "We'll all take dehydrated this morning, thank you, just as we did last month and just as we will for the next two months. What are you trying to do, make us hungry?"

Prokopik cooked breakfast while the rest dressed.

After breakfast they all sat down at the big table to plan the day's activities.

Chorn said, "I'm going over to the burial area to see if I can find out anything about their bodily structure."

"I'm surprised that they die," said Smith. "I thought they were about as indestructible as the rocks outside."

Chorn nodded. "That's why I'm curious. So did I."

"It's back to that college for me," said Prokopik. "Maybe I can find somebody who will talk for more than thirty seconds. Pat, you going with me?"

Pat nodded. "Yes, that seems the best place to learn about their chemistry."

DILLARD said, "One thing: Don't miss any opportunity to get some specimens of that money of theirs. We've got to get some of that, some time before we leave. It may be the most significant thing we can learn from these people; don't you agree, George?"

Prokopik nodded. "Yes, it must be a fantastic alloy."

Alicia said, "Why do you suppose they only use it for currency. Is it that valuable?"

Dillard nodded. "Most likely, they use it for the same reason we use dollar bills: they are hard to get."

"I'm only an ignorant chemist," said Pat. "But I thought dollars were valuable because there was silver or gold behind them."

"Nope. Dollars are valuable simply because they are hard to get. They are intricately made on controlled materials; only the government is able to make them. So long as the country isn't flooded with them, dollars are scarce and valuable. That's all there is to it. These people seem to use exactly the same principle. That folding metal money of theirs is a real scarce item. We've got to get some to see what it is. It'll be a valuable alloy for us to have."

"Maybe that's why none of the natives will give us a specimen," said Chorn.

"It's more than that," put in Alicia. "They wouldn't



give us a handful of sand if we asked for it. They . . .”

“Now, Alicia,” said Dillard. “Easy does it. Let’s remember that they gave us a hundred square miles of land just a little over a month ago.”

Alicia sat back and smiled. “All right, Frank. Chin up and all that. We’ll keep plugging away till we find a way to get through to them.”

“Pip-pip, old girl,” said Dillard. “Well, let’s be off.”

They helped each other into the clumsy outdoor suits. Flasks of oxygen clicked into place for immediate use while additional flasks dropped into pockets built into the sides of the suits. Small food and water packages and pads of paper and pencils all went into their proper places. Last of all, each picked up a helmet and carefully dropped it over his head, turning it to seat it in its polyethylene seat.

**T**HE SIX stood in a circle for several minutes testing the radios, the direction-finder equipment, and the compasses. There was a final adjustment of the drawstrings on the suits and a glance around to see that all was secure. Chorn hit the switch that set the homing beacon pulsing, and they passed through the airlock—three at a time—to the outside.

The atmosphere was calm, the sand still; white sunshine filled the saucer-like depression to overflowing. Pat Tse-

melis, Chorn, and Prokopik headed off due west; Alicia Baird, Dillard, and Smith took a more northerly direction.

Smith led the way up to the top of the rise that surrounded the dome; Dillard and Alicia were close behind him. Smith took the last few steps that took him to the top, then stopped and stared to the west. “For Heaven’s sake. Look at that.”

Alicia and Dillard stopped alongside, and looked out in the direction of his pointing finger. An object moved there, slowly, weaving its way among the rock outcroppings. They stared at it as it edged along on a course that would take it just past the rim on which they stood.

Dillard said, “I’ve never seen one in use before.”

“Neither have I,” said Smith, “and I tried to get them to run one for me a couple of weeks ago. This is a break.”

“What is it,” asked Alicia.

“It’s the vehicle the natives use when they travel on the surface,” said Smith. “They’re beautifully designed, and we may be able to use them when we get a full group here. I’ve wanted to see one run and this looks like my chance.”

**S**SMITH STARTED down from the rim to intercept the device. Alicia and Dillard again fell in shortly behind him. As the vehicle drew clos-



er, Alicia could see that it was built low to the ground, heavy, with a single caterpillar track reaching the full width. The seat for the occupant was located exactly amidships.

The vehicle left the bare rock and began to cross a wide sand spit. Smith lengthened his stride to place himself ahead of the vehicle. Alicia and Dillard were about ten feet behind him.

Smith stopped in a position just to one side of the vehicle's path. It drew closer to him and he took a step toward it. It moved silently, with no sound other than the grinding of the sand under the track, and this sound was more felt than heard.

Smith was about ten feet from it now. Alicia and Dillard clearly saw the native lift the wedge-like protuberances that served as its arms and push the steering bar to the left. The vehicle changed its course slightly and bore down on Smith. A shout of warning burst simultaneously from Alicia and Dillard. Smith suddenly saw the danger he was in and he tried to leap sideways. The soft sand gave way beneath his feet and a descending spike on the track impaled his left boot, pinning it to the sand. The force of his jump spun him flat to the ground halfway in the path of the vehicle.

Dillard and Alicia stood frozen, breath suspended,

eyes staring. Smith's screams rang tinnily and remote in the helmet radios blended with the actual sound of the screams carried through the thin atmosphere. The effect was ghostly, as of something happening in a dream world, far away, unreal, yet they watched it before them.

A dull thud and a spurt of sand from beneath the track told of an exploding oxygen cylinder. The track caught the edge of Smith's helmet, buried it in the sand, and crushed it with the soft plop of a squashed melon. The screams abruptly stopped; then the vehicle passed on. The occupant did not look back.

**F**OR A SHORT moment, Dillard and Alicia stared at Smith, torn face open to the atmosphere, left arm and leg lying at a peculiar angle, blood seepage reddening the orange sand.

Dillard leaped forward, pulling out an oxygen flask, and knelt alongside Smith. He opened the valve and directed the stream of oxygen onto Smith's face. With the other hand, he began scooping sand away to try and get an arm under Smith. Alicia threw off her lethargy and jumped to Dillard's side saying, "Don't. Don't move him yet."

Swiftly and lightly she ran an ungloved hand down the collar of Smith's suit and



briefly felt of his injuries. She glanced at the leg and at the site of the numerous punctures in Smith's body. "Look, you drag him by the collar and the right armpit. Don't lift him up. I'll keep the oxygen on his face."

She took the flask while Dillard shifted position. Cautiously, he secured a grip on Smith's collar and arm and then he began to back away pulling Smith after him, careful to keep Smith's face away from the jagged edges of the helmet.

They had both ignored the other voices in their helmets, but now Alicia called to Pat, Chorn and Prokopik to come help them. The request was unnecessary; they were already on their way around the rim.

They arrived as Dillard dragged Smith over the rim, just as he started down. Pat held two more oxygen cylinders while the other two men helped Dillard. They made good time. When they approached the dome, Alicia dropped her flask and ran on ahead to set up the lock.

Soon they were inside flinging off suits, dragging Smith onto a spare table top, lifting it to the erected table. Alicia said, "Pat, prepare two pints of plasma. Steve, six-million units of penicillin. George, bandages, adhesive tape, splints, hot water. Frank, antiseptics, operating supplies."

Alicia cut off Smith's suit while the other four silently carried out her orders. In fifteen minutes everything was laid out the way Alicia wanted it, and she was the only one that was busy. The others pulled up stools and sat down to watch, occasionally doing some small chore for Alicia.

**H**ALF AN hour later, Alicia decided that Smith needed a pint of whole blood. Prokopik gave it. In another hour a sudden tenseness developed in Alicia and her flying hands began to move even faster. The others sensed a crisis and grouped around. Smith's heart stopped beating, but a ready syringe of adrenalin started it again. Another half hour passed; Smith began to moan, his head began to roll. An hour later Alicia stepped back, peeled off her rubber gloves, and brushed a wrist across her forehead.

"I've done all I can," she said. "The rest will depend on good care and God."

"How much of a chance has he?" asked Prokopik.

"About 50-50, I'd guess. Is there tea ready?"

Dillard silently handed her a cup of tea and she sat down at the table to sip it. Everyone was silent, staring at Smith. Pat's eyes were unnaturally wide. The mid-morning wind began to stir outside, slowly drowning out the sounds of the pumps, ris-



ing in pitch as they listened. And soon came the familiar sound of sand striking the dome.

"Well," said Chorn slowly. "I guess we know where we stand now. These things are out to kill us."

"It looks that way," said Pat. "He deliberately ran Jed down. Deliberately. The filthy—" She stopped.

Dillard nodded and said nothing. He bent forward and placed the palms of his hands into his eye sockets, elbows on knees. He sat quietly.

"What are we going to do about it?" said Prokopik.

No one answered.

"Look, we can't just take this lying down. We've got to do something."

"What do you suggest," said Pat dully. "Going after them with a hammer? You'd break the hammer."

**D**ILLARD straightened up. "Physical violence will get us nowhere, even if it were possible to hurt these, these blocks of granite that pass for intelligent beings. I don't know what we ought to do ultimately, but it seems to me the first thing to do is talk to the governor over there. Maybe that will help us make up our minds. Sound all right?"

"You know," said Chorn quietly—too quietly, "this only emphasizes what we were talking about last night;

we don't belong here. These things have nothing but contempt for us—they ran Jed down the way a man might run down a snake in the road. I don't know about you, but I'm fed up with it." He turned toward Alicia as though seeking her support, but Alicia's head was back and her eyes were closed. Her drooping body told how dog-tired she was. Chorn turned questioningly toward Prokopik.

"I don't know," said Prokopik. "You seem to be right, but I don't know. I think we ought to talk to them before we decide anything."

Dillard got wearily to his feet. "I'll go talk to them. Better wait until I get back before you radio Earth what's happened." And he began to climb into his suit.

"Think you ought to go alone, Frank?" asked Pat.

Dillard nodded. "Two of us or a thousand of us couldn't stop one of them from doing anything he wanted to do. I'd better do it alone." He went over to take two oxygen flasks and stopped alongside Alicia's chair. He put a hand gently on her head. "You all right, Alicia?"

She suddenly opened her eyes and said, "What? Oh, yes, Frank. Just tired."

He smiled at her and finished dressing. Just before he dropped the helmet over his head Dillard said, "Leave the beacon on. We may be in for



a storm." And he went out into the billowing wind.

### III

**D**ILLARD returned in an hour and a half. Alicia was working over Smith when he entered the dome. Dillard lifted his helmet and banged it down on the peg and stomped across the room to recharge the oxygen flasks. Alicia finished her work and turned to look at him. "Frank? What happened?"

He did not answer immediately; when he finally turned to face them, they could see that his face was flushed. He replaced the flasks and then climbed out of the heavy suit. "How's Jed?"

"Not so good," said Alicia. "Pulse faint, breathing shallow, fever setting in. He's not doing well."

"Damn," said Dillard. He walked over to where the rest were sitting near Smith. He put his hands on the back of a chair and leaned over it. "I talked with the governor, or whatever he is. You know what he said when I told him what one of his people had done? He said 'Of course'. It seems that this business of running over somebody is standard procedure on this planet; it's a big joke. Everybody does it whenever he gets the chance when he's on the surface. He couldn't under-

stand why I was complaining—couldn't even grasp the concept of an injury—doesn't know what physical harm is. God!" He slammed the chair on the floor and was instantly contrite when Smith groaned, gasped, and tried to change his position.

Dillard watched silently while Alicia swiftly tended to Smith. Then he continued in a softer voice, "He even thought it was amusing, this business of getting hurt. He thought it was funny. Funny...and look at Jed here."

Chorn said, "We'd better report this to Earth right away. See what they say. Maybe they will..."

A soft background sound intruded itself above the noise of the wind and sand. It had been there for several seconds but no one had noticed it. Then suddenly they all realized at once what it was.

The air was being pumped out of the lock.

**A** QUICK glance, each at the other, and then a staring at the door of the lock. Prokopik moved catlike to a position near the entrance, picking a rock drill out of the rack as he went. Dillard moved over to join him, still carrying the chair. Pat, Alicia, and Chron drew up in front of the table on which Smith lay, placing themselves between the door and the table. They stared at the door.



Slowly it swung open, and they saw a native standing in the lock. It moved out of the lock with the stop-and-go motion they all used for propulsion. Its progress was slow; and as it moved across the floor, its plate-like under-pinnings cut and gouged the hard plastic floor.

It stopped and the front end began the odd bobbing movement that the natives seemed to find necessary. It spoke in the throbbing rumble the Earth people had come to understand. "I came to see what you spoke of."

The sensory portion of the front end found the anomaly that was Smith-lying-on-the-table. The odd motion carried it over to the table. Alicia and Chorn gave way. It stopped and its rear plates seized the floor, digging in, rolling up a portion of the floor to obtain leverage to lift its front end up to the level of the table. Alicia started to move forward but Dillard waved her back. Chorn moved up behind the native and again Dillard waved his hand.

The sensory portion focused on Smith's bare arm as it lay on the table. Slowly and delicately a wedge-like protuberance reached out and carefully touched the biceps; it barely dented the flesh. The opposable portion near the end gently closed down and touched the flesh, indented the flesh, and sunk into the flesh, cutting and ripping

deep into the muscle. Blood spurted; Smith screamed and tried to pull his arm away but it would not come free.

CHORN TOOK a half step back and swung the heavy rock drill in a wide arc over his head. The drill crashed into the front portion of the native and glanced off, not shaking the body in the slightest. Dillard thrust a leg of the chair between the opposable portions and twisted the chair to pry them apart. The leg of the chair bent. Chorn swept the drill behind him to prepare for another swing when the native released the arm and dropped down to the floor again. The native held the blood-covered protuberance in front of the sensory portion. Then it said, "This is from inside. This is what you said is 'injury'?"

Dillard snarled, "Yes, damn you. You've injured him more."

Alicia stepped up and inspected the gash. Smith was moaning again, so Alicia set about making him comfortable.

The native turned and moved toward the airlock while the others watched in indecision. The native passed into the lock, the pumps went into action, and he was gone.

"What'd he do to Jed?" said Prokopik.

They all gathered around as Alicia sutured the lacerated arm. She said, "I don't



know whether this will make any physical difference or not, but it may deepen shock. My God, did you see that?"

Chorn turned on his heel and began pacing up and down alongside the table. "Just like a piece of meat," he muttered. "They treat us just like we were pieces of meat."

No one answered.

"And that drill," he continued. "It had no effect on him at all. I knew they were tough, but I had no idea how tough." He stopped pacing and faced Dillard and said, "Well, what are we going to do about it? Now we know. Not only do they think we are not worth bothering with, but they butcher us at every opportunity."

Pat said, "Any suggestions?"

"Yes," said Chorn. "Let's get out of here. It did not turn out here the way we thought; we're not going to learn anything worth putting up with this kind of treatment. Let's pack up and go home where we belong. We just can't communicate with these . . . these things."

**P**ROKOPIK said, "It's not really up to us. We've got to report all this to Earth." He turned to Dillard. "Don't you think that we ought to make that report now?"

Dillard nodded and glanced at the clock and the planetary map. "Yes. Henry Mueller

will be on duty now. Let's tell him about it."

Chorn went over and sat down in front of the radio controls. When the set had warmed up, he established contact with Earth and then turned the microphone over to Dillard. Dillard described the day's happenings in detail and then put Alicia on to describe Smith's injuries. When that was completed Dillard took over again.

"There is more to it than just this, Henry," he said. "All of us have been feeling pretty low about the way the natives treat us. We haven't mentioned it before, because we thought we could snap out of it; now we know we can't. We all feel we don't belong here. We are not wanted and it's got on our nerves. Let me illustrate with some of the little things that have happened to me in the last month."

**D**ILLARD told of the times when a native would walk away in the middle of a conversation; of the frequent refusal to talk at all; of the lack of interest in anything the Earth people had to say or demonstrate; of the refusal of the natives to supply the Earth people with specimens of anything much less the provocative medium of exchange they used. This perpetual disinterest, the continuous indifference, the constant reminder that they were



not wanted, all grew to enormous proportions after a while. And perhaps the feeling of rejection was amplified by the abnormal suppression of normal human drives; there seemed to be some evidence of that. Then Dillard turned the microphone over to Chorn so that Chorn could give his views.

Chorn talked long and fast. The others listened in surprise as Chorn listed incidents that he had not mentioned before. Then came Prokopik's turn and he, too, had had things happen that he had not mentioned. Pat Tsemelis was next and then Alicia.

When it was over, the voice from Earth told them to stand by. It was necessary to gather advisors to determine the future course of conduct. The radio transmission had been recorded and would be played back for the benefit of the Earthside scientists. So stand by for the best advice that the best brains on Earth could muster. And don't worry; everything will be all right. The radio faded, leaving only the sound of the wind inside the dome.

Alicia returned to Smith. Chorn wandered over to Prokopik and said, "I feel better already."

Dillard overheard the remark and joined them. "Yes, I guess it did us a lot of good to get it off our chests." He turned to Pat. "You feel it, Pat?"

She nodded. "Good catharsis; we've dumped our burden on someone else."

They all nodded and smiled; Dillard said, "Well, let's get things straightened out in here. We've let the equipment go too long."

THEY SCATTERED out, each settling down to work on the things that needed repair. Alicia continued to fuss with the little oxygen tent she had rigged for Smith. Prokopik checked out all the radios. Chorn set about to polish away the frosted surface the blown sand had put on the helmets. Pat replaced medications used on Smith. Dillard worked on the main power plant. They bent over their tasks, lost in their thoughts.

It was Chorn who first noticed it. He cocked his head to listen to an unaccustomed sound that had insinuated itself above the noise of the wind. Dillard saw him and began to listen himself. Then Pat and Prokopik heard it.

They sat turning their heads, trying to locate the source of the sound, to identify it. One after another, they found the source and sat staring at Alicia.

It was the sound of a woman humming.

Alicia had the sphygmomanometer attached to Smith's right arm and was busily engaged in taking his blood pressure. She hummed as she



worked, hummed in the time-honored manner of a woman contentedly busy at work she loved. A woman humming, a sound strange in their ears, one not heard in a long long time; they stared at her in surprise.

Dillard asked, "Is Jed better, Alicia?"

She looked up. "No, I'm afraid not. Barely holding his own."

Chorn looked at Dillard and then at Alicia, and said, "Well, why the humming then?"

Alicia had turned back to Smith and did not hear the question. Pat hurried over to Chorn and said quietly, "She doesn't know she's doing it. Let her alone; it's the first time she has felt she was accomplishing anything since she's been here."

Chorn nodded and turned back to the helmets. Silence fell, but soon the humming started again. They worked, with the wind outside and the humming inside, and it was good to work, all warm and comfortable and snug and homelike.

After several hours they stopped to eat. Alicia gave Smith intravenously one liter each of carbohydrate and protein solution. Then the chores continued.

**T**HE RADIO came to life suddenly, startlingly. All five gathered around the

speaker as Dillard turned the volume low to avoid disturbing Smith. It was Henry Mueller.

"Half a dozen people have listened to what you had to say—Doctor Hendricks, Muster, Uron, Merrill, even Professor Bintner. We all agree that there is only one thing for you to do. You have to go on as you always have. Do nothing about this special situation in regard to Smith."

There was more, much more, but it was all material calculated to boost their flagging spirits. Mueller recited how important was this first contact with an extraterrestrial race, but they knew it was not, not for them. Mueller told of all they might learn for the human race, but they knew it was not true. Mueller said that they were letting unimportant things assume too great an importance; they should not expect another race to fawn on them. But they were the ones that had to live in the chill and disinterested air. And then it was over.

For a little while, no one said anything. The five drifted over to chairs around the table and sat down. Prokopik said, "I suppose we should have known. There is really nothing we can do. We can't possibly hit back, even if we could hurt them; we can't leave. We've just got to sit and take it. There's nothing else for us." And he slapped



his right fist into his left hand.

"Yes, we've known it all along," said Pat. "We just hoped that some miracle would happen to show us a way out."

Dillard said, "Well, I'm ready to carry on. How about you, Alicia?"

She smiled a tired smile. "Yes, I'm all right. It won't last forever."

"I think I can do it," said Chorn. "But I'm likely to spit right where their eye should be."

"Good," said Dillard. "I guess Earthside knew we'd react this way. I suppose it shows the wisdom of having older people come here for this preliminary study. No hot blood here, just good old tried and true middle-aged scientists, carry on no matter what the odds, no imagination, no wild-eyed schemes, just do the job."

Alicia smiled at him again. "You're making us sound like clods, Frank."

Dillard smiled back. "No, just stating facts. We know we all..."

**A** RATTLING, vibrating bubbling sound interrupted him, a sound that rose in intensity to a blood-filled gurgle. It came from Smith.

Alicia leaped toward him. But before she reached his side Smith sat upright on the table, twisted his body, fell to the floor and lay motion-

less, half wrapped in the make shift oxygen tent. Alicia scooped up the stethoscope and listened at his chest, examined his eyes.

One minute went by.

Alicia filled a syringe with adrenalin and injected it directly into the heart.

Another minute went by.

She seized the oxygen mask and began to apply surges of oxygen to Smith's mouth. She called Dillard and showed him how to continue with the oxygen.

Another minute.

She filled another syringe with heortebin and injected it into the heart, then listened with the stethoscope.

Another minute.

She tore the bandages from Smith's left side and with a single stroke of a scalpel she opened the middle mediastinum; several slighter strokes exposed the heart. The cavity was filled with brownish blood and Alicia paled when she saw it. She inserted her hand and the displaced blood spilled out over the lips of the incision and ran down Smith's side to the floor. Alicia began a gentle massage.

Two minutes went by.

**T**HE OTHERS watched, eyes wide, hardly breathing. They watched the muscles in Alicia's forearm flex slightly each time she gently squeezed the heart. And so they did not notice that be-



gan to happen, but Alicia saw it from the beginning.

Each time she squeezed the heart the blood pool overflowed slightly and poured down to the floor. She watched carefully to make certain that the overflow was correlated to the squeeze. And after four minutes there could no longer be any doubt. She was simply pumping the blood out to the floor.

She dropped her forehead to her left hand and the tears poured from her eyes. Slowly she began to sob, and soon the sobs were wrenching her entire body. The others rose from their knees and looked wonderingly down at her. She knelt, one hand in Smith's chest cavity, the other holding her head, the squeezing still continuing, her sobs loud now.

Prokopik pointed silently to the pulsing overflow, and then they all understood. Dillard and Prokopik stepped up to Alicia and gently took her under the arms and tried to lift her away. She did not resist but she did not let go with her right hand. They tried to pull her away but she held on. They pulled harder on Alicia but only dragged Smith's body a foot across the floor.

Dillard set her down on the floor and tipped her head back and slapped her hard across the cheek. The sobs stopped and she looked at him with dawning recogni-

tion. "Let go, Alicia," he said softly.

She looked down at Smith's body and withdrew her hand suddenly, spattering the blood on her face. Dillard helped her to her feet and led her over to the wash basin and helped her wash.

Prokopik, Pat, and Chorn set about wrapping Smith's body in a piece of polyethylene and heat-sealing it. Then they cleaned up the dome and soon had it looking as though nothing had happened, save for the wrapped body near the lock. They joined Dillard and Alicia sitting near the window.

Dillard said, "We've got to bury him immediately. I'll go out now and find a suitable place; it'll be dark in a few hours. Alicia, do you want to go out with me?"

Alicia shook her head. She did not reply, but continued staring out the window. "I'll go with you, Frank," said Pat.

"Thank you. We'd better go right now."

**THEY DRESSED** and went out into the wind and flying sand and climbed the southern rim. A few hundred yards off the rim, they found a rock outcropping that leaned away from the direction of the prevailing wind. The space immediately behind the rock was bare of sand where eddy air currents had swept it clean. The usual



sand spit started further out.

"I think Jed would like this," said Dillard.

"Yes—I think so, too."

They returned to the dome and told the others. Pat agreed to stay and look after Alicia while the others prepared the burial place. The three men donned the harness for the heat chisels and went outside, taking Smith's body with them. When they got to the site Dillard began to carve the outcropping while Corn and Prokopik dug the excavation. In two hours their work was done and they went to get the two girls.

The five stood beside the open grave, looking into it, watching sand sprinkle down into the maw. Dillard, Chorn, and Prokopik lifted Smith's body to the edge. Chorn and Prokopik climbed down into it and Dillard passed the body down. Carefully they placed it on the bottom and then built over it several layers of the slabs that had been cut out of the hole. After several thicknesses had been put in place, they fused the rock. Then more layers, more fusing until the grave was filled even with the surrounding plain.

Dillard took a heat chisel and carefully melted the surface of the cross he had cut, throwing sand on the surface as he worked. When he was done the surface was slick and glass-like and white in contrast to the grey rock.

THE FIVE stood beside the sealed grave and looked down on it. The wind rattled the sand on their helmets. It tugged at their suits and pushed at their bodies and made them constantly shift their feet to lean against it. When they looked out across the rock plain, they saw the sand winding in thickened swirls around the jutting rocks. Rock and sand they saw, the wind they heard, there was nothing else.

Dillard said, "Oh Lord, we commit unto Thee a good man. Although he lies far from home, he is one of Thy children and we know Thine eyes follow us wherever we go. Take him to Thy side and hear us as we say the loving words taught us by Thy Son. Our Father, which are in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name." Dillard could hear the muted voices of the others as they joined him, the voices echoing strangely inside the helmet. "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on Earth..." Dillard's voice faltered; the others fell silent. They all stood muted, fearful in the crying wind as they realized that the words were wrong. Then Dillard repeated firmly, "...On Earth and on Mars as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the



kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."

They stood silently and dry-eyed, and Dillard turned and led the way back over the rim and down to the dome. Inside they did not talk as they stripped off their outer garments. Pat went to make tea; the others sat at the table and watched.

Alicia said, "Jed would have liked that, Frank."

"Yes," said Chorn. "He would have."

Prokopik nodded. Pat turned from the hot water pot. "It was comforting in a way, but...but frightening. I have never thought of dying here. I...I..."

**D**ILLARD got up, crossed to the window, and looked out. Alicia joined him, standing at his side. They looked out into the depression in which the dome stood. It was a grey time outside. Dusk was falling and the sand and rock all had the same color. The sand swirls in the air and the sand pits on the ground all had the same color. Alicia shivered and moved closer to Dillard. He put an arm around her waist and half-turned toward her. She turned to meet him. Her breath began to catch and she placed her head in the hollow of his neck.

Pat brought the tea to the table and sat down. Idly, without looking at it, she pulled a notebook over to her,

and just as idly she flipped it open. Without really meaning to she glanced at an open page.

It was Smith's notebook and it was Smith's handwriting there.

She stared at it, swallowed hard, tried to move her eyes away, could not, stared through the film of tears that gathered in her eyes. She swallowed again and the tears overflowed. She put a hand to her mouth and pressed her lips tight shut, could not breathe at all, took her hand away, gulped air almost audibly.

Over at the window Alicia's breath came in short quick gasps.

Prokopik reached out for his cup of tea, not looking where he reached. The back of his hand brushed the cup and knocked it to the floor. It fell with a resounding clatter.

Chorn leaped to his feet, upsetting his own tea.

Pat collapsed on the notebook, clutching it to her, tearing the pages, wetting the pages with her tears, frankly and loudly crying.

Alicia screamed and clung to Dillard and turned her head back and forth against his chest, sobbing, "NO... No."

Chorn and Prokopik went to Pat's side and placed their arms around her. Dillard half-carried Alicia to a chair and sat her down and placed her head and arms on the table.



Chorn and Prokopik began to straighten Pat in her chair but Dillard stepped around the table and stopped them.

"No," he said. "Let her cry it out. Just put your arms around her." Then he went back to Alicia, pulled up a chair next to her, sat down in it, and took her into his arms.

For a long time there was the sound of crying in the dome, the sound of crying and the sound of the wind. And after awhile the crying grew softer and was lost in the sound of the wind.

### III

**D**ILLARD stood up and went over to the radio and turned it on. When it was ready, he announced shortly that Smith had died. A voice from far away extended condolences and Dillard turned the radio off.

He stayed in the radio chair and turned to face the others. "Well, I guess that's all the help we'll get from Earth. Anybody have any suggestions?"

Chorn spoke softly, staring at the floor, "I'm through. I don't like the work we are doing. I hate these filthy beasts we have to work with. I detested them before they murdered Jed—coming over here and cutting him up while he was dying. I want nothing more to do with them."

Dillard turned to Prokopik. "George?"

"I don't know. I've lost my spark in this work. We get nowhere, we do not really communicate with them. I don't worry about getting killed—Jed's death I think was an accident. But it isn't worth it to me to walk over there every day to see them. They don't want us near them. Don't you see? This land they gave us, it's a reservation. They've got us on a reservation and they want us to stay here." Prokopik's voice had gotten louder as he talked.

Dillard turned to Alicia. "What do you want to do, Alicia?"

She looked at him through wet eyes. "I just want you to hold me, Frank. I want that, but even wanting it I know it is useless. I'm not a woman here; I'm not a woman, and I want to be, so much, for you."

Dillard looked down at the floor and then looked up. "Pat?"

"I never want to see another native as long as I live."

Dillard turned back to the radio and put an elbow on one edge of it and rested his head in his hand. "I don't know. . . It shouldn't end like this. The first civilized race—it shouldn't end like this."

**P**ROKOPIK said, "What did they do on Earth when they got into trouble with a newly-discovered aboriginal



tribe? Kill them, either with guns or kindness. Here we can't do either. Guns don't hurt them, and we can't find any kindness they understand."

"There's a difference," said Dillard. "These are not aboriginals. They're a highly civilized race."

"So what do you do with a highly civilized race? Sue them?"

Dillard snorted—snorted and then suddenly lifted his head off his hand and stared at Prokopik. "Sue them," he repeated. He turned to look out the window and said, "Why not?"

The others stared at him, waiting for him to continue, but he did not. Then his body relaxed and he put his head back on his hand.

"What is it, Frank?" asked Alicia.

"For a minute, I thought George had something. Their system of law is just like our own, so a lawsuit might be the answer. But I forgot; they have no laws relating to personal injuries or negligent death. They don't even know what an injury is, so we couldn't bring a suit in their courts; and they've got the only courts around."

They sat quietly looking at the floor and listening to the wind. "It shouldn't end like this," repeated Dillard. "The races of two planets meet, and all it produces is antagonism, conflict, death. It isn't

right. It... Wait a minute." And he slammed his hand down on the top of the radio and stared fixedly at the wall. "Conflict," he almost shouted. "Conflict of Law. By God, that's it."

He jumped to his feet and stood motionless, tense, his left hand holding his chin.

Chorn said, "What's the matter, Frank?"

"Wait a minute," said Dillard. "Let me reason this out."

**H**E BEGAN pacing back and forth, occasionally slapping his right fist into the palm of his left hand. Now and then he stopped and seemed to be talking to himself, waving a pointed finger in front of him. One time he stopped stock still, his head hanging, his eyes narrowed in concentration. Then he continued his pacing until he spun to face them.

"It'll work. At least it's worth a try and I'm going to do it." He glanced at the clock and then went over and began to climb into an outfit.

Alicia went over to him. "Where're you going, Frank?"

He cupped her cheek in his hand and said, "Out. I'm going to see a lawyer."

"At this hour?"

He waved at the clock. "The city will be in business for another hour yet. I've got time to see if this wild idea of mine has any merit." He



snapped the oxygen flasks into place. "Keep the beacon burning for me, little one." He patted Alicia on the cheek again. Then he said soberly. "Maybe we can make them pay for what they did to Jed after all. Not in the way we would like, but at least something; I'm off to file a lawsuit."

"Wait a minute, Frank," said Prokopik. "What are you going to do?"

"I'm going over to the city and file a lawsuit against the native that killed Jed."

"Have you gone crazy? What kind of a thing to do is that?"

"Can you think of anything better?"

"No, but I don't think much of that."

**CHORN WALKED** over to Dillard. "Look, Frank, George is right. If you want to do something about Jed, all right; we're with you. But this is ridiculous. A lawsuit is no answer to anything. It won't help Jed, it won't help us. What do you expect to gain?"

"If I win it, the natives may be more careful the next time. It might teach them some sort of a lesson."

Prokopik said, "Oh come on, Frank, it won't teach them anything. You might stir them up against us."

Chorn said, "You can't possibly win it, Frank, and you know it. Look how they are.

You're going to sue one of *them*? It's crazy."

Dillard turned to Alicia and said, "You feel this way, Alicia?"

"I don't want you to go over there, Frank. I'm afraid."

"Pat?"

She did not answer.

Dillard said, "Does anybody have any suggestion at all, anything at all, as to what we should do or try? Anything."

There was no answer.

Dillard nodded his head. "That's what I thought. I do not intend to sit here staring at the wall thinking about Jed. I'm going." And he dropped the helmet over his head and passed out through the lock.

**IT WAS BLACK** outside and Dillard had to lean against the wind. He set off up the side of the depression, following the little compass set in the bottom of the helmet. In twenty minutes, he could see the slight glow that marked the entrance to the city and in another five minutes he slipped through the cylindrical portal in the rock and stood beside the moving belt.

He climbed onto the belt and sat in one of the low trough-like devices the natives used for seats. The belt moved through the ellipsoid-shaped tunnel, slanting downward, and soon the familiar branches began reaching off the main tunnel. Dillard noted



that there were not many natives abroad, and those that were out took no notice of him whatsoever.

The belt approached the busy center of the city. The black glazed rock walls with the occasional inset illumination gave way to a purple color that appeared to have depth to it. The occasional illumination gave way to continuously glowing walls.

Dillard stepped off the belt and began to walk, keeping to the center of the walkway so that he did not have to stoop. Soon he turned off into an even smaller tunnel and here the center did not leave him room to walk upright. He watched carefully to avoid stepping on any of the natives but, as usual, they seemed to avoid being in a position to be stepped on. The light was darker in the side tunnel and he took special care to note symbols that identified the building entrances that opened into the tunnel.

He came finally to the portion of the tunnel that was devoted to lawyer's offices. He almost chuckled to himself. Just like in Earth cities—lawyer's row. Then he found the building he had been in two days before.

He dropped to his knees, went in the door, and climbed onto the bucket hoist affair that slowed down momentarily as it went past the various levels. On the sixth level he rolled off and crawled down

the hall on his hands and knees. He passed a native going the other way and each of them had to squeeze to the wall to let the other by. Dillard, even after these many weeks, still felt his skin prickle when he felt the physical contact through the heavy outsuit.

He reached the door of the office, dropped to his stomach and wriggled in. Inside, there was a little more overhead room and Dillard was able to sit upright in one of the five troughs in the room. Only one other of the troughs was properly occupied and soon—at the beckoning wave of a protuberance at another door—the native went into the adjoining room. Dillard sat alone.

**I**T WAS QUIET and cold. Dillard shivered and stared at the rock floor and noted the slight grooves worn in it by the passage of countless clients seeking legal advice. He reviewed in his own mind the plan he had evolved. On close inspection, sitting in the waiting room, he wondered if he might not have lost his mind to think that he could accomplish anything by so hair-brained a scheme. And then a protuberance waved at him.

He rolled out of the trough and went into the lawyer's office on his belly and climbed up into another trough alongside the raised



portion of the floor that served as a desk. He turned on the helmet microphone and said, "I was here two days ago."

"Yes."

"I come now as another lawyer to talk to you about a lawsuit. I am going to file a complaint against someone, and I want to retain you as counsel. Will you take the case?"

"Who is the other party?"

"I do not know his name but you may be able to identify him." And Dillard told him that the person he wanted to sue had been driving one of the tractor vehicles that morning at such and such a place.

The lawyer turned the front end of his body and spoke at a small metal square set flush in the desk top. In a moment a voice came back and Dillard realized that it spoke a name.

The lawyer said, "I can take the case; I have no connection with the proposed defendant. Now as to my fee."

**D**ILLARD'S mind reeled. He remembered his days in law school. From his very first courses in Contracts and Personal Property, right on up through Administrative Law and Conflict of Laws, he could hear his law professors saying, "Get your fee first. A lawyer should always arrange for his fee before he does anything else; believe me, I

know. If you lose the case, your client will be convinced you botched his case and are not worth anything. If you win your case he will be convinced that he never really needed you in the first place. So get your fee first."

"Now as to my fee," the lawyer repeated. "I assume you have no money I can use."

"That is correct," said Dillard. "I had hoped you would take the case on a contingent fee basis."

"If I do, my fee will be one-third. Is that satisfactory?"

"Yes."

"Then let me hear some of the facts before I make my decision."

Dillard had difficulty organizing his thoughts. For the first time on Mars he was actually conversing with a native. There were no yes or no answers to questions, no disinterest, no obvious desire to get away. Here was the give-and-take of a normal conversation, one that an Earthman was used to.

"Well, let me see," said Dillard. He organized his thoughts and began to outline his plan to the lawyer. Part way through, he noticed a definite change come over the lawyer. There was no more of the constant shifting of the front portion, the perpetual bobbing up and down and sideways. As Dillard talked, the motion grew less and



less pronounced and finally stopped altogether. The lawyer sat immobile. Dillard had the definite impression that he was engrossed, concentrating.

Dillard continued his discussion. He came finally to the point where Jed died. At the mention of Jed's death the native reacted violently.

**T**HE FRONT portion of his body wildly oscillated from side to side. The sudden transition from a motionless position to vigorous activity was startling. Dillard stopped talking and stared until it stopped as suddenly as it started.

The native said, "He died. Your client died." And he lowered his head and spoke softly into the disk on the desk. Then he raised his head and said, "This is terrible. A terrible thing. I will take this case. Go on."

Wondering what had happened, Dillard went on with his plan. And soon he was done.

The lawyer asked, "You are admitted to the bar in your own jurisdiction?"

"Yes, but I never actively practiced. I simply wanted knowledge of the law for my work as ethnologist."

"I think we should request your admission to the bar of this court for the purpose of trying this case. I think it will help us."

Dillard was dumbfounded. "Can we do that here, too?"

"Yes. We will need proof of your good standing at the bar in your home jurisdiction. Now. It seems to me that there is absolutely no controversy at all in regard to the facts of your case. It is only the law to be applied to those facts that is in doubt. So we will be able to stipulate everything in the case. I am certain that counsel for the other side will agree to submitting the case completely on stipulation. Can you supply the law of your jurisdiction?"

"Yes, I think so."

"Good. I will now set up the trial." And the lawyer turned again to his communicator and began talking rapidly.

Dillard sat back, lost in his thoughts, content. Knowledge that a good lawyer had taken the case made him feel confident. But even more than that was the realization that he had at last broken the barrier that had separated him from the natives all this time. He did not yet know or understand the reason for his break-through, but right now it was enough that it existed. He thought of Jed Smith, and his heart turned heavy. Why, he wondered, did accomplishment always demand such a heavy price?

**H**E SUDDENLY realized that the lawyer had spoken to him. "I beg your



pardon. What did you say?"

"It is completed. The trial is scheduled for tomorrow morning."

"What?" Dillard leaped upright and struck his helmet against the ceiling. "Tomorrow morning! We can't possibly be ready to go to trial in the morning."

"We must; those are the procedural rules."

Dillard sank down into the trough, defeated. He knew he could not possibly gather the information he needed by tomorrow morning.

The lawyer said, "We had better go to the communications center so you can get the material for our case. Come." And he moved off his trough and out the door. Dillard followed.

They used the belts and came finally to a long low room with individual pieces of equipment. A native sat in front of each.

The lawyer said, "Use these radios to contact your planet and have them radio back the information you need. Assign different frequencies to each radio, so that they can all be used simultaneously. The lawyer for the defense will be here shortly to work with us so that he can stipulate to the information. Can you think of anything?"

"Translation. All the information will be in the English language—our native language. How will any of

you really know what is being sent?"

"Everything will be recorded. We can double-check on any translation you give. Your companions will have to help."

"My God, that's right. Let me get them over here right now. I'll call them from here. That'll surprise them."

#### IV

DILLARD instructed the operator as to the frequency to use, and then leaned forward and called the dome. Prokopik's voice answered. Dillard briefly described what was going on and asked all four of them to come over right away. There was some hesitation on Prokopik's part and then a delay as he turned to consult the others. Finally he said, "Alicia and Chorn don't want to come but Pat and I will be right there."

Dillard for the first time felt a surge of annoyance rise up against his colleagues. "Look, George, this is no whim of mine. We may have the answer to the entire problem we've been facing, and we need everybody here if we are to succeed. Bring food, water, and benzedrine, and get over here right now. A native will meet you at the east entrance and guide you here. Be prepared to work all night. Leave the set on so you can listen to what I'm



about to tell Henry Mueller. No more time. See you soon." And he clicked off the set.

The operator adjusted the set to the frequency for calling Earth then Dillard took over again. He caught Henry Mueller just as he was getting ready to go off duty.

"Recorder on, Henry?"

"Yes."

"All right. We are trying a lawsuit here in the morning and I need some law, lots of it. So you route out a dozen lawyers right now—the Department of Justice has them. Here's what I want: I want the Federal Constitution verbatim; any and all Federal statutes relating to jurisdiction over Federally-owned land; a leading case from each state, and the District of Columbia, relating to personal injury and death due to negligence of a driver of a vehicle; the leading text law on the same subject, any opposing cases and views. Get Professor Yager from Georgetown Law School and have him supervise all the stuff you transmit. Here are the facts of my case and here is what I'm trying to do. Have Yager listen to this and act accordingly." And Dillard recited his entire plan.

"One more thing for now," continued Dillard. "Get Jed Smith's brother and have him give me a Power of Attorney so I'll have a standing in court. Got that?"

"I hope the recorder has."

"You can use a dozen radios and send me these data simultaneously. Here are the frequencies." Dillard took a sheet handed to him by the lawyer and began to translate into megacycles.

WHEN HE finished, Mueller said, "But some of those frequencies lie in the regular communication channels here. We can't use them."

Dillard said, "Get everybody else off the air. This thing has got to have the highest priority. I don't care if it louses up the city or the entire country for a few hours; this has got to be done right."

"All right, Frank. Stand by."

Dillard rolled out of the trough and joined his lawyer just as the opposing lawyer arrived. There were explanations all around as the lawyers worked out how they were going to control the expected flood of information. As they finished, in came Alicia, Pat, Prokopik, and Chorn.

Dillard took them to one side and explained how they would accomplish the translations. Each would translate orally into a device that would produce a sheet of copy printed in the native language. They seated themselves at their assigned devices and familiarized themselves with the details of the



operation. Just as they were finishing, the Constitution began to come in. They each took a part of it to get the feel of how the system would work. At first they fell behind; halfway through, they caught up. Near the end they were ahead, and then another radio came to life and began pouring out information. Soon there was another, and another. The room bustled with activity, hummed with the language of two planets. Natives hurried from one place to another.

Dillard worked at translation generally until the law cases began to come in. Then he found that he was called on so often to clarify the translation of a legal word or phrase that he gave up and devoted himself to advice.

**O**N AND ON it went. All the radios were in use now. Dillard kept an eye open for comments by Professor Yager and every so often he ran across a cryptic comment that clarified the meaning of the holding in a case or a dictum or a dissent. Then without a word Pat slumped and toppled out of her trough.

Dillard leaped to her side, twisted off her helmet and directed a stream of oxygen to her face. She revived swiftly.

"What happened, Pat?"

"I—I don't know. I just fainted, I guess."

Alicia bent over Pat's face and inspected it carefully. "Anoxia," she said. "Her oxygen ran out and she did not notice it; give her some new flasks and she'll be all right."

Dillard slipped fresh flasks into Pat's harness and helped her replace her helmet. "I'm fine," she said, and she got back to work.

A little later, Dillard called a halt for food. The radios kept spewing but they let the recording machines take it up while they slipped the helmets off, took a bite, and slipped the helmets on again. And then they got back to it.

Time wore on and they grew tired. Yet something happened to them as they worked. Dillard watched Alicia. He knew she was bone-tired yet there was a spring to her step as she walked—stooped over in the low-ceilinged room—and talked with the staff of the natives. It was strange to see the blonde-grey of her hair positioned so closely to the brown of the front portion of the natives.

Dillard and the two native lawyers gradually pieced the case together as the information came in. Opposing counsel was everywhere. He would pick up a sheet translated by Chorn and ask Prokopik to give his version of the material and then balance the two. He took part in the discussions between Dillard and his lawyer as they decided to put a certain case in the record or



throw it out. Dillard was constantly astonished at the astuteness of the two lawyers in the selection of the material; he had to keep reminding himself that they were lawyers trained in much the same system of jurisprudence as he himself had trained in. Only in the field of personal injury were they slow to grasp the logic of the law; and even there they swiftly gained facility as they went along.

**THEY TOOK** another break for food and for the first time they actually witnessed the natives eating. The procedure would have sickened them ten hours earlier, but now it seemed the most normal method in the world.

Dawn came and they were still at it. The lawyers had agreed on most of the record. The radios were quiet but there was additional work piled up on the recordings. The four Earth people continued their translation while Dillard and the other two lawyers continued to thrash out the record.

The troughs where the translators sat had been bent out of shape at the suggestion of a native the better to accommodate the Earthside rump. Several of the natives hovered around each of the translators; two of the natives had made some progress in mastering English, so they were helping. The remaining

material was less important, sent by Yager in the event that it was needed.

As the record built up, Dillard began to see that there was a gap in it. He began to listen to the recordings—not translating, but listening to see if somewhere he could find the missing element. He finished, and it was not there. Dumbfounded he listened again, but it was not there. A radio broke its silence. It was Yager. With sinking heart Dillard listened to Yager tell him that the missing element was indeed missing. Incredible as it seemed, the missing part of the case just did not exist. Dillard was stunned, and it did not help to learn that Yager was stunned too. In two hundred years of American jurisprudence, one point—one vital point—had been overlooked, overlooked by the astute lawyers, the brilliant judges, the sage legislatures.

But Yager continued to talk. There was a possible way out. There was a possibility of overcoming the missing element in the case, and he described it. When he was done Dillard felt better. At least he had a fighting chance. He went back to work.

**DILLARD** and his counsel were discussing the need for certain text material in the record. The opposing lawyer interrupted to say, "Trial



soon. We had better leave for court."

Dillard, startled, looked at his watch, turned and called to the others, "Trial in twenty minutes; put it down and let's go."

They filed out the door-opening one at a time, the Earth people crawling on their hands and knees to get through. They rode the belts to the courthouse. The belts were crowded, and although the natives acted the way they had always acted the Earth people did not notice.

When they arrived, the two native lawyers—each carrying a portion of the record—went in first and took the bucket-hoist arrangement to the floor the courtroom was on. The Earth people followed more slowly. They entered the courtroom from the rear.

The room was in the shape of an elongated equalateral triangle. At the very apex mounted high was the judge's bench. Dillard knew, without being able to see, that there was a trough behind the bench. Immediately in front of the bench was a series of the raised portions of the floor that served as desks, each with its own set of troughs. An open area lay behind the desks. This area separated the working portion of the courtroom from the spectators and served as the Earthside equivalent of the bar. Although the area

was not a raised actual barrier as was the bar in a courtroom on Earth, it was just as effective in dividing the courtroom into two parts.

The remaining portion of the courtroom was devoted to spectator troughs arranged in rows that spread out in the shape of a fan. Everything centered on and pointed to the judge's bench. The ceiling was low, rising as it neared the bench, and the acoustics were good. Dillard had earlier been impressed with the total effect. It was a room completely dominated by the judge, which was as it should be.

THE NATIVE lawyers and the Earth people went down the aisle. Most of the seats were filled with natives, Dillard noted, and he was surprised; the trials he had watched in the past had been sparsely attended. As they came to the area which constituted the bar, Dillard turned to his colleagues and pointed to a vacant trough in the front. Three natives slipped out of their seats and took others to make room for the Earth people up front.

Dillard crossed the bar and joined his counsel at one of the desks. The entire record of the case was there. Opposing counsel took a trough alone at a desk just on the other side of the room. Dillard turned to look behind him and to wink at Alicia.



The courtroom was completely filled now. The bobbing native audience looked like a waving field of grain. There was an undercurrent of native voices but no words or phrases could be understood.

Then the room fell silent, all at once, as though someone had made a signal. One moment the judge's bench was empty and the next moment it was occupied.

Dillard looked at the judge with a good deal of interest. How different it was to look at a judge as a mere spectator and to look at him as a participant. The difference was that of watching pictures of a battle scene and of being in it oneself.

The judge was of a darker brown than most of the natives, and he did not constantly move the front portion of his body. He held himself motionless, except when it was necessary to accomplish a physical act. He pulled the pleadings of the case over in front of him and directed the sensory portion of his body at them. A protuberance flipped plastic pages and in a few seconds he was done.

**T**HE FRONT portion of his body reared up and he said, "I see we have a case of first impression to try this morning. Both parties have agreed on all the facts and it is solely a question of law that confronts us. Is the

record in court and ready to be inspected?"

The two native lawyers and Dillard got out of their troughs and went up to the bench; Dillard and his counsel carried the record. Dillard had enough room to stand upright at the bench, but he did not. To keep himself from towering over the judge he remained on his knees.

Dillard and his lawyer placed the massive record on the bench. Dillard's lawyer said, "We ask admission of this lawyer from another jurisdiction for the purpose of trying this case. His certificate of good standing is the first item in the record."

The judge asked opposing counsel, "Any objections?"

"None, Your Honor."

"Admitted. Now let me glance at the record."

The three lawyers returned to their seats. The judge looked at the summary of the record and then flipped pages to glance at individual items. Approximately two minutes passed.

**T**HE JUDGE'S front portion reared up and he said, "Let me see if I understand the theory of plaintiff's case. An injury—this thing you call personal injury—was done to your client. You come to this court for recompense. But the law of this jurisdiction does not recognize personal injury—we have no such thing. It is your position



however that this court must apply the personal injury law of your jurisdiction because the injury occurred on land in your jurisdiction. Right so far?"

"Yes, Your Honor."

"You say this court must apply your law in this case because our own doctrines of Conflict of Law so demand."

"Yes, Your Honor. Your doctrines of Conflict of Law are almost exactly like ours."

"And our Conflict of Law principles state that the law of the place where the injury occurred shall control. Since this injury occurred on land in your jurisdiction, you say we must apply your law."

"Yes, Your Honor. We recognize that the injury contemplated by your Conflict of Law doctrines is injury to property and to business rights; but your doctrines do not limit themselves to those rights and no others. We think they will apply here."

"Ingenious reasoning, counselor."

"I hope it is not tortuous, Your Honor."

"I think not. What is your opinion counselor?" The question was directed at opposing counsel.

"The theory of the case is sound, Your Honor. But I will state my reasons why the plaintiff should not prevail when the time comes."

"Thank you. Then I take it that the case comes down to proof of the law of the

land where the injury occurred—the land given by this planet to the people from another planet. Let me continue with the record."

Dillard settled back in his trough, overwhelmed at the speed with which the judge had stated the issue in the case. The courtroom was silent while the judge flipped pages. The judge reared up and said, "This document you call your Constitution is extraordinarily interesting; I have never seen anything like it. Would you have any objection to my having it reprinted so that the bench and bar may read it?"

"None, Your Honor," said Dillard.

THE JUDGE went back to the record. The courtroom remained silent as he went through more pages at a rapid rate. Again he reared up and said, "I now see clearly what you mean by a negligent injury to the person. This series of cases from your various states makes it very clear. One who drives a vehicle is under a duty not to drive it negligently so as to injure others."

"That is right, Your Honor."

"But the law shown by these cases is not applicable to the land on this planet. These cases show the law of many of your states, but no state owns the land on this planet. Instead, the land here



is owned by your Federal government."

"That is correct, Your Honor. We put the state cases in the record so you would have a background of our law."

"Commendable. Now, to find the law we are to apply in this case, we do not look to the state cases or statutes; instead we must look to your Federal law."

"Yes, Your Honor." Dillard's head was spinning. This judge was slicing through superficialities with an astonishing speed, fast coming down to the meat of the case, fast approaching the weak link—the tenuous thread that held the case together.

V

THE JUDGE was commenting again. "I see that your Congress has provided a statute to cover all crimes committed on Federal land. That statute..." he glanced at a paper "Title 18, United States Code, Section 5, will clearly place the land on this planet within the criminal jurisdiction of the United States. But we are not dealing with a criminal action here. This is a civil action to recover damages for a negligently-caused death, so the Criminal Code is of no aid to us."

"Yes, Your Honor." Closer and closer.

At the word "death", the entire native audience went briefly into a wild side-to-side swinging movement. The courtroom rippled in silent motion and then stilled.

There was a clicking noise behind Dillard and he turned to see that Prokopik and Alicia were replacing oxygen flasks. Alicia made a slight signal with her hand. Dillard switched off the speaker so he and Alicia could talk together on the radios without disturbing the proceedings.

"What's happening, Frank?"

"I don't know what that was. Something about death affects these people. But the judge knows his "

The judge had reared again. Dillard hastily switched his speaker on so he could talk and listen.

"This case of Erie Railroad Company versus Tompkins must have created quite a stir when it was decided."

"It did, Your Honor."

"There is language in it that we will have to face here. The case quotes the words of one of your judges, Justice Holmes..." the name sounded like Haomes in the native language... "and shows that the philosophy behind your system of jurisprudence is much like our own."

The judge had come to the end of the record. He flipped



back through it, stopping for a moment here and there as he went. Soon he had reached the top again. He sat motionless, the front portion of his body held low. Several minutes went by. Then he reared up and said to Dillard, "Counselor, tell me: What is the origin of the law of negligence on the Federally-owned land on this planet?"

**T**HERE IT was. The weak link. The judge had come to that simple—oh so simple, question—where does the law come from? Dillard slowly lifted himself out of the trough prepared to speak as he had never spoken before. But the judge began first.

"We are confronted here with possibly the most fundamental question in all law, one which has never been decided on this planet, and which has apparently never been decided on your planet." The upper portion of the judge's body inclined toward Dillard. "Very few people, very few lawyers, ever stop to think of the source of law. It must have a source; it must come from some place; it cannot spring up in a vacuum. That was pointed out in that Erie case by your Justice Holmes. Now on your planet, as on ours, there are only two possible sources of law. One source is the statutes passed by a legislature; the other source is the cases that have been tried in a duly constitut-

ed court. There are no others."

Dillard stood erect on his knees, listening, trying to organize his thoughts. The judge continued.

"In the case being tried here and now, there are no cases at all. The Federally-owned land on this planet does not have a court. Some day it will, and a body of law will grow. But for now, we must look to the statutes of your government as the only other possible source of law. I look at this record and I see none. Your Congress passed an act accepting the land granted you by the authorities of this planet; your Congress accepted the land and did nothing else. The existing statutes passed by your Congress in the past clearly succeed as a source of criminal law. But there have been no comparable statutes passed relating to civil actions of negligence; there is no source of the law of negligence. So counselor, you must tell me where this law comes from that you would have me apply in this case."

**D**ILLARD said, "We think it comes from the Federal Constitution. We think Your Honor will agree that the provisions of the Federal Constitution apply to Federal land on this planet."

"I agree to that."

"The Constitution is the supreme law of the land, as stated in Article Six, Section



Two. Article Three defines the power of the judiciary. So our position is that our own Federal court, sitting here on this planet for the first time, trying this case, would find a remedy by using its general equity powers. To attempt to show this, we have put into the record several cases and some text material to show a fundamental premise of our law—namely, the law will imply a remedy whenever necessary.”

“Yes, that is a fundamental premise in our law, too.”

“Under our Constitution as a source of law, we say that one of the courts sitting on the land here would find a remedy in this case. Under your Conflict of Law rules you must apply here the law that our court would apply.”

The judge sat motionless in his odd high position and then dropped down and began turning the pages in the record. Dillard’s heart sank, for he knew what it was the judge was looking for. In a moment the judge had found it.

The judge said, “One of your cases here—the one entitled Henry versus Cherry—states this: the constitutional provision that every man shall have a certain remedy for all the injuries or wrongs done to his person, property, or character is not self-executing. Now, if that be true, why should the Constitution apply in this case?”

DILLARD felt as though his back was against the wall, but he said, “Because, Your Honor, a man has been killed by an act that was unwarranted, thoughtless, and negligent as viewed by our law. Simple justice demands that a remedy be supplied in this case. We think the record shows that our courts would supply such a remedy, even though the Constitution is not always self-executing. And since our court would allow recompense against the defendant, this court must also. That is our case, our entire case.”

The judge said, “I see your point and it is a good one. You may well be right when you urge that your court would find a remedy here. The many cases you have put into the record allow me to grasp the spirit behind your law. I see that it is a just law, looking to the rights of the individuals, protecting the individual from both the government and from one another. I must say that I think your court would find a remedy here; and so I am inclined to think that I must, too.”

Dillard felt exultation sweep through him. He turned and seated himself on the trough and allowed himself one swift triumphant glance at his colleagues behind him. The reaction left him trembling, exhausted.

The judge reared up in the



direction of opposing counsel and said, "Would you care to comment now, counselor?"

"Yes, Your Honor." And opposing counsel slid off his trough.

Dillard watched him curiously. He had not paid much attention to opposing counsel since the beginning of preparation for trial; there had not been time. Dillard's general impression was that the lawyer had been extraordinarily co-operative, even to the point of defeating his own case. He watched the lawyer slowly move out toward the center of the courtroom. The lawyer was of a color almost as dark as that of the judge himself; and the lawyer, too, possessed very little of that peculiar bobbing motion that seemed to characterize the natives.

**THE LAWYER** said, "Your Honor, I agree with everything that has been said here this morning. I also find myself in agreement when the court says that the plaintiff's Federal court would find a remedy in this case. And I further agree that if that be true, then this court could also find a remedy."

Dillard was surprised. The lawyer seemed to be handing Dillard the case on a platter.

The lawyer continued. "But there is one point that I have not heard mentioned." The lawyer paused, and Dillard

recognized the speaking tactics of the highly skilled advocate. "What is it that the plaintiff is really trying to do here? I will tell you what he is really asking."

Another pause. "He is asking this court to rectify a deficiency in the laws of his own jurisdiction. Failing to find a specific origin of law in his own jurisdiction, the plaintiff comes into this court and asks this court to supply the deficiency. Plaintiff's legislative and judicial bodies of government did not see fit to enact or create any personal injury law on the land on this planet, so plaintiff now asks this court to do it for them. Why did not this body called the Congress of the United States create law that we could all rely on? One simple sentence enacted by the Congress would have done it, but it was not done."

Dillard felt shrunken, cold. Here at last was a cold statement of the true situation. It had taken the lawyer for the other side to bring out in clear words what was really happening. But the lawyer was not yet done.

"When this court asks plaintiff's counsel why this court should give a remedy, the answer is—simple justice. Well, I would recite another simple rule of justice that exists, I note, in plaintiff's system of jurisprudence as well as ours. It is this: justice will be done for the diligent, and



not for one who rests on his hands."

Dillard listened to the familiar words. He remembered his law professors pounding the familiar precept: *Equity aids the diligent*.

**T**HE LAWYER continued. "The defendant should not bear the burden of the lack of a source of law. It should be the plaintiff who should suffer from the failure of the Congress to act, not the defendant." And the lawyer was through and on his way back to his trough before Dillard fully realized it.

There was an intense silence in the courtroom. The judge was motionless in his low position for several minutes before rearing up in Dillard's direction. Dillard slipped to his knees to hear the judge say, "Do you have any further comment counselor?"

Arguments formed in Dillard's mind, arguments based on the words "simple justice". But even as he started to make them, he realized how weak they would sound. Opposing counsel's use of the phrase had seen to that. So Dillard said simply, "No, Your Honor. You have our entire case."

Dillard sat down, knowing at last what lawyers meant when they spoke of the feel of a lost case. Minutes went by, and then the judge reared up and spoke.

"This has been an unusual

and interesting case. I am sorry that the death of a man lurks behind it." Again the wild movement. "My duty would be less onerous if the injury were less severe." At those words Dillard saw that he had lost. "I would like to congratulate both counsel for the manner in which they have handled the record. Counsel for plaintiff in particular has shown fine courage in placing in the record cases that he knew would hurt his cause. We all see now the caliber of the lawyers on our sister planet. On my own accord, I will move for the permanent admission to the bar of this court of counsel for the plaintiff. I know our other lawyers will be proud to welcome his as a brother."

Opposing counsel slid off the trough and said, "I would like to second such a move, Your Honor."

Dillard's own lawyer spoke up, "And I will certainly join in such a move."

Dillard stared around him in surprise, but he had no time to speak. The judge announced his decision, "In this case I find for the defendant. Complaint dismissed." And he was gone as suddenly as he had appeared.

**D**ILLARD sat there until he felt something touch him on the arm. It was his lawyer. The lawyer said, "We did our best. It was a close case."



Dillard nodded tiredly. "I'm sorry about the expense you went to. I have no way to pay you back."

"You will have, in time. Do not worry about it; let me know if I can be of further service to you."

"I should like to talk to you tomorrow. I have some questions."

"Come see me in my office. Goodbye." And he left the courtroom.

Dillard turned and crawled over to the other four. No one spoke. Silent and in single file they left the room and took the belt to the surface exit. They passed out to the outer surface and stepped into the wind and the sand and the blinding afternoon sun. They squinted their eyes in the brightness and looked around at the rock and the barren and lifeless landscape as though they had never seen it before. Then they headed for the dome.

Inside the dome they peeled off their outsuits and recharged their oxygen flasks and checked out the equipment and prepared a simple meal, all in perfect silence. They gathered around the table with steaming tea in front of them. The warmth of it soaked into their tired bodies.

CHORN SAID, "Well, we lost the lawsuit. But you know? I don't feel badly about it."

Pat said, "I feel that way too. And something else, I think Jed would have rather had it this way. He wouldn't care about our winning. He..." She stopped and sipped tea.

"We learned something," said Alicia. "I'm not certain what, but we learned that we can communicate with them if we go about it right; we just haven't known how. I don't know what the answer is. I'm too tired to think now, but we'll find it."

"I think they are a practical people," said Prokopik. "We thought they would have the same kind of detached curiosity we do, but they don't have our kind of curiosity at all. No reason why they should have, I suppose. They seem to need a practical outlet for their curiosity. We've been trying to use science and natural curiosity as a common ground, and it hasn't worked."

"Excellent, Steve," said Chorn. "Somewhere in that reasoning we will find the answer. Don't you think so, Frank?"

Dillard looked up with the startled manner of one who had been thinking of something else. "What? Oh yes, we'll find it. We've been going at it all wrong. And Jed's death has helped break the ice somehow. I don't know how, but I'll find out tomorrow."



"What are you thinking of, Frank?" asked Alicia.

"The trial. The trial was—well, it was unbelievable."

"Why? They've got the same law as we have."

DILLARD sat back and stared out the window at the swirling sand. "You know," he said. "Most people think of the law as a set of fixed rules, stiff, unyielding, distasteful. But take a case where a young mother is committed to a mental institution, or a youth is indicted for his first crime, or a young couple with several children seek a divorce. These things involve questions of human values that the judges and the lawyers must work out. That's the real spirit that lurks behind the law; that's the strength of the law." Dillard compressed his lips, fell silent, and then continued.

"It is surprising enough to find that these people have laws so much like our own. But this morning we saw that the spirit behind their laws is the same too, and that is downright incredible. We almost won our case on the simple basis of justice. Think what that means for the future of these two races."

The others nodded.

Dillard continued softly. "We *should* not have won the case. The other lawyer had the right idea; it is our own fault that we do not have any law concerning the personal rights of individuals. Con-

gress should have done something, but nobody thought of it; everybody has overlooked the fact that some authority must create law. Do you realize that the same situation exists on the moon, and in Antarctica? It's absurd."

The others nodded. Chorn said, "Well, this case ought to jar them loose. Congress is going to look kind of foolish when we report this."

There were nods, and half-smiles. Alicia stretched and yawned and said, "Well, I'm exhausted. I'm going to bed. Help me clean up here."

As they worked Dillard said, "Death has some special meaning to these people. I don't know what it is yet, but Jed's death has affected them almost as much as it has us. They are aware of us now, even interested. But I also think you're right, Steve, about their having a different kind of curiosity."

Pat turned and stared at him, started to speak, but then turned back to drying the dishes.

In short order the dome was tidy and ready to continue its accustomed role. The five people stripped off their clothes and climbed into sleeping bags in the hammocks. Outside the wind dashed the sand against the dome and moaned its mournful sigh.

But the sound of the wind was comforting.







From space pilot to traffic officer was a terrible let-down, but it wasn't until he encountered this speed-mad girl that O'Reilly comprehended Sir William Gilbert's famous ditty.

# Constabulary Duty

by Calvin M. Knox



*When constabulary duty's to  
be done—to be done—  
A policeman's lot is not a  
happy one!*

— *W.S. Gilbert*  
*The Pirates of Penzance*

UNTIL THE moment when the flashy little sportster zipped out of Long Island Spaceport, and started doing orbital maneuvers at about three times the legal safety limit of velocity, it had been a pretty dull day for Jim O'Reilly of Groundside Traffic Control. He had been spending the day the way he spent most of these gloom-shrouded days, cursing himself for not having been smart enough to falsify his age. There were pilots who had done that, despite the risks—lopped a year or two off their true ages when entering the Space Academy.

That way, they delayed retirement a little. O'Reilly hadn't been that shrewd, or that cold-blooded. Which was why he now occupied a job in Groundside Traffic Control, staring at the reflection of his own unhand-some face in the plexite windows of the central control tower and watching the rain come down, instead of piloting a spaceship.

HE WAS THIRTY-years-plus-nine-months old. That was nine months past the mandatory retirement age

for all space pilots. And nine months ago they had relieved him of his command post aboard the big liner *Mauritius* and handed him the job of a traffic cop at Long Island Spaceport.

Quite a come-down. But he wasn't the only one, anyway. They just didn't let a man take up a ship after he turned thirty; they took his ticket away, because after that age his reflexes couldn't be trusted, and spaceships are dangerous things in the hands of an aging pilot.

The rain plunked down, blurring the gleaming hulls of the ships standing on the blasting area, raising little gobbets of mud on the unpaved walkway just below. This seemed to be National Rain Month, O'Reilly thought. Not a day went by without a downpour. And always the same dull monitoring job, the same wearying routines, the same old...

A flash of light followed by a rolling boom came to him suddenly. O'Reilly snapped out of his reveries almost at once.

The red lights were flashing all over the place in his wing of the control tower. The speaker on his panel sputtered and came to life, and Traffic Lieutenant Alden's rasping voice said, "You see that, O'Reilly?"

"Yeah. One of those little private flitters taking off like a shot."



"Three times minimal escape velocity," Alden said. "Better monitor it. It had full clearance, but I think we've got a violation on our hands. Keep your instruments on it and be ready to grab control."

"Sure," O'Reilly grunted.

UNWILLINGLY, he started to go into action. He felt annoyed because Alden had seen fit to notify him; he was capable of spotting such things by himself, if they'd only give him a *little* credit for brains. After all, Jim O'Reilly been head man on the *Mauritius* once. He hadn't been a traffic cop all his life.

He plugged in an input jack and said quickly, "Control, this is Sergeant O'Reilly of Traffic. Did you just authorize a takeoff on Field Seven?"

"Yes, O'Reilly. A private sportster. Is there anything wrong?"

"Plenty." He squinted at his tracking scope and saw that the sportster had gone into a thirty-minute orbit and was undertaking some of the wierdest stunt gyrations he had ever seen. "Whoever's in that ship is going to lose his ticket for a year," O'Reilly said. "You ought to see the damned figure eights that he's doing. Give me the wave coordinates and other data fast and I'll radio them."

"Right. The ship's a Col-

lins 408H, operating on a control-band ordinate of 107.83 on the standard. One person aboard, Miss Melva Collins. She's fully licensed."

O'Reilly quickly jotted down the data. "She may be fully licensed now, but she won't be for long. Get off my line and I'll give her hell."

The line cleared. O'Reilly felt melancholy joy in the fact that he had at long last found an offender, and at the same time it depressed him that he should get pleasure out of such a trivial thing.

OF COURSE, doing loop-the-loop around Earth in a spaceship was a long way from being trivial. But it rankled him that he, James J. O'Reilly, formerly a licensed Pilot, should be condemned to rot away on Groundside while some scatterbrained girl was allowed to risk her life up there in space.

Savagely he started pounding out the coordinates on the wide-range radio in his office.

"Calling Collins 408H, pilot Miss Melva Collins. Come in, please. Groundside Traffic Control calling. Please acknowledge."

There was no response. O'Reilly listened to the static whistling through his phones, and stared with widening eyes at the gyrations of the ship around the Earth.

She was dipping low over



the Equator, then whizzing poleward, doubling up, passing now through a registered no-traffic zone used only by commercial jetliners...

O'Reilly felt numb. Any moment now, the nitwit might lose control and plunge Earthward, or crack into some Mars-bound liner carrying several hundred people.

"Come in, damn you!" he roared into the phones. "Do you hear me, 408H? Acknowledge!"

Still silence.

O'Reilly took a deep breath. He couldn't waste much more time trying to make contact.

**I**N A RESTRAINED voice he said, "Groundside Traffic Control calling Collins 408H. I hope you can hear me. Your present flight path is breaking every traffic rule in the book. I'm ordering you to land your ship immediately at Long Island Spaceport—and if you don't respond, I'm going to seize control by remote wave and *bring* you down. Is that clear?"

There was a long moment of silence. Then an innocent-sounding youthful feminine voice asked plaintively: "Is something wrong, Groundside? Melva Collins talking, from the Collins 408H."

"Wrong?" O'Reilly's internal pressure climbed dangerously toward the overload notch. "No, Miss Collins,

there isn't a blessed thing wrong. But you aren't handling your ship in approved procedure."

"No?" Sweetly.

"No!" **E m p h a t i c a l l y.** "You're in mortal danger of sending yourself to join your sainted forefathers. And I want to get you the deuce out of space before you take a few million other people with you."

"I don't think you have any right to talk to me that way," came the injured retort. "I'm a licensed pilot. I'm not doing anything I shouldn't do."

On O'Reilly's intercom channel came the harsh voice of Lieutenant Alden, saying, "O'Reilly, have you brought that idiot girl down yet?"

"I've made contact," he said. He repressed a curse. Turning to the radio again he said, "408H, I'll give you one tenth of a second to get out of that crazy orbit and start coming down. Okay. Your time's up. Keep away from the controls; I'm bringing you down on remote."

"Leave me alone!" came the shriek. "I'm not doing anything wrong! You can't bring me down!"

"I'm going to do just that," O'Reilly said.

**H**E WAS SWEATING as he started to set up the contacts for a remote-control landing. He was licensed to perform groundside landings until the age of thirty-five,



but it was nine months or more since he had last guided a ship to ground. Still, he didn't think he had forgotten any of his ability. And he wouldn't mind banging that girl around a little in a faulty landing.

He fished out her ordinate number—107.83, standard ranking—and fed it through the computer channels back to Central Control. Each ship had its own individual control signal, registered simultaneously at every Ground-side spaceport. It was possible, thanks to some ingenious electronics, for spaceport control officers to take control of any Earthbased ship within a radius of fifty thousand miles and guide it safely to a landing.

It was absolutely necessary to have such a system. Occasionally a pilot blacked out at the controls of his ship; at least on one occasion, a pilot had died. Once, a small boy had stolen a ship and piloted it round the moon before anyone realized it. And occasionally some licensed pilot went on a joy-ride the way this girl was doing, and had to be brought down.

*Had to be.* A spaceship hurtling Earthward out of control was deadlier than any fission bomb. The shock waves of a crash landing could devastate whole cities.

O'REILLY waited for confirmation, then flipped

the switch that immobilized the 408H's controls and put him in charge.

His phones picked up an immediate howl of protest: "Damn you, what have you done to my controls?"

"I've locked them up, sweetheart. You might as well give up and wait for landing. I'm bringing you in."

O'Reilly leaned intently over his simulated control panel, performing actions that were duplicated in parallel on the ship now orbiting Earth. His fingers moved with ease; he had been a licensed pilot eight years and had made innumerable planefalls. This was the first he had handled by remote control, but he wasn't worried much about that.

"I'll see to it that you roast for this!" came the outraged yell of the girl up above. "You can't do this to me! You can't. ."

"Lie down in your bunk and don't make so much noise," O'Reilly said. "You're tempting me to land you somewhere in Antarctica and leave you there."

"Why, you. ."

O'REILLY took his hands from the controls long enough to break the contact with the 408H. He could put up with being a traffic cop if he had no choice about it, but he damned well didn't have to listen to that overgrown brat's squalling while



he was busy saving her life.

Carefully he brought the tiny vessel out of its orbit and into a series of narrowing ellipses that took it closer and closer to the Earth. Mentally he computed the number of swings he would need to bring her down. He phoned Central Control and told them when to expect the ship's arrival. They gave him go-ahead to use Field Seven for the landing.

Serenely O'Reilly brought the ship down toward Earth. Minutes later, he received word that he was in visible approach, and a few seconds after that he cut in the autopilot and watched while the ship dropped the last few hundred feet and came to rest on the broad ferro-concrete surface of the landing field.

It had been a perfect landing.

*You haven't lost the old touch yet, he told himself. No matter what the medics say.*

Landing the 408H had been a breeze. The real work was just beginning.

**H**E ELBOWED himself up from the section of the office taken up by the control panel, went to the wall-closet, and took out his rubberoid slicker. It was still pouring out, and he was trebly accursed if he was going to get pneumonia on *that* girl's account.

He slipped into the purple raincoat, adjusted the cap, and stepped out of his bubble-building. A passing fuel-truck came by, and O'Reilly hailed it.

"Where to?"

"Field Nine."

"Drop me at Seven, will you? I'm going out there to read the riot act to some crazy girl who doesn't know the speed laws."

The 408H was standing in the middle of Field Seven when O'Reilly got there—a trim little sports model with glossy finish and sleek streamlined meteor detectors. A real neat job for the hot-rod set. *Damn this rain*, he thought, as he trudged across the squishy field.

There was a very wet-looking blonde standing in the rain outside the 408H. She wore an emerald cloak that set off her bright yellow hair nicely; but right now, she looked anything but attractive, despite the generally eye-filling figure she had. Her hair streamed with water, and she stood arms akimbo, her full lips drawn down in an angry snarl and her eyebrows lifted aggressively.

"Miss Collins" O'Reilly asked quietly.

"I am. And who in creation are you?"

O'Reilly sighed gently. "James J. O'Reilly of Groundside Traffic Control. I was the one who brought your ship in just now."



"Oh, you were, were you? Well, I want to let you know that..."

O'REILLY restrained himself from strangling her and broke in, producing his little black book of regulations. "According to the traffic code, Miss Collins, you're entitled to a hearing. But in the meantime I'll have to suspend your license. Hand over your ticket."

"I will not! You can't do this to me!"

O'Reilly felt very weary and very wet. Water was trickling off his vizor and down onto his cheeks and his prominent nose. Suddenly he took three quick steps toward her with the general idea of breaking her into three or more pieces and going 'someplace where it was dry. She caught the look in his eye clearly, jumped back and out of his way, and produced her license. O'Reilly snatched it away and scanned it quickly.

*Melva Collins*, it said. It gave her age as 22, her height as 5'4, her weight...

"Okay, you've got my license. But you'll swing for this, O'Reilly. As soon as I let my father know..."

*Your father?* A ripple of shock ricocheted up his spinal column. He realized suddenly whose daughter Melva Collins had to be. He'd seen her in news telecasts, only she'd been a brunette then.

Yeah. Sure. D. F. Collins,

of the Collins Spacecraft Corporation. That was why she was in a Collins 408H. It wasn't just a coincidence.

And D. F. Collins also happened to be a director of Long Island Spaceport. That made him one of O'Reilly's employers. O'Reilly felt a sudden sense of foreboding, as he made his way through the rain to hand in Melva Collins' pilot's license to the authorities.

HE WAITED for the call most of the rest of the afternoon, and when it came it hardly surprised him. The office phone rang, and he picked it up with slightly quivering fingers.

"Sergeant O'Reilly."

"Sergeant, this is Mr. Collins' secretary. Mr. Collins is in his office in the Administration Building and he'd like to see you right away."

"Okay," O'Reilly said tonelessly. "I'll be right there. Soon as I can get my raincoat on."

He hung up. He waited a second or two, then rang up to Lieutenant Alden, and said he was going off-duty for about fifteen minutes. Then he climbed into his raincoat again and legged it across the spaceport to the towering Administration Building.

COLLINS' office was on the seventeenth floor. *It was a good job while it lasted*, he thought as he gave his



name to the secretary. Collins would fire him so far he'd take up an independent ninety-minute orbit. He began to wish he hadn't spoken quite so ruggedly to the girl. She had probably repeated every bit of blasphemy that had left O'Reilly's lips.

"Mr. Collins will see you now," he was told. "Through that door."

O'Reilly went through the sumptuous door into a sumptuous office. D. F. Collins of Collins Spacecraft sat behind a broad mahogany desk. He was a tall, sturdy-looking man in his fifties. He seemed to be scowling.

He said, "Are you Sergeant O'Reilly?"

"T-that's right."

"Sit down, Sergeant. I understand you and my daughter had some difficulty earlier today."

O'Reilly nodded.

"I'm sorry to hear that," Collins said. His voice was an authoritative and commanding one. "She's always been a headstrong girl, you know. She took private lessons in space-piloting—cost me a fortune—and then demanded her own ship. It had to be a high-acceleration sports model, too. Nothing else would satisfy her."

"I saw the ship," O'Reilly said. "It's really a beauty."

"You took her ticket away, I understand?"

O'Reilly nodded. "You'll get the full explanation to-

morrow, I think. I filed a charge downstairs. Seven major violations and four minor ones, including resisting arrest. But..."

"But what, Sergeant?"

O'REILLY felt dribblets of sweat pouring down his beefy face. "Look here, Mr. Collins. I used to be a space pilot, and it isn't my fault I'm a traffic cop now. I'm too old for space, according to the medics. But I know what my job is and my job was to bring your daughter down from space fast before she did some serious damage. So I did it. Okay, I know you can pull strings to get her ticket cleared, and I know you can get me booted out of here for arresting her. Why don't you just say it, then, instead of letting me squirm? Why..."

He stopped. Collins was smiling.

"There seems to be some mistake, Sergeant. I'm not going to pull any strings. You don't know how happy I am that Melva's going to be suspended; I only hope it's a life suspension and not merely a few years. I called you over to congratulate you, that's all. And to thank you. It's the first time in twenty-three years that anybody has been able to discipline that girl. And..."

The door flew open.

O'Reilly turned and saw Melva Collins stalk in. She



was still dripping wet, and her clothes and hair were soggy. Her long eyelashes were plastered together by water. She looked angry.

"*Father!*"

Collins looked at her. "You're supposed to knock before entering, my dear."

"To the deuce with that. I've lost my license! They say they won't let me space again! And it's all because of this—this..."

"I was just doing my job, Miss," O'Reilly said.

"You should have heard the things he said to me! And then he refused to let me land my ship, and—oh, I wish I could scratch his eyes out! You'll have him fired for me, won't you?"

"No," Collins said. "I won't."

O'REILLY began to grin. Somehow, seeing the magnate bearded by his daughter was worth all the boredom of nine months as a traffic cop. He watched the frustrated rage animate the girl's face as she worked herself up into a tantrum which Collins seemed powerless to control.

The yelling went on for about sixty seconds, at the end of which time O'Reilly turned to Collins and said, "Mr. Collins? May I make an

impertinent suggestion?"

"What is it, Sergeant?"

"I think I know what your daughter needs. And it isn't a pilot's license."

"It's a good sound spanking," Collins said. "I've known that for years."

"*Father!* How could you! I..."

"Quiet, Melva." Collins smiled. "Sergeant, I know it isn't quite in the realm of a traffic officer's duties—but perhaps you'd be willing to oblige me? I think she needs it."

O'Reilly grinned and gave a spaceman's salute. "Call it corrective discipline, sir. It's part of a traffic officer's duties, and I'm willing to oblige."

"Keep your hands off me, O'Reilly. Don't come near me! Don't..."

O'Reilly advanced relentlessly, cornered the kicking girl without much trouble, and bent her over his knee. He paused and looked doubtfully at Collins. The old man was beaming in unmistakable approval.

*It's been a long, tough day,* O'Reilly thought. *But here's where I even the score.* His arm rose and fell rhythmically.

For once, duty was pleasure for O'Reilly.







# MIRROR

by Ralph Spencer

The question was: why  
was Professor Burr  
writing backwards, and  
driving off on the wrong  
side of the street?



**A**BNER HINCKLEY, D. SC., walked out of the nuclear physics building of the University of California at Mojave. He walked like a man older than his middle age, stooped as though the weight of the world and its worries bowed him down. Preoccupied and wracked by inner perturbation, he hardly noticed how the winter sun had lowered early in the evening and sent cool blue shade over the desert outside the campus oasis, shadows cast by the purple mountains that ringed the valley.

But there was a roll of speech from behind the curving brick wall of the building that housed all the expensive equipment and maze of offices and laboratories that made up his accustomed haunts. Vaguely he recollected that there should not be any stranger in this area, for at one side of it was the round structure like an old-fashioned gas tank that covered the cyclotron, and there was a fence all around to keep the public out.

Like any torn and baffled man, Hinckley seized on the opportunity to snatch at an interruption in his own grave problems. He rounded the wall and was aware of a group of students clustered by a pit near the foundations of the building.

Beyond the students, Hinckley saw Professor



Thomas Bidpae Burr waving a piece of chalk with one hand while he gestured toward his class with a small pottery object in the other hand.

**B**URR, WAS excited, gleeful. He might well be, Dr. Hinckley thought sourly, for he had pulled such a network of strings that he had obtained permission from the very highest authority for an archaeological excavation right at the base of the triple-classified hush-hush structure devoted to atomic research. Even then, no one supposed he would hold a class there!

Burr's comfortably-stout figure, clad in finest tropical woolens, vibrated with enthusiasm and his normally pecan-colored bald head was a shocking pink.

"Notice the frill of feathers about the neck of this reptile head," Professor Burr's round lecturing voice boomed, as he held up the pottery object again. "Definitely the feathered serpent god, and proof that the Aztecs, or some other Nahua-cultured people, came down from the present Shoshone areas to northward—and Shoshones speak a cousin dialect of the Nahuatl to this day—and passed through this desert on their way to Mexico and their greater glory! I shall now write on these atom-smashers' wall the name of the god, for your convenience in spelling."

The close-packed students, some of them on camp chairs, more seated on the ground, burst out laughing.

Dr. Hinckley's lean face grew a trifle gloomier. He'd forgotten his distance spectacles in his anxiety and he couldn't see the writing; but he suspected Burr of inscribing something disrespectful to the science department.

Hinckley crowded into the audience, but his light weight had no force able to budge the robust athletes who seemed to be the main registrants for Far Western Archaeology 2-B.

**A** STUDENT majoring in psychology who had to have three units of general culture, and therefore took archaeology, was saying, "Uh, I don't know. Maybe Bidpae is cracking. We've had case histories."

A student who was majoring in business administration (he had to have three units in science, and therefore took archaeology), said simultaneously: "Darned clever trick of Bidpae's, recognized technique in advertising—so the class'll remember the spelling."

Chimes rang in the center of the campus, and the class rose as one and swarmed away. Bidpae moved with them in the center of the troop, headed for a small, smart car on the drive.

"Professor Burr!" Hinckley raised his voice and no-



ticed that it cracked. Strain, he thought, and wondered briefly if he should follow custom and call, "Bidpae!" Perhaps Burr didn't object; everybody knew the story.

A Boston Brahman still under the spell of transcendentalism, and its interest in Hindu philosophy, had christened his son with a middle name which honored the fifth century author of moral fables in Sanscrit.

That son, the present Professor Burr, had made one brief attempt soon after he himself became a pundit on the Aztecs, Mayas and Incas, to record himself as "T. B. Burr." He soon found his students were pronouncing it "Teabibber", in a scoffing manner, since Burr was noted for his excellent taste in vintages and loathed tea. This disgusted the professor so that he just let nature take its course, and "Bidpae" he was called whenever his back was turned—and sometimes when it was not.

**H**INCKLEY had not made up his mind, but was about to shout something, anyway, when Professor Burr's car purred pleasantly into action and shot away. Burr saw the scientist and waved, grinning cheerfully, then looked astonished at the fact that the car was going down the left side of the street. He jerked the wheel over and continued at a rapid pace toward the campus en-

trance that led to the faculty dwellings on a high dune.

Dr. Hinckley sighed and turned back to the building, but stopped to read the writing on the wall. The word Burr had put down there was "*ItaoclazteuQ*", but with each letter completely reversed and connected properly to those before and after it, as though the whole word had been written from right to left.

Hinckley's face remained as worried and nervous as before, but turned a shade paler. He whirled around and started walking as fast as he could down the driveway in the wake of Burr's car.

A student waiter in a white coat met Hinckley at the door. Professor Burr was dining alone, but in state, his dinner jacket and white shirt front setting off his rich brown, curly beard. He boomed greetings as Hinckley was ushered into a dining room of softly glowing, polished eucalyptus wood paneling.

"Not a word, Hinckley, not a word until you've sampled this ethno-gustatory meal of mine," Bidpae shouted cheerfully. "Know you're irritated because we probed around the foundations of your devilish contraptions, but let that be until you try this wine made from cactus juice according to a recipe Shagun translated from the legends of Texco-co."



To the student waiter, Bidpae commanded, "Bring Dr. Hinckley some antelope steak. Wangled it flown in from the Arizona field expedition, fresh, today," he added to his guest.

**H**INCKLEY allowed himself to be seated and served, but he neither drank nor ate. "Burr," he said, "I've come to."

"Now, now," said Bidpae, ladling some of his favorite nopal jelly (also an ancient Aztec recipe). "Suppose we had undermined your infernal machinery? You and it are the epitome of progress, and all progress is degeneration, as we historians discover. Only increases the mass of human misery possible to the extent that it permits the increase of populations. There is no answer, sir, to philosophical pessimism. Truly was it said, long ago, it would be better not to have been."

Bidpae wiped his mouth, looked out his wide windows over the sunset gilding the mountains along the western rim of the Mojave, ate more jelly, and breathed deeply in contentment.

Dr. Hinckley got in a word at last, while the steak turned cold on his plate. "You're a hell of a pessimist, enjoying yourself the way you do." He glanced through the door at the Oaxaca blankets used for rugs on the floor of the sitting room, at the reflection of

excavated golden ornaments in a case along the wall.

"All I can do is try to alleviate the overwhelming sadness of life," Bidpae stated gravely, pouring a liqueur (not Aztec). He tapped the great wooden Mexican drum that stood at the head of the table and its musical reverberation brought the student waiter with coffee, cheese and fruit.

"Would you mind alleviating misery for some one else?" asked Dr. Hinckley. "Particularly a student of us both, Erickson."

"The Viking? The big blond? The swimming champ?" asked Burr.

Hinckley nodded.

**"A**NYTHING I can do; what's the trouble?" said Burr. "He was always more your protege than mine. As a historian, he was a good physicist. Ingenious chap, though; inventive; he thought of a lot of new ways to bluff his way through archaeology, and students have covered most of that ground for generations."

"Inventive," agreed Dr. Hinckley. "Very." He paused, looked speculatively at the untouched glass of cactus wine, and then gulped it down.

Bidpae nodded, approvingly, and waited for the stimulant to exercise its ameliorating and catalytic action on the conversation.



"Ever hear of the negative proton?" Hinckley finally asked.

"Uh, I did see something about it in the papers, and, yes, I overheard a word or two at the Faculty Club. Manufactured out of pure energy, wasn't it, by your riv—uh—your collaborators in the University of California at Berkeley."

"Yes. They've got a bevatron; we haven't." Hinckley was a little more animated, a little resentful. "But we had Erickson," he went on, after another pause.

Bidpae waited for the cactus juice to work further.

The wait was too long. Dr. Hinckley didn't seem to know just how to go on.

"You *had* him?" Bidpae prompted, finally.

"Yes, and I've come to see if you can help."

The professor of Western Antiquities permitted his astonishment to show almost as much as his curiosity.

Dr. Hinckley sadly watched the play of emotion across Professor Burr's eloquent features, and then furthered the confusion. "You see, Erickson's no longer with us."

**B**IDPAE'S face now registered concern. "If he finally decided that life isn't worth living, as I've said often enough, I hope you'll remember that I always accompany my remarks on pessi-

mism with advice. My remedy for this sad world is to snatch the evanescent pleasures..."

It was Dr. Hinckley's turn to look puzzled. When he understood, he said, "Rot."

Bidpae was relieved, but still curious. "Just how can I help?" He filled Dr. Hinckley's glass again.

"Maybe not at all, but maybe. You wrote the word '*Quetzalcoatl*' on the wall—at your lecture."

"Yes, so I did," admitted Burr. He leaned over in his excitement. "I'm puzzled by all this," he said with the emphasis of understatement. "I'm amazed, also, that you could even pronounce the name of that deity, since you probably never heard it before."

"I heard it. Recently. Not from you. You wrote it backwards."

"I did?"

"Yes. When you drove off, you took the left side of the road."

"I did? Oh, yes, so I did; strange thing. Only for a minute, though."

"About half a block—away from the laboratories."

Bidpae reached out and moved Dr. Hinckley's glass of cactus juice away from him. "You have to get used to it," he said.

Hinckley frowned. "Oh, well. You may not understand it, and you may not believe it if you do get the drift



of it, but if you're to help... It was like this:

"At Berkeley they produced a negative proton, or anti-proton. It immediately coalesced with a positive proton, to their mutual annihilation. Results showed on a photographic emulsion.

**"NOW, ERICKSON** was greatly excited by the idea that the negative proton was the mirror image—the image in reverse, of the proton of the nucleus of the atoms that make up the molecules that make up the world around us.

"We had toyed with methods of giving it a longer life. You know that during the hundred sixtillionths of a second before the explosion was finished, time stood still, in that environment. And Erickson argued that if it were in its own true environment, in a world where negative protons were the common stuff, and only positive protons were dangerous intruders, perhaps to be manufactured by bevatrons... I don't know how to explain it to you."

"I not only understand you," said Professor Burr with dignity, "but I assure you that your idea is not new to me, hasn't been entirely new for at least a thousand years. In the legends of all the Nahua people there are persistent stories of time standing still, when all animate matter is frozen, as it

were, and ordinarily inanimate things are alive. There was the rebellion of the pots and pans against mankind..."

"All right," Hinckley interrupted. "Maybe. I was going to say that Erickson argued that in Berkeley by a great expenditure of energy they have torn a negative proton from its context—from its world, so to speak—and that what we poor stepchildren of the university (who don't have a bevatron) should do, is to concentrate on opening up that negative world. He claimed that if the anti-proton was the mirror image of our world, the negative world would be similar, only, in reverse."

Hinckley's voice dwindled off, and he sank his head into his hands. "I can't go on."

**PROFESSOR BURR** solicitously moved the glass of cactus juice back, pulled one of Hinckley's hands down and clasped it around the drink. Hinckley drank. He began again:

"Well, Erickson reasoned that the clue to all of it was in the direction of electrical flow, or, its nature. If he could, for instance, reverse the polarity within the atom..."

"Never mind the details," soothed Bidpae. "In our discipline we generalize; isolated facts are only the first process of induction, and usually it is easier if you



just disregard them thereafter; they never all fit in, anyway, so just use your generalization. I take it he or you together built some kind of apparatus?"

"He built it—and the plans were all Erickson's. This glass is empty!"

"Glasses invariably get empty; just one of the proofs of pessimism," said Bidpae. But he filled the glass.

"Well," said Hinckley, when the glass was in condition to be rolled softly back and forth on its side, "it took some time and money, but we generated a field, between poles; and in there, or through there, is evidently the negative universe.

"We tried to fish anti-protons out of it by throwing scraps of metal through. They vanished in the field, and reappeared on the other side just the same as when they went in.

"We skidded a running phonograph through; it came out playing, but it didn't play in the field. We attached a walkie-talkie to the whole phonograph—oh, a lot of detail, we had to make it all so we could toss it without breaking it—buffers, cushions. And it played in the field. Evidently it doesn't matter which way or what kind of a current starts a radio impulse.

"And then..." Dr. Hinckley's voice ran down once more.

BIDPAE handed him the bottle. "I can see it already," he said. "You pushed Erickson through, with the walkie-talkie on him."

"*I did not*," shouted Hinckley. "I was against the whole idea. Anyway, first we threw a guinea pig across the field, and it wasn't any more scared than when we threw it across the floor outside the field. So Erickson strapped on the walkie-talkie, to yell once as he went through, and we put a mattress for him to land on; and he ran back for a running broad jump."

Hinckley shuddered, leaped from his chair, stood leaning over the back of it, and blurted hastily: "Changed my mind again when I saw him start, and shouted to him to stop. My interference, maybe the overbalance of the equipment on him—anyway, I saw he didn't take off right, and he didn't come out the other side of the field."

Hinckley came around and sat in his chair, and stared defiantly at Professor Burr.

"Uh," said Bidpae. "Go on. The portable radio set?"

"Oh, yes, he talked, after a while. Not English; some weird language. And several times I caught that word you wrote on the wall."

Bidpae studied his colleague. He reached for the bottle and measured its contents by eye. He set it down and leaned back and remarked speculatively: "You know—it



just occurs to me—you wouldn't be merely, uh, pulling my leg with this whole story? I won't follow you to your den of iniquity and find jeering students?"

**H**INCKLEY shook his head. "Wish that was it. But in a way, you already were there. Writing backwards! Erickson's special field was up against the inside of that very wall. For a little while you were something of a mirror image, yourself: hands, eyes, everything. Writing backwards, driving on the left..."

Bidpae lifted one hand, then the other; he rubbed his eyes.

"You're all right this far from it," said Hinckley, grimly. "But it did occur to me that anybody calling on one of your gods might be speaking the language of that god. Want to come and try translating?"

Bidpae was holding the door of his little car open for him by the time Hinckley maneuvered down the steps. A very short while later, they were both in front of a maze of wiring, condensers, induction coils, relays, intricate feed-back arrangements, and huge electro-magnets alongside the far wall inside the laboratory. Hinckley saw that Bidpae did not understand any of this, but he did not exult; there were too many other parts of it that no one understood. The field, Hinckley

explained briefly, was under the archway of electro-magnets. He indicated the mattress. The apparatus hummed slightly, musically.

"Afraid to shut it off," admitted Hinckley. "Don't know what it might do to Erickson." He fitted earphones over Bidpae's ears and sat down with him at a table. They waited. Bidpae doodled snake heads on a paper, some of them with feather ruffs. Hinckley stared straight before him.

Burr moved a receiver off his ear. "You know," he said, "In the pocket of my car, I always carry a little—softener of a rugged life's sharp corners. If you. "

He broke off and gasped, "Nahuatl it is, basic language of the Nahua people of central Mexico. Why did I just treat learning a strange tongue like acquiring a show piece? Why didn't I—umm, I'm getting it, though. sounds like Erickson's voice, but he never studied. " His pencil flew over the paper.

**H**INCKLEY jerked his head to sharper attention when Bidpae shouted a question in a language like tinkling stones and rasping skulls in a sandstorm on the desert, then went back to writing.

There were more questions and then Professor Burr leaned back with wonder in his eyes.



"He's there," he said. "Chichen-Itza, Maya or Itza city, way down in Yucatan. He says his people have just conquered it."

"His people? Aztecs?" hazarded Hinckley.

"Nahua tribes," corrected Professor Burr. "The Aztecs were a Nahua tribe, but Erickson describes conditions long before their day. It was in 987 A.D. when warriors from Mexico captured Chichen-Itza. Doesn't make sense, does it? And besides that—tell me, Hinckley, as a physicist (which I am not), how a little walkie-talkie could reach us from Yucatan?"

"How do I know?" said Hinckley. "When the very basis of the universe is altered, what might not happen to time and distance?"

"Uh," said Bidpae, slipping off the head set, and then hastily holding one ear muff to his ear, while he glared at the archway. "Or size? Might the whole thing be in the archway? Nahua people were here; maybe the field reaches them wherever they are?"

The earmuff crackled, and Bidpae pulled the whole set back on his head. He shouted more questions. Then he took it off.

"He just said they are taking the walkie-talkie away from him, to prepare him—and stopped in the middle of a word. But do you know, before that, Erickson told me

that the snake balustrades honoring Quetzalcoatl do not exist on the great temple at Chicken-Itza? Confirmation of the theory that the worship of the feathered serpent, Quetzalcoatl, was introduced to the Maya by the Nahua conquerors; so, naturally, the balustrades so prominent in the ruins today.. How I would like," Bidpae rose and half started toward the archway, then shook his head and sat down again. "It isn't safe there," he said.

"To hell with snake balustrades," said Hinckley. "What about Erickson? Prepared for what?"

**B**IDPAE laid an assauring hand on the little scientist's quivering shoulder. "You realize, these people had a better appreciation of the true nature of progress than we admit to ourselves, usually. We both know, when we stop to think of it honestly, that every great act in the course of human history has had to be laved in sacrificial blood. Christ was crucified; they ~~shot~~ Lincoln; Caesar was ~~stabbed~~; Rembrandt ~~practically~~ starved to death; Gandhi was assassinated—and in mythology, Prometheus, and so on. So certain peoples, including those of the Nahua culture, sought to substitute, uh, less useful victims. War prisoners instead of their own kings, or probably any convenient strangers. "



"You mean they're going to sacrifice Erickson?"

"I'm afraid so. Of course, being, white—the legends all say that Quetzalcoatl was a white man—he would be a natural selection. They have just begun to prepare him for the, uh, ceremony. Of course, now I think of it, there is a mirror-like quality here, too. In our history, maidens were cast as sacrifices into the waters of the sacred well at Chichen-Itza, a fall of seventy feet before they struck the water. Here they're going to throw a man, reversing the sexes."

Hinckley began to pace the room.

**B**IDPAE sat and rubbed his bald head with the ear muffs. "You know," he said meditatively, "I think there must be a treasure-trove of Nahua artifacts under this building. This must have been a main settlement in their march southward. Otherwise, why did Erickson fall right into a Nahua culture when he went under the archway? Why not—oh, the cattle kings, or the miners-Forty-Niners, or the California Dons? Now if I could get permission to tunnel under that wall..."

Dr. Hinckley jumped up and down and screamed: "Will you do something to save Erickson!"

"His walkie-talkie was taken away from him," soothed

Bidpae. "He only pays the usual price for an unusual achievement. In a way, it is a great honor for him; there will be multitudes to watch, more genuine adulation than he ever received at a swimming and diving exhibition. Wait! Diving? Isn't he the champion? There's a legend that when Quetzalcoatl came to Mexico, they knew him because he survived a sacrifice!"

Bidpae rose and animatedly slapped Hinckley on the back. "I think all will be well," he said, and then his exuberance died out. "Of course, Quetzalcoatl had a long white beard, and Erickson doesn't."

The receiving set seemed to be gasping and chuckling as it lay on the table. Bidpae leaped to pull it over his head.

"He has a long white beard," he murmured in awe. He listened further. "He says he's in the Valley of Mexico now. He has been educating the people there for the last fifty years. He taught them to tame turkeys, and dogs, and better ways to plant better corn. He couldn't teach them to plow, because there are no horses, not even oxen. He has them working gold for jewelry, and he's trying to get a copper knife to shave with."

**B**IDPAE shouted into the walkie-talkie, and turned



to Hinckley. "I just told him that shaving is a mistake; he should have a long white beard. Uh, how'd he grow a beard since he left here?"

"How did fifty years pass since he talked last?" queried Hinckley. "I told you—probably time is all balled up there."

Bidpae was listening. Finally he took off the head set, rose, stretched. "We might go back to my house," he said. "Erickson's afraid his batteries are running down. He doesn't intend to call us again for some years, unless there are untoward incidents."

"We can't go anywhere," objected Hinckley. "The last fifty years was only about twenty minutes."

"Why, yes, that's right. But you might go out to my car now—hold it!"

The receivers were clicking and whispering. Bidpae put them on, and an expression of deepening consternation veiled his features, his eyes rolled up.

"The people in his city have been conquered by sun-worshippers! That must be the legendary conquest of Quetzalcoatl's followers by the adherents of Tezcatlipoa, the sun god, you know. They'll sacrifice him now, certainly."

"Do something!" shouted Hinckley.

"Erickson!" Bidpae called into the mouthpiece, "You have a right to be put to sea

on a raft of serpents, promising to return!" He said to Hinckley, "They might not be able to make such a raft easily, and this gives time—Cortez may come!"

"Can he understand English now?" asked Hinckley.

BIDPAE muttered, and poured a rolling thunder of Nahuatl into the instrument, then listened. Then his shoulders sagged and he slowly pulled the set from his head.

"It's practically over." He slumped down in the chair. "How time flies down there! They made a raft of bundles of reeds, with serpents in the bundles, and are ready to launch it. That is in line with the legend: Quetzalcoatl floated away and never came back—though when Cortez arrived, the Indians thought he was the god. He might never have subdued Mexico otherwise."

Hinckley turned all resoluteness. "That's enough waiting," he said incisively. "I'm going to shut off the current."

"So?" enquired Bidpae, dubiously. "What will happen..."

"How do I know?" snarled Hinckley. "Can't leave Erickson floating down the Gulf of Mexico on bundles of straw full of snakes! What's worse?"

"Well," said Bidpae, "of course a sacrifice is required,



considering that Erickson has accomplished a very astonishing feat. Some kind of sacrifice."

Hinckley was not listening. He jerked the master switch on the wall, a flare of blue flame following the copper knife.

"I'm going to reverse all the connections," the scientist declared, getting busy with insulated pliers. "I was thinking, while you were maundering; it just might be..."

After a few moments of feverish activity, he plunged over to the switch on the wall and hurled it back.

This time there was more than a single flame; the whole mechanism shimmered and flickered and dissolved into the blaze of a hundred arcs, or of a bolt lightning. When they could see again, they saw the opposite wall of the room standing bare—the entire set-up was gone.

**T**HE MATTRESS was still there, though, and on it stood a teen-age boy, looking dazed, and clutching around him a voluminous cloak of brilliant feathers.

Hinckley saw Professor Burr gaping. He became aware that he was, too, and shut his mouth.

Burr opened his mouth wider and said, "Why, uh, yes—see the yellow hair? Erickson?"

"Oh, yes, sir that's my name," answered the boy, and

stroked the feathered cloak in bewilderment. He started to take it off, then wrapped it back. "Where's my clothes?" As they did not answer, the boy continued, diffidently, "I'm all right, but—I was hurt?"

Dreadful experience," said Hinckley, "but of course you're all right now." He turned to Burr, swallowed as though the words hurt him:

"We had too much current, speeded up time; the man grew years older by seconds, and then younger, in reverse, out of control, too young. And I have to say, you probably saved his life with your knowledge of that queer lingo."

Bidpae rose and bowed. "I rather think he has to thank you for your, ah, intuition, and uh, resoluteness in—reversing? Is that what you said?" He looked at the place where the wiring, the coils and condensers and the magnet arch had been.

Hinckley took a few steps and waved his hand through the space. "No field now, of course," he said to Bidpae, and then to the boy: "I'm afraid we wrecked your set-up, Erickson. But, my God, man—boy—what a future we—you—have when you reconstruct it and repeat the experiment!"

**"WHAT!"** roared Professor Burr. "You'd risk Erickson's life again? Do you realize that he is a unique



authority on the basic history of pre-Conquest, why, pre-Aztec civilization in the Valley of Mexico? In addition, he is a man who actually saw the temples of Yucatan under construction, before they introduced the worship of Kukul-kan, or Quetzalcoatl..."

"With his unparalleled knowledge of electricity, and his discovery of a method of reversing the polar qualities of the energy that activates the proton and the anti-proton..." broke in Hinckley.

"Associated intimately with the intellectual giants who reared the pyramids of Teotihuacan; revered as a god, himself; and with all the secrets of that vast culture opened to him..." interrupted Bidpae.

"As a physicist..."

"As a historian and archaeologist... Have a little sense, man," and Bidpae agitatedly grasped Dr. Hinckley's slight form by the shoulders and shook it.

"Grrh," growled Dr. Hinckley and doubled up his fists.

Swirling around, they wafted a piece of paper off the table. It floated over to the boy, Erickson, who caught it casually and

glanced down at it, then gave it all his attention, to the exclusion of the academic disputation over by the table.

"Say!" said Erickson, waving the paper at the contending professors.

They turned to look at him. Bidpae released his hold on Hinckley. The scientist unclenched his fists. The paper was the one on which Professor Burr had doodled pictures of Quetzalcoatl as a feathered serpent.

"Where did you find this new horned toad?" asked Erickson, indicating the drawings. "Those spines ought not to be right on his neck, I know, but on the back of his head, but he's a new species! Have you got him here? I'd terribly like to see him, because..."

The boy went shy again, paused, then plunged on:

"I see you people are just like my father and mother, always fighting over what I'm going to be when I grow up. I'm dreadfully sorry; I don't know and I don't care about any of those things you picked for me, but I know what I'm going to be—a zoologist!"

### Don't Forget —



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*editorial*

## YOU AND I

**T**O MANY of you, this will be a recapitulation of material you have read before; I beg your indulgence. Any magazine which can be considered alive is constantly acquiring new readers, and it is for our new friends that this is written.

Science Fiction magazines are unique in one respect: a sizeable fraction of their readership take an active interest in them. Now many other publications encourage and print letters from readers—newspapers usually have letter columns; so do magazines such as *Time*. But, for the most part, these deal with particular readers' reactions to a specific article or story. You rarely find discussion of an entire issue, or see in-

terest displayed in the general policy of the magazine. You rarely see comments on articles and artwork, complaints, or requests for the type of article or story the reader fancies, etc.

As one correspondent mentions in "The Last Word" this time, it is quite true that the editor makes the decisions about the book's policy. Whether he merely implements a policy laid down by the publisher (as with specialized science fiction magazines like *Amazing Stories*, for example) or whether the editor is free to select the best material he can obtain, along the lines of his own ideas about what constitutes good science fiction (as with *Astounding Science Fiction*,



*Future Science Fiction*, and *Science Fiction Stories*, for example) he welcomes comment and suggestions from the readers.

**J**UST WHAT it is that makes a magazine "sell" is a mystery wrapped in an enigma, to use a Churchillian phrase. Anyone who has had experience in the magazine fields knows of instances where a title which seemed to hit the absolute depths of tastelessness and inanity—from miserable covers to moronic or reprehensible content—sold like the proverbial hotcakes. On the other hand, there have been titles which showed every indication of trying to present something really worthwhile to the public—first-rate in appearance and content—and were ignored by the public. But these are extremes: in general, a "good" magazine (one which satisfies the particular section of the public taste to which it is directed) will get along; and the better it fulfills its intent, the more solidly it will grow in circulation.

The big-circulation magazines can afford to hire field men to make surveys of what the readers like and what they do not like—in short, what keeps them buying the magazine, even if they're displeased with an issue now and then, or do not like certain features.

No science fiction magazine can do this. We have to depend upon what the readers tell us, in addition to what the sales figures show. If, for example, there's a general agreement in response to a particular issue (as to what was liked and what was not liked) and if corresponding sales figures show that an issue generally disliked did not sell as well as it should have sold at that time of year, then we have something to go on. Likewise if generally favorable reactions are backed up by "good" sales figures for the time of year.

This is the ideal response. Usually, we do not see any such one-to-one relationship between the letters and votes and the sales figures on any particular issue. However, sometimes a general trend can be spotted over the course of several issues.

**T**HE EDITOR has to work in the dark to a very great extent, and his tenure of office often depends upon his instincts. He can't hope to guess right all the time; he can't hope to avoid sad blunders now and then. The "great editor" is the one whose successes are so consistent that his boners either are not noticed, or are quickly forgotten in the general enthusiasm. The "good editor" is the one whose successes generally outweigh the failures and lapses. His readers feel tolerant toward what they



don't like even though they may write hot letters—they'll still buy another issue in hope that the lapse was only temporary.

There are two kinds of letter which are worthless to an editor, however affecting they may be. One is the letter from the reader who doesn't like *anything* about the magazine; this is painful to the editor, and it usually makes him wonder—but, after all, the odds are that this reader picked the wrong magazine for his tastes. Equally worthless is the letter from the reader who thought *everything* in the magazine was just completely wonderful. One is flattered for a few seconds; one sighs and says, "Would that we had 50,000 more like you, friend," but we know that this reader is atypical, like the one who hated everything in the book. The two balance each other out.

However, the reader who's *satisfied* with a particular issue, is not in the same class—if his response shows that he liked one item better than another, etc. We can't ring the bell with him every time, and his reactions may be balanced by a reader who didn't like anything in the issue *very much*, but found some items that weren't too bad. Yet, if we're on the right track, the "satisfied" reader will predominate. And he'll come back for more.

So, what we need to know is how you felt about this issue, every time. If you can write a letter, we're very happy to see it; if you have time only for a postcard, that's welcome, too. And we include the "Readers' Preference Coupon" for those of you have time only for casting a ballot on the stories, etc., without adding details, or entering into any of the discussions running in the "The Last Word". "The Reckoning" sums up the information we were able to derive from all the ballots, postcards, and letters.

**THE DEPARTMENTS**, let me add, have to be considered expendable in any given issue. If a story runs overlength, etc., then we are likely to leave out one or more department. However, don't think that we've dropped a department if you do not see it in a given issue; it'll be back, later on, when there's room—unless your response has given clear indication that most of you do not want this department. In such an event, we'll announce your decision and bow to it.

It was because of your requests, and favorable notes when we asked you, over a considerable period of time that we shifted this magazine to a monthly schedule. It was at your requests that "The Reckoning" and the "Readers' Preference Coupon" were restored.



What about requests for specific authors and types of story? Well, this is not as simple a matter to find out, or to comply with when we have a consensus; but I can say that I'll do everything I can to give you what you want, as soon as you do your part in letting me know.

Yes, I do have the final say in selecting material, but you have the last word—not only in the letter department, but in deciding whether you're going to support this magazine. Some editors have thought that all they had to do was to present what they liked and then tell the reader that this was just what he

wanted. Now, believe it or not, some such editors have succeeded—because their instincts were just right; they *really knew* what their readers wanted without knowing how they knew. But, in most instances, such a policy has led to a very select circulation, and from there to oblivion for the magazine.

I'm not convinced that I'm a "great editor", as defined above; I hope I'm one of the good ones. Meanwhile, let's pull together, you and I, and see if we can't produce a magazine with which we'll both be pleased, and of which we can both be proud.

RAWL

## Now Every Other Month

*Our readers insisted on it!*

*Yes, people who care about good science fiction demanded that we increase the schedule on FUTURE SCIENCE FICTION, and offer them the stories and features they enjoy six times a year, instead of four!*

And the June issue features

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*An absorbing novelet of a space ship which could doom a world*

by T. H. Mathieu

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by Isaac Asimov

don't miss  
#37 of

# FUTURE SCIENCE FICTION



# **lullaby**

by Arthur  
Zirul

Theodore Harcourt was an immortal, and he hoped that his infant son was, too . . .

**T**HE BABY'S CRY plumb ed Theodore Harcourt's sleep like a taloned hand probing into thick mud. Harcourt stirred a bit. Desperately he hoped the gasping little cry would stop and let him slip back into his mud sea of oblivion. The baby cried louder. The urgent, lost-kitten sound of a new born infant seeking food with its voice.

Harcourt rolled over and blinked his reddened eyes. He stared sullenly at the broad, freckled back of his wife. If she had heard the cry, she now cleverly acted as if she hadn't. The baby screamed again; pausing longer between howls as though building up strength for each cry. Harcourt nudged his wife's back with his elbow. She stirred.

"Two o'clock feeding, your turn," he said.

His wife groaned and mumbled, "Go to hell."

"Martha!" Harcourt said, shocked. "We promised to share and share alike. After all, we are both responsible for his condition."

"Brat was your idea. You take care of him."

"Martha, have you forgotten what day today is?"

"Go to hell."

Harcourt sighed wearily. He had been expecting this to happen; he should never have married a woman like Martha. His other wives had been more suited to his tempera-



ment. But, of course, there had been no choice: it *had* to be Martha. He sat up stiffly. It had been only four hours since the last feeding, and he hadn't fallen asleep promptly after it. He was exhausted. He felt as if he had always been exhausted. Sluggishly he swung his feet over the edge of the bed. His feet groped for his slippers in the dark. Not finding them he stood up anyway and shuffled, barefoot, towards the urgent cries from the nursery. He silently cursed the fate that forbid his hiring a nursemaid.

The baby had kicked off its covers and was lying there in the center of the crib's mattress, dwarfed by it, kicking its little red legs in spasmodic jerks. Its tiny face was twisted into a wrinkled, red caricature by its screaming, toothless mouth. Harcourt changed the infant's diaper with quick, practiced movements; he talked soothingly as he worked.

"Hush, hush now little fella. This is no way for a little man who is going to father a whole new race to act. We immortals have to learn our manners, now don't we?"

**T**HEODORE HARCORT had been positive of his immortality on his ninety-fifth birthday. Of course, he had suspected it for at least fifty years before, but by ninety-five he had been sure of it. He still looked, and felt,

as if he were twenty-five. Others had noticed it, also. He had been forced to quit his job and move several times in order to escape from, first, the admiring questions, then the jealous glances, finally the open antagonism. It had not been easy for him, but he had had his goal to sustain him. He was determined to father a master race of immortals.

Harcort lifted the baby gently, feeling the strain on his weary muscles. He rested the infant's flopping head on his shoulder as he walked into the kitchen. He took a bottle of formula from the irradiation cabinet and put it into the short wave heater. While the bottle warmed, he rocked the baby gently. He remembered other babies, mothered by his other wives. He had hoped for them all but none had fulfilled his hopes. This baby was different, though; this one's mother was different from the other women. She was immortal also.

A chime sounded softly and he removed the bottle from the heater. He sat in a kitchen chair, trying to snatch some rest in the pneumatic plastic seat, while the infant in his lap sucked greedily at the bottle's nipple. Harcourt knew that he himself had not been born immortal; but he also knew what had made him immortal. It had happened in 1946 at Oak Ridge. He had been a young nuclear scien-



tist assigned to the atomic isotopes.

**T**HERE HAD been four people in the room the day the tube of Isotope 322 had dropped and lost its cap. All four of them were rushed to the hospital immediately, but exhaustive tests revealed only that they seemed to be unharmed. After two weeks, they were returned to their laboratory and given extra courses in safety procedure. Twenty years later, Harcourt worked desperately to duplicate the isotope he had become certain had caused his immortality. He failed.

The mice exposed to the isotope lived their normal lifespans and died, as did the

other animals, as did his assistants. Harcourt never succeeded in duplicating the exact set of circumstances that had produced the immortality. On his fiftieth birthday, he decided to try the biological method; that, too, failed. The three women he married and abandoned did not carry the immortality gene. He had kept a secret watch on the children they produced. The children grew up and, too soon, grew old. What was needed, he deduced, was an immortal wife. It was then, when Harcourt was ninety, he decided to search for the three other people who had been in that Oak Ridge laboratory the day of the isotope exposure. They too must be  
[Turn Page]

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*Why was a girl running a top-security army post?*

*What was the secret of Mary Q and the Party Girl?*

*Why did the post commander wear dark glasses?*

The strangest detective you ever read about was faced with a strange mystery that had to be solved before sabotage could erupt in the

## DESERT OF SIN

*don't miss this compelling novelet*

by Edward D. Hoch

*in the big MAY issue of the pocket-size*

★ DOUBLE ACTION ★

DETECTIVE and MYSTERY Stories



immortal, he realized. And one of them had been a woman—a reasonably young woman scientist named Martha Long.

The baby rejected the bottle. Harcourt raised it to his shoulder and rubbed its back tenderly. The baby belched softly; it accepted the bottle once more with its vacuum pump of a mouth.

"Take it easy, little fella," Harcourt crooned, his eyes closed. "You will have lots of time for food. Lots of time for everything. Daddy spent a long time finding you, and you mustn't choke yourself."

**H**ARCORT had traced the three scientists one by one. Fifty years had passed by then and it had not been an easy job; especially since they had changed their locations so often. He found the first one in a cemetery—a suicide. The second man he located in Mexico. The scientist greeted Harcourt almost hysterically when he learned who Harcourt was. Theodore Harcourt promptly murdered him with a hypodermic filled with an undetectable poison; he would tolerate no competition in his plan for world domination.

It took a long time to find Martha Long. She had been in several rest homes for short periods. He finally found her in a skid row hotel in Chicago. She would have nothing to do with his plan

at first. Her own immortality had given her nothing but bitterness; she did not wish to curse others with it. But Harcourt could be very persuasive. No mere woman was going to stand in the way of his plan.

He painted glowing pictures of a glorious future filled with people like themselves, who ruled and controlled. He swayed her with dreams of a Utopia where loneliness, and the hatred of lesser peoples, were abolished. He even reduced himself to the level of mawkishness by insisting they were the new Adam and Eve. At length she succumbed and they were married.

**T**HE BABY finished the bottle and closed its eyes. Harcourt cradled it carefully in his arms. As he re-entered the nursery, he stumbled on the door saddle and almost fell. He hefted the infant before placing it back on the wilderness of mattress.

"My, I do believe you have gained a little weight," he said, "That's wonderful; keep it up, now. You've got to grow up big and strong and overcome your condition. You have too you know."

The baby hiccuped and bubbled some milk from its mouth.

"Now, now," Harcourt chided, dabbing at the mouth with a diaper. "That's no way for an immortal to act. Sleep



now, today is going to be a big day for you."

The baby fell asleep.

Harcort shuffled out of the room yawning and stretching his aching muscles. He would forego his experiments today, he decided. After all, it was an occasion, and there certainly was no doubt about the baby's immortality. He simply had to find the key was all. The condition could not be permanent. Despite Martha's pessimism he was certain

there was an answer. Immortality simply could not operate like that; "freezing" life the way the isotope had "frozen" him. If that were the case why hadn't it happened in the womb long before birth?

"Well, I'll continue the experiments tomorrow," he muttered as he scuffed back to bed. "After all, today is the baby's birthday. Now how old will he be? Is it ten or eleven years?"

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## ★ Next Time Around ★

At first glance, you may think that the cover painted by Ed Emsh for Mack Richards' *"The Moon — Good Night!"* is just one of those things which Art Departments demand in order to get something bright and attractive — too bad if it depicts utter impossibilities. And fire in space certainly looks like a platinum-plated absurdity, right out of the bad old days when no one knew or cared about science in science fiction. Well, this time all hands are vindicated: we have that bright cover, but everything is satisfactorily accounted for!

Part three of *"Tower of Zanid"* increases both the suspense and the snickers, as Anthony Fallon nears his none-too-much-desired goal. And Gordon R. Dickson relates how an urgent but fascinating problem was solved in the "Teakettle's" *"Last Voyage"*.



Second  
of  
Four  
Parts

# the tower of zanid

illustrated by FREAS

by L. Sprague de Camp

Anthony Fallon's goose was cooked for certain if he didn't get into the mysterious Safq, and very likely cooked if he did. But there was a further likelihood that he'd be done in in the maze of intrigue necessary to make the attempt!

## Synopsis

**DR. JULIAN FREDRO**, a Polish archeologist, arrives on Krishna in 2168 to investigate the Safq, (a mysterious monumental building, shaped like a spiral shell), in Zanid, the capital of Balhib. **ANTHONY FALLON**, an English adventurer living in Zanid with a jagain (legal mis-

tress) named **GAZI**, spies for **QAIS** of Babaal, an agent of **GHUUR** of Uriiq, the Kamuran (Khan) of Qaath, the steppe-land west of Balhib. **PERCY MJIPA**, an African serving as Terran consul in Zanid, has learned of Fallon's occupation, and uses this knowledge to force Fallon to agree to help Dr. Fredro enter the Safq, which is con-





Fallon felt his ankles grabbed suddenly, then he was pushed headfirst into the arena...



trolled by the sinister cult of Yesht. Mjipa wishes Fallon to investigate the disappearance of three Earthmen in Balhib, all having vanished during the last three years.

Fallon belongs to the Juru Company of the Civic Guard of Zanid, which includes many non-Krishnans. From CAPTAIN KORDAQ of the regular army, the (commanding officer of the Juru Company), Fallon hears that Ghuur is about to attack Balhib and annex it to his great and growing empire. In the course of a night's patrol, Fallon breaks up a duel and makes a preliminary reconnaissance of the Safq. Kordaq asks to renew his old acquaintance with Gazi, with whom he was once in love.

Fallon has already declined a request from Qais that he look into the Safq. Now, seeing that he must do so anyway, he drives a bargain with the agent, hoping to get enough money to win back the throne of Zamba, which he briefly occupied. Qais writes a 2500-kard draft to Fallon on the banker KASTAMBANG, with whom he secretly does business. This draft is cut into three parts, one each being kept by Qais, Fallon, and Kastambang until the information is furnished to Qais. The banker invites Fallon to a party, at which he will introduce him to a renegade priest of Yesht who can give Fallon the ritual of

the Yeshtite services.

Fallon testifies at the trial of the duellists. GIREJ, one of the duellists, thanks Fallon for saving his life, and vows everlasting gratitude.

#### IV

"GAZI!" CALLED Anthony Fallon as he re-entered his house.

"Well, how now?" came his jagaini's irascible voice from the back.

"Get your shawl, my pretty, for today we shop."

"But I've already marketed for the day."

"No, no vulgar vegetables. I'm buying you some fancy clothes."

"Art drunk again?" said Gazi.

"How's that for a gracious response to a generous offer? No, dear; believe it or not, we're invited to a ball."

"What?" Gazi appeared, fists on hips. "Antane, if this be another of your japes."

"Me? Japes? Here, look at this!"

He showed her the invitation. With a pleased squeak Gazi threw her arms around Fallon's neck and squeezed the breath out of him. "My hero! How came you upon this? You stole it, I'll warrant!"

"Why is everybody so suspicious of me? Kastambang gave it to me with his own pudgy hand." Fallon straightened the kinks out of his ver-



tebrae. "It's tomorrow night, as you see. So come along."

"Why the haste?"

"Don't you remember—this is bath day? We must be clean to attend this do. You don't want the banker's jagaini to sneer at you through her lorgnette, do you? So don't forget the soap."

"The one good thing you Earthmen have brought to Krishna," she said, bustling about. "Alack! In these rags I'm ashamed to enter a good shop to purchase better garments."

"Well, I won't buy you an extra intermediate set of clothes so you can work your way up through the shops step by step."

"And have you really the wealth for such a reckless spense?"

"Oh, don't worry. I can get the stuff at cost."

**THEY RATTLED** back across town, passing the Safq. Fallon gave the monstrous edifice only a cursory glance, not wishing to reveal an excessive interest in it before Gazi. Next they clattered past the House of Justice, where the heads of the day's capital offenders were just being mounted on spikes on top of a bulletin-board. Below each head, a Krishnan was writing in chalk the vital statistics and the misdeeds of its former owner.

And then into the Kharju, where the sextuple clop of

the hooves of the ayas drawing the carriages of the rich mingled with the cries of newsboys selling the *Rashm* and pushcart peddlers hawking their wares; the footfalls of thousands of pedestrians, the rustle of cloaks and skirts; the clink of scabbards; the faint rattle of bracelets and other pieces of heavy jewelry; and over it all the murmur of rolling, rhythmic sentences in the guttural, resonant Balhibo tongue.

In the Kharju, Fallon found the establishment of Ve'qir the Exclusive and pushed boldly into the hushed interior. At that moment Ve'qir himself was selling something frilly to the jagaini of the hereditary Dasht of Qe'ba, while the Dasht sat on a stool and grumped about the cost. Ve'qir glanced at Fallon, twitched his antennae in recognition, and turned back to his customer. Ve'qir's assistant, a young female, came up expectantly, but Fallon waved her aside.

"I'll see the boss himself when he's through," he said. As the assistant fell back in well-bred acquiescence, Fallon murmured into Gazi's large pointed ear: "Stop gooing over those fabrics. You'll have the old *fastuk* raising the price."

A voice said: "Hello, Mr. Fallon. Is Mr. Fallon, yes?"

**FALLON** spun round. There was the white-haired arche-



ologist, Julian Fredro. Fallon acknowledged the greeting, adding: "Just sightseeing, Fredro?"

"Yes, thank you. How is project coming?"

Fallon smiled and waved towards Gazi. "Working on it now. This is my jagaini, Gazi er-Doukh." He performed the other half of the introduction in Balhibou, then switched back to English. "We're dressing her properly for a binge tomorrow night. The mad social whirl of Zanid, you know."

"Ah, you combine the business with the pleasure. Is this a part of the project?"

"Yes. Kastambang's party; he's promised me information."

"Ah? Fine. I have invitation to this party too. I shall see you there. Mr. Fallon—ah—where is this public bath I hear about, that takes place today?"

"Want to see the quaint native customs, eh? Stay with us; we're on our way to one after we finish here."

The *ci-devant* feudal lord completed his purchase, and Ve'qir came over to Fallon rubbing his hands together. Fallon demanded the best in evening wear, and presently Gazi was pirouetting slowly while Ve'qir tried one thing after another on her unclad form. Fallon chose a span-gled skirt of filmy material so expensive that even Gazi was moved to protest.

"Oh, go on!" he said. "We're only middle-aged once, you know."

She threw him a look of venom but accepted the skirt. Then the coutourier fitted her with a gold-lace *ulemda* set with semi-precious stones—a kind of harness or halter worn by upper-class Balhibo women on the upper torso on formal occasions, adorning without concealing, for it ostentatiously detoured around those areas that Terran culture deemed it seemly to cover. Fallon reflected that one big biological advantage that Krishnan women had over their Terran sisters was that they did not sag appreciably with age.

AT LAST, Gazi stood in front of the mirror, turning slowly this way and that. "For this," she said to Fallon, "I'd forgive you much. But since you're so rich for the nonce, why get you not something for yourself? 'Twould pleasure me to pick a garment for you."

"Oh, I don't need anything new," said Fallon. "And it's getting late."

"Yes you do, my love. That old rain-cloak of yours is unfit for the veriest beggar, so patched and darned is it."

"Oh, all right." With money in his srip, Fallon could not long withstand the urge to buy. "Ve'qir, have you got a man's rain-cloak in stock? Nothing fancy; just good



sound middle-class stuff."

Ve'qir, as it happened, had.

"Very well," said Fallon, having tried on the garment. "Add it up, and don't forget my discount."

Fallon completed his purchases, hailed a khizun, and started back towards the Juru with both Gazi and Fredro. Gazi said: "'Tis unwontedly open-handed of you, my love. But tell me, how got you such a vast reduction from Ve'qir, who's known to all the dames of Zanid for squeezing the last arzu from those so mazed by the glamor of his reputation as to venture into his lair?"

FALLON smiled. "You see," he said, repeating each phrase in two languages, "Ve'qir the Exclusive had an enemy—one Hulil, who preceded Chillan as Zanid's leading public menace. This Hulil had got something on Ve'qir, as the Americans put it, and was blackmailing him. Then the silly ass leaned too far out of a window and broke his skull on the flagstones below. Well, Ve'qir insists that I had something to do with this opportune defenestration, though I proved to the prefect's investigators that, at the time, I was in conference with Percy Mjipa and couldn't have pushed the blighter."

As they passed the Safq, Fredro craned his neck to

stare at it and began to babble naively about getting in, until Fallon kicked his shins. Fortunately Gazi knew a mere half-dozen words of English, all of them objectionable.

"Where we going?" said Fredro.

"To my house to drop off these packages and put on our *sufkira*."

"Please, can we not stop to look at Safq?"

"No, we should miss our bath."

Fallon glanced at the sun with concern, wondering if he was not late already. He had never gotten altogether used to doing without a watch; and the Krishnans, though they now made crude wheeled clocks, had not yet attained to watch-culture.

GAZI AND FREDRO kept Fallon busy interpreting, for Gazi knew practically nothing of the Terran tongues and Fredro's Balhibou was still rudimentary; but Fredro was full of questions about Krishnan housewifery, while Gazi was eager to impress the visitor. She tried to disguise her embarrassment when they stopped in front of the sad-looking little brick house that Fallon called home, jammed in between two larger houses, and with big cracks running across the tiles where the building had settled unevenly. It did not even have a central court, which in Balhib



practically relegated it to the rank of hovel.

"Tell him," Gazi urged, "that we do but dwell here for the nonce, till you find a decent place to suit us."

Fallon, ignoring the suggestion, led Fredro in. In a few minutes, he and Gazi reappeared, clad in sufkira—huge togalike pieces of towelling wrapped around their bodies.

"It's only a short walk," said Fallon. "Be good for you."

They walked east along Asada Street until this thoroughfare joined Ya'fal Street coming up from the southwest and turned into the Square of Qarar. As they walked, more people appeared going the same way, until they were engulfed in a sufkir-wrapped crowd.

Scores of Zaniduma were already gathered in the Square of Qarar where, only the night before, Fallon and his squad had stopped the sword-fight. There were but few non-Krishnans in sight, first because the Square of Qarar lay near the north-east corner of the Juru, where not so many of the foreigners resided, and second because many non-Krishnan races did not care for the Balhibo bath-customs. Osirians, for example, had no use for water at all, but merely scrubbed off and replaced their body-paint at intervals; Thothians, expert swimmers, insisted on

total immersion or nothing; and most human beings, unless they had become well assimilated to Krishnan ways, or came from some country like Japan, submitted to their planet's widespread tabu against public exposure.

**THE WATER-WAGON,** drawn by a pair of shaggy, six-legged shaihans, stood near the statue of Qarar. The cobbles shone where they had been watered down and scrubbed by the driver's assistant, a tailed Koloftu of uncommon brawn, who was just then securing his long-handled scrubbing-brush to the side of the vehicle.

The driver himself had climbed up on top of the tank and was extending the shower-heads over the crowd. Presently he called out: "Get ye ready!"

There was a general movement. Half the Krishnans took off their sufkira and handed them to the other half. The naked ones crowded forward to get near the shower-heads while the rest wormed their way back towards the outer sides of the square.

Fallon handed his sufkira to Fredro, saying: "Here, hold these for us, old man!"

Gazi did likewise. Fredro looked a little startled but took the garments, saying: "Used to do something like this in Poland before period of Russian domination two



centuries ago. Russians claimed it was *nye kulturno*. I suppose—I suppose one cannot have the bath without someone to hold these things?”

“That’s right; the Zaniduma are a light-fingered lot. This’ll be almost the first time Gazi and I have been able to take our bath at the same time. If you’d like to take yours after we finish...”

“No thank you!” said Fredro hastily. “Is running water in hotel?”

FALLON, holding the family cake of soap in one hand, and towing Gazi with the other, wormed his way towards the nearest shower-head. The driver and his assistant had finished tightening the joints of their extensible pipe-system and now laid hold of the handles at the ends of the walking-beam that worked the pump. They tugged these handles up and down, grunting, and presently the shower-heads sneezed and began to spray water.

The Zaniduma yelled as the cold fluid struck their greenish skins. They laughed, splashed each other, spanked each other’s bottoms, and soaped each other’s backs; to them it was a festive occasion. The land of Zanid rose out of the treeless prairies of west-central Balhib, not many hundred hoda from where these gave way to the

vast dry steppes of Jo’ol and Qaath. Water for the city had to be hauled up from deep wells, or from the muddy trickle of the shallow Eshqa. There was a water-main from the Eshqa above the city and a system of shaihan-powered pumps for raising the water, but this served only the royal palace, the Terran Hotel, and a few of the mansions in the Gabanj. Hence the Zaniduma were not lavish with their water.

Fallon and Gazi had gotten reasonably clean, and were picking their way out of the crowd when Fallon stiffened at the sight of Fredro, on the edge of the square, with their two sufkira draped over one shoulder, focussing his camera for a shot of the crowd.

“Oy!” said Fallon. “The damned fool doesn’t know about the soul-fraction belief!”

He started towards the archeologist, pulling Gazi, when she pulled back, saying: “Look! Who’s that, Antane?”

A VOICE resounded through the square. Turning, Fallon saw, over the heads of the Krishnans, that an Earthman in a black suit and a white turban had climbed up on the wall around the base of the tomb of King Balade at the other end of the square, to harangue the bathers:

“...for this one God hates all forms of immodesty, as



He explained through the mouths of His prophets: Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, and Getulio Cao! Beware, sinful Balhibuma, lest ye mend not your iniquitous ways, and He deliver you into the hands of the Qaathians and the Gozashtanduma. Dirt is a thousand times better than exposure to the lustful gaze of..."

It was Welcome Wagner, the American Ecumenical-Monotheist. Fallon observed that the heads of the Krishnans were turning, one by one, towards the source of this stentorian outcry.

"...for in the Book of Getulio, the true revealed word of the One God, it says that no person shall expose his or her modesty before another, be the other of the same sex or otherwise; and furthermore. ."

"Is everybody trying to start a riot?" said Fallon. He turned back towards Fredro, who was aiming his camera at the backs of the crowd, and hurried over to the archeologist, barking: "Put that thing away, you idiot!"

"What?" said Fredro. "Put away camera? Why?"

The crowd, still looking at Wagner, began to grumble. Wagner kept on in his piercing rasp:

"Nor shall ye eat the flesh of those creatures ye call safqa; for it was revealed unto the prophet Getulio that the One God deems a mortal sin the eating of those

Terran creatures called snails, clams, oysters, scallops, and other animals of the shellfish kind; and inasmuch as the nearest Krishnan equivalent is these same safqa, therefore He must likewise disapprove "

FALLON said to Fredro: "Don't you know the Balhibuma believe that taking a picture of them steals a piece of their souls?"

"But that cannot be the right. I took—I took pictures at festival and nobody minded."

Some of the crowd had begun to answer the Terran preacher back: "We'll eat as pleases us!" "Go back to the planet whence you came!"

Fallon said tensely: "They had their clothes on! The tabu applies only when they're naked! Look here, if you want some nude art photos to slobber over, I'll show you. "

The crowd had become noisier, but Welcome Wagner merely yelled louder. The driver of the water-wagon and his assistant, becoming absorbed in the scene, stopped pumping. When the water ceased to flow, those who had been standing around the wagon began straggling across the square to the denser crowd that was forming around the tomb.

Fredro said: "Just one more picture, please," and aimed his camera.



Fallon impatiently grabbed for the camera. Instead of letting go, Fredro tightened his grip upon the device, shouting: "*Psiakrew!* What are you doing, fool?"

As they struggled for possession of the camera, the sufkira slid off Fredro's shoulder to the ground. Gazi, with an exclamation of irk (for she would have to wash the garments) picked them up. Meanwhile Fredro's shout, and the struggle between the archeologist and Fallon, had drawn the attention of the nearer Zaniduma. One of the latter pointed and cried: "Behold these other Earthmen! One of them is trying to steal our souls!"

"Oh, he is, is he?" said another.

**GLANCING** around, Fallon saw that he and his party had in their turn become the focus of hostile glances. Around the tomb of Balade, the noise of the hecklers had nearly drowned out the powerful voice of Welcome Wagner. That crowd was working itself up to the stage where they would soon pull the Earthman down off the wall and beat him to death, if they did not kill him in some more lingering and humorous manner. Even the water-wagon driver and his assistant had gotten down off the vehicle and trailed over to see what was happening.

Fallon jerked Fredro's sleeve. "Come on, you idiot. Shift-ho!"

"Where?" said Fredro.

"Oh, to hell with you!" cried Fallon, ready to dance with exasperation.

He caught Gazi's wrist and started to lead her towards the water-wagon. A Zanidu stepped up close to Fredro, stuck out his tongue, and shouted: "*Bakhan Terrao!*"

The Krishnan aimed a slap at the archeologist's face. Fallon heard the slap connect, and then the more solid sound of Fredro's fist. He glanced back to see the Zanidu fall backwards to a sitting position on the cobbles. The scientist, if elderly, still had plenty of steam left in his punches.

The other Zaniduma began to close in, shouting and waving their fists. Fredro, as if aware for the first time of the trouble that he had fomented, started after Fallon and Gazi. The little camera swung on the end of its strap as Fredro turned from side to side as he ran, shouting polysyllabic Polish epithets, fists clenched and cocked to discourage his foes from closing with him.

"The wagon!" said Fallon to his jagaini.

**REACHING** the water-wagon, Gazi turned long enough to toss the bundle of towelling into Fallon's hands, and swung herself up on to



the driver's seat by the hand-holds. Then she held out her hands for the sufkira, which Fallon threw to her before climbing up himself. Right after him, came the bulky body of Julian Fredro.

Fallon pulled the whip out of its socket, cracked it over the heads of the shaihans, and shouted: "*Hao! Haoga-i!*"

The bulky brutes stirred their twelve legs and lunged forward against their harness. The wagon started with a jerk. At that moment, Fallon had no particular thought of interfering in the quarrel between the citizens of Zanid and Welcome Wagner. However, the wagon happened to be headed straight for this scene of strife, so that Fallon could not help seeing that bare arms were reaching up from the crowd and trying to pull down the preacher, who clung to the top of the wall, still shouting.

Little though he really cared about Wagner's fate, Fallon could not resist the temptation to try to cut a fine figure in the sight of Gazi and Fredro. He cracked his whip once more, yelling: "*Vyant-hao!*"

At the cry, the rearmost Zaniduma turned and tumbled out of the way as the team lumbered in among them.

"*Vyant-hao!*" screamed Fallon, cracking his whip over the heads of the naked throng of Krishnans.

THE WAGON drove in among the crowd, dividing it as a ship does flotsam, while the Balhibuma who had started to chase Fredro ran in behind it, shouting threats and objurgations. Under Fallon's guidance the wagon slewed up against the wall around the tomb, like a motorboat coming in to dock, where Welcome Wagner, released from the clutch of Krishnan hands, was shakily getting to his feet again.

"Jump aboard!" yelled Fallon.

Wagner jumped, almost falling off on the far side of the water-tank. A few more cracks of the whip, and the team broke into a shambling run for the nearest exit from the Square of Qarar.

"*Au!*" shrieked the proper driver. "Come back with my wagon!"

The driver ran up alongside the wagon and began to swing himself aboard. Fallon hit him a sharp rap over the head with the butt of the whip, at which he fell back upon the cobbles. A glance to the rear showed Fallon that several others were trying to climb up also, but Fredro got rid of one by kicking him in the face while Wagner stamped on the fingers of another as he grasped one of the hand-holds. Fallon leaned forward and snapped his whip against the bare hide of yet another, who was trying to seize the bridle of one of



the animals. With a howl, the Krishnan hopped away to nurse his welt.

Fallon urged the shaihans to greater speed as the wagon rumbled into the nearest street. It seemed to Fallon that half the people of Zanid must be chasing his vehicle. But with the water-tank three-quarters empty, the team made good speed, sending chance pedestrians leaping for safety.

"Where—where are we going?" asked Gazi.

"Away from that mob," growled Fallon, jerking his thumb back towards the nude horde. "Hold on!"

**H**E PULLED the team into a tight turn around a corner, so that the wagon rocked and skidded perilously. Then he did another, and another, zigzagging until, despite his own familiarity with the city, he was a bit confused himself as to where he was. A few more turns and the mob seemed to have been left behind, so he let the team drop back to their six-legged trot.

People along the street stared with interest as the water-wagon went by, bearing three Earthmen—two in their native costume and one nude, and an equally unclad Krishnan woman.

Wagner spoke up: "Well, say, you guys, I don't know who you are, but I'm sure glad you got me out of that

spot. I guess I hadn't ought to have stirred up these heathens so. They're kind of excitable."

Fallon said: "My name's Fallon, and these are Gazi er-Doukh and Dr. Fredro."

"Pleased to meet you," said Wagner. "Say, aren't you two gonna put your clothes back on?"

"When we get around to it," said Fallon.

"It makes us kind of conspicuous," said Wagner. "It sure looks funny for a minister of the true religion to go kiting around on a water-tank with naked people."

**F**ALLON was about to reply that nothing prevented Wagner from getting off, when the wagon rumbled into the north around the square. Fallon gave an explanation.

Wagner looked at the looming structure and his tin of naive good-bye gave him pause. He shook his fist, crying: "I could blow up that lair of heathen idolatry, I wouldn't care none if I got blown up with it!"

"What?" cried Fredro. "You crazy? Blow up priceless archeological treasure?"

"I don't care nothing about your atheistic science," said Wagner. "We'd be better off if it was all abolished."

"Ignorant savage," said Fredro.

"Ignorant, huh?" said Wagner with heat. "Just be-



cause you believe a lot of atheistic lies about men coming from monkeys and things, you think you're smarter'n me, don't you? Well, your so-called science don't mean a blessed thing, mister. You see, *I* know the *truth*, so that puts me ahead of you no matter how many of them college degrees you got."

"Shut up, you two," said Fallon, guiding the wagon through the side-streets back in the direction of his own house, but detouring well south of the Square of Qar-ar. "You're making us conspicuous."

"I will not shut up," said Wagner. "I bear witness to the truth, and I won't be silenced by the ignorant tongues of the gentiles. And you're making us a lot more conspicuous, going around in that shameless..."

"Then get off the wagon," said Fallon.

"I will not! It ain't your wagon neither, mister, and I got as much right on it as you."

**F**ALLON caught Fredro's eye. "*Abwerfen ihn, ja?*"

"*Jawohl!*" said the Pole.

"Catch," said Fallon to Gazi, tossing her the reins.

Then he and Fredro each caught one of Welcome Wagner's arms. The muscular evangelist braced himself to resist, but the double attack was too much for him. A

grunt and a heave, and Wagner flew off the top of the water-tank to land on his white turban in a spacious puddle of muddy water.

*Splash!*

Fallon took back the reins and speeded up the shaihans lest Wagner run after to try to clamber back aboard. He took one last look back around the water-tank. Wagner was sitting in the puddle, head bowed, and beating the brown water with his fists. He seemed to be crying.

Fredro smiled. "Good for him! Crazy fools like that, who want to blow up a monument, should ought to be boiled in a slow oil." He clenched his fists. "When I think of such crazy fools, I—I..." He ground his teeth audibly as his limited English failed him.

Fallon pulled up to the curb, stopped the shaihans, and set the brake. "Best leave this here."

"Why not ride it to your house?" said Fredro.

"Haven't you ever heard that American expression, 'Don't steal chickens close to home'?"

"No. What does it mean, please?"

**F**ALLON, wondering how so educated a man could be such a fool, explained why he would not park the vehicle right in front of his own domicile, to be found by the prefect's men when they



scoured the Juru for it. As he explained, he climbed down from the water-wagon and donned his sufkir. Privately he thought that there was a better than even chance that he had been recognized and would be in trouble over his impromptu charioteering anyway, but he would cross that bridge when he came to it.

"Care to drop in on us for a spot of kvad, Fredro? I could do with one after this afternoon's events."

"Thank you, no. I must get back to my hotel to develop my photos. And I am—ah—dining with Mr. Consul Mjipa tonight."

"Well, give Percy Pickle-face my love. You might suggest he find an excuse for cancelling the Reverend Wagner's passport. That bloke does more harm to Balhibo-Terran relations with one sermon than Percy can make up for by a hundred good-will gestures."

"That wretched obscurantist! I will do. Is funny; I know some Ecumenical Monotheists on Earth. While I don't believe their teachings, or approve of their movement, none is like this Wagner. He is a class of himself."

"Well," said Fallon, "I suppose at this distance they don't feel they can import missionaries specially, so they grab anybody here who shows willingness and send him out after souls. And

speaking of souls, *don't* try to photograph a naked Balhibu! At least not without his or her permission. That's as bad as the sort of thing Wagner does."

FREDRO'S lined square face took on the look of a puppy surprised in a heinous deed. "I was stupid, yes? Will you excuse, please? I will not do it again. A burnt child is twice shy."

"Eh? Oh, surely. Or if you must photograph them, use one of those little Hayashi ring-cameras."

"They do not take a very clear picture, but I will consider. And thank you again. I—I am sorry to be such a trouble." Fredro glanced back along the street by which they had driven, and a look of horror came over his face. "Oh, look who is coming! *Dubranec!*"

He turned and walked off rapidly. Fallon said: "*Nasuk genda*" in Balhibou, then looked in the direction indicated. To his astonishment, he saw Welcome Wagner running towards him, his muddy turban still on his head.

"Hey, Mr. Fallon!" said Wagner. "Looky, I'm sorry we had this here little trouble. I get so riled up when something goes against my principles that I don't hardly know what I'm doing, like that time in the the-ayter last year when they had all



them actors running around without a stitch. I was wrong, see?"

"Well?" said Fallon, looking at Wagner as if the latter had crawled out from under a garbage-pile.

"Well, what I mean is, do you mind if I walk home with you? And pay a visit to your place for a little while? Please?"

"Everybody's apologizing to me today," said Fallon. "Why should you wish to call on me, of all people?"

"Well, you see, when I was sitting there in the street after you threw me off, I heard a crowd of people; and sure enough there came all that mob of naked Krishnans some of 'em with clubs even. They musta trailed us by asking which way the wagon went. So I thought it might be safer if I could get indoors for a while, until they give up looking. Them heathens looked like they was stirred up real mean."

"By all means, let's move," said Fallon, setting out at a brisk walk and dragging Gazi after him. "Come along, Wagner. You caused most of this trouble, but I wouldn't leave you to the mob. Krishnan mobs can do worse things even than Terran ones when their blood's up."

**THEY WALKED** as fast as they could without breaking into a run the few blocks to Fallon's house.

Here Fallon shepherded the other two in and closed and locked the door behind them.

"Wagner, bear a hand with this couch. I'm moving it against the door, just in case."

The settee was placed in front of the door.

"Now," said Fallon, "you stay here and look out while we get dressed. Don't take off your sufkir in the living-room, Gazi; it shocks the Reverend."

A few minutes later Fallon had donned his diaper and Gazi a skirt. Fallon came back into the living-room. "Any sign of our friends?"

"Nope. No sign," said Wagner.

Fallon held out a cigar. "Do you smoke? Thought not." He lit the cigar himself and poured a drink of kvad. "Same with alcohol?"

"Not for me, but you go ahead. I wouldn't try to tell you what to do in your own house, even if you are committing a sin against the one true God."

"Well, that's something, Dismal Dan."

"Oh, you heard about that? Sure, I used to be the biggest sinner in the Cetic planets; maybe in the whole galaxy. You got no idea of the sins I committed." Wagner sighed wistfully, as if he would like to commit some of these sins over again for old times' sake. "But then I seen the light. Miss Gazi..."



"She doesn't understand you," said Fallon.

WAGNER switched to his imperfect Balhibou. "Mistress Gazi, I wanted to say, you just don't know what real happiness is until you see the light. All these material mundane pleasures pass away like a cloud of smoke in the glory of Him who rules the universe: the one God whose prophets are Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, and Getulio Cao. You know all these gods you got on Krishna? They don't exist, really, unless you want to say that when you worship the god of love you worship an aspect of the true God, who is also a God of Love. But if you're going to worship an aspect of the true God, why not worship all of him?..."

Fallon, nursing his drink, soon became bored with the homily. However, Gazi seemed to be enjoying it, so Fallon put up with the sermon to humor her. He admitted that Wagner had a good deal of magnetism when he chose to turn it on. The man's long nose quivered, and his brown eyes shone with eagerness to make a convert. When Fallon tossed in an occasional question or objection, Wagner buried him under an avalanche of dialectics, quotations, and exhortations which he could not have answered had he wished, for

his interest in religious matters had never been more than tepid.

AFTER MORE than an hour of this, however, Roqir had set and the Zanido mob had not materialized. Fallon, growing hungry, broke into the conversation to say: "I hope you don't mind my throwing you out, old man, but..."

"Oh, sure, you gotta eat. I forget myself when I get all wrapped up in testifying to the truth. Of course I don't mind taking pot-luck with you, if you aren't gonna serve safqa or ambara..."

"It's nice to have seen you," said Fallon firmly, pulling the sofa away from the door. "Here's your turban, and watch out for temptation."

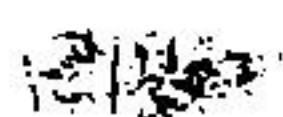
With a sigh, Wagner wound the long dirty strip of white cloth around his lank black hair. "Yeah, I'll go, then. But here's my card." He handed over a pasteboard printed in English, Portuguese, and Balhibou. "That address is a boarding-house in the Dumu. I can't afford nothing fancy like the Terrao. Any time you feel low in the spirit, just come to me and I'll radiate you with divine light."

Fallon said: "I suggest that you'll get farther with the Krishnans if you don't start by insulting their ancient customs, which are very



well adapted to their kind of life."

"Yeah, yeah," said Wagner with bowed head. "I'll try to be more tactful. After all I'm just a poor, fallible sinner like the rest of us. Well, thanks again. G'bye and may the true God bless you."



"**T**HANK BAKH he's gone!" said Fallon. "How about some food?"

"I'm preparing it now," said Gazi. "But I think you do Master Wagner an injustice. At least he seems to be that rarity: a man unmoved by thoughts of self."

Fallon, though a little unsteady from all the kvad that he had drunk during Wagner's harangue, poured himself another. "Didn't you hear the zaft inviting himself to dinner? I don't trust these people who claim to be so unselfish. Wagner was an adventurer, you know; lived by his wits, and I should say he was still doing it. It's like these scientists, such as Fredro, who pretend they do everything from a pure and lofty love of knowledge, but they've got the same leches as the rest of us. When I was hippopotamus-farming on the Wau, a fellow showed up claiming he wished to study the folklore of the Bongo; but what he really wanted was to check up on a rumor that the Bongo girls knew some special tricks..."

"You judge everybody by yourself, Antane, be they Terran or Krishnan. I think Master Wagner is at base a good man, even though his methods be rash and injudicious. As for his theology I know not, but it might be true. At least his arguments sounded no whit more fallacious than those of the followers of Bakh, Yesht, Qondyor, and the rest."

**F**ALLON frowned at his drink. His jagaini's admiration for the despised Wagner nettled him, and alcohol had made him rash. To impress Gazi, and to change the subject to one wherein he could shine to better advantage, he broke his rule about never discussing business with her by saying: "By the way, if my present deal goes through, we should have Zamba practically wrapped up and tied with string."

"What now?"

"Oh, I've made a deal. If I furnish some information to a certain party, I shall be paid enough to start me on my way."

"What party?"

"You'd never guess. A mere mountebank and charlatan to all appearances, but he commands all the gold of Dakhaq. I met him at Kastambang's this morning. Kastambang wrote out a draft, and he signed it, and the banker tore it into three parts and gave us each one. So if anybody can get all three parts,



he can cash it either here or in Majbur."

"How exciting!" Gazi appeared from the kitchen. "May I see?"

Fallon showed her his third of the draft, then put it away. "Don't tell anybody about this."

"I'll not."

"And don't say I never confide in you. Now, how long before dinner?"

"Oh, another half-hour. Everything was started tardily."

"Is that so, my wench?" Fallon caught Gazi's arm and pulled her down in his lap. "That gives us time for a little fun, no?"

She wriggled protestingly. "Now? Art mad? By the God of the Earthmen, Antane, you do surely choose the most inauspicious and unromantic times..."

Fallon kissed her, a custom which had become so common among the Varasto nations that they had almost forgotten that it had been introduced by Earthmen a mere half-century before.

At first Gazi tried to wriggle out of his embrace. Then she tolerated his kisses. Then she responded with increasing avidity.

## V

FALLON was halfway through his second cup of shurab, the following morning, when the little

brass gong suspended by the door went *bonggg*. The caller was a Zandio boy with a message. When he had sent the boy off with a five-arzu tip, Fallon read:

Dear Fallon: Fredro told me last night of your plans to attend Kastambang's party to-night. Could you get around to see me today, bringing your invitations with you? Urgent.

P. Mjipa, Consul

Fallon scowled. Did Mjipa propose to interfere in his plans on some exalted pretext that Fallon would lower the prestige of the human race before "natives"? No, he could hardly do that and at the same time urge Fallon to proceed with the Safq project. And while Fallon was not enamored of Mjipa's rigid outlook and fussy ways, he had to admit that the consul was an upright and truthful representative of the human species.

So he had better go to see what Percy Mjipa had in mind, especially as he really had nothing better to do that morning. Fallon accordingly stepped back into his house to gather his gear.

"What is 't?" said Gazi, clearing the table.

"Percy wants to see me."

"What about?"

"He doesn't say."

WITHOUT further explanation, Fallon set



forth, the invitation snug in the wallet that swung from his girdle. As he closed the door behind him he heard Gazi singing a Balhibo pastoral in the kitchen. Now that the prospect of the party had her in such good humor, Fallon had no intention of letting Mjipa talk him out of going.

Feeling less reckless with his money than he had the previous day, he caught an omnibus drawn by a pair of heavy draft-ayas on Asada Street over to the Kharju, where the Terran Consulate stood across the street from the government office building. Fallon waited while Mjipa held a long consultation with a Krishnan from the prefect's office about a suit threatened by a Zanido woman against Dr. Nung, a Terran physician. The woman's jagain had been wounded in a duel; and Dr. Nung, called in at the last minute, had failed to prevent the fellow from dying.

When the prefect's man had gone, Mjipa called Fallon into his inner office and began in his sharp, rhythmic tones: "Fredro tells me you're taking Gazi to this binge at Kastambang's. Is that right?"

"Right as rain. And how does that concern the Consulate?"

"Have you brought your invitation as I asked you to?"

"Yes."

"May I see it, please?"

"Look here, Percy, you're not going to do anything silly like tearing it up, are you? Because I'm working on that blasted project of yours. No party, no Safq."

**M**JIPA SHOOK his head. "Don't be absurd." He scrutinized the card. "I thought so."

"You thought what?"

"Have you read this carefully?"

"No. I speak Balhibou fluently enough, but I don't read it very well."

"Then you didn't read this line where it says '*Admit one only*'?"

"What?"

Mjipa indicated the line in question. Fallon read with a sinking heart. "*Fointsaq!*" he cried in tones of anguish.

Mjipa explained: "You see, I know Kastambang pretty well. He belongs to one of these disentitled noble families. A frightful snob; even looks down on us, if you can imagine such cheek. I'd seen one of his '*Admit one only*' cards and I didn't think he would want Gazi—a brotherless, lower-class woman. So I thought I'd warn you to save you embarrassment later if you both showed up at his town house and the flunkey wouldn't let her in."

Fallon stared blankly at Mjipa's impassive face. He could see no sign of gloating. Hence, while he hated to ad-



mit, it looked as though the consul had really done him a kindness. Not quite, he told himself. Percy knew that if Gazi were barred at the door, Fallon might lose his temper and pink somebody, and that would be the end of the Safq project.

"Thanks," said Fallon finally. "Now all I have to do is break the news to Gazi without getting my own neck broken in the process. I shall need the wisdom of 'Anerick to get me out of this one."

"I can't help you there. If you must consort with these big brawny Krishnan women. "

FALLON refrained from remarking that Mjipa's wife, a Bamangwato like the consul, was built on the lines of the elephants of her native continent. He asked: "Will you be there?"

"No. I wangled invitations for myself and Fredro, but he decided against going."

"Why? I should think he'd drool over the prospect."

"He heard about the beast-fights they stage at these things, and he hates cruelty to animals. As for me, these brawls merely make my head ache. I'd rather stay home reading *'Abbeq and Dangi'*".

"In the original Gozash-tandou? All two hundred and sixty-four cantos?"

"Certainly," said Mjipa.

"Gad, what a frightful fate to be an intellectual! By the

bye, you said something the other day about getting me some false feelers and things for disguises."

"A good thing you reminded me." Mjipa dug into a drawer and brought out a package. "You'll find enough cosmetics to disguise both of you: hair-dye, ears, antennae, and so on. As Earthmen practically never use them in Balhib any more, you should be able to get away with it."

"Thanks. Cheerio, Percy."

FALLON strolled out, thinking furiously. First he suppressed, not without a struggle, an urge to get so stinking drunk that the accursed party would be over and done with by the time he sobered up. Then, as the day was a fine one, he decided to spend some time walking along the city wall instead of returning directly home. Perhaps a stroll of a couple of hoda would give him a plan for escaping from this predicament. At least it would postpone the evil hour.

He did not wish to quarrel or break up with Gazi; on the other hand there would certainly be fireworks if he simply told her the truth. He was plainly in the wrong for not having puzzled out the meaning of all the squiggles on the card. Of course he had shown it to her, so she should also have seen the fatal phrase. But it would do no good to tell her that; nor



could he justly blame her for this dereliction, knowing as he did that she was if anything less literate in the written language of her people than he.

The nearest section of the wall lay to the east, directly away from his home, where the wall extended from the palace on the hill to the Lummish Gate. Most of the space from the fortifications surrounding the palace grounds to the Lummish Gate was taken up by the barracks of the regular army of Balhib. These barracks were occupied by whichever regiment happened to be on capital duty, plus officers and men on detached service. These last included Captain Kordaq, assigned the command of the Juru Company of the Civic Guard.

FALLON paused to watch a company march out to relieve the one on guard at the palace. As the soldiers stamped up the hill, helmet-crests nodding and pikes in precise alignment, Fallon thought that Krishnans were certainly good at parade-soldiering, an art that had practically disappeared from warless Earth.

Thinking of Kordaq set off a new train of speculation. Perhaps, if he worked it right...

He inquired at the barracks and presently the captain appeared, polishing his spectacles.

"Hello, Kordaq," said Fallon. "How's life in the regular army?"

"Greeting, Master Antane! To answer your question, though 'twere meant as mere courteous persiflage: 'tis onerous, yet not unprofitably without compensation."

"Any more rumors of wars?"

"In truth the rumors continue to fly like insensate aqebats, yet no thicker than before. One becomes immunized, as when one has survived the bambir-plague one need never fear it again. But, sir, what brings you hither to this grim edifice?"

Fallon replied: "I'm in trouble, my friend, and you're the only one who can help me out."

"Forsooth? Though grateful for the praise implied by your confidence, yet do I hope you'll not lean too heavily upon this frail swamp-reed."

FALLON candidly explained his blunder, for he could be truthful when expedient. He added: "Now, you've been wanting to renew your acquaintance with Mistress Gazi, yes?"

"Aye, sir, for old times' sake."

"Well, if I went home sick and took to bed, of course Gazi would be much disappointed."

"Meseems she would," said Kordaq. "But why all this



tumultuation over a mere entertainment? Why not simply tell her straight you cannot go, and carry her elsewhither?"

"Ah, but I've got to attend, whether she goes or not. Matter of business."

"Oh. Well then?"

"If you accidentally dropped in at my house during the eleventh hour, you could soothe the invalid and then offer to console Gazi by taking her out yourself."

"So? And whither should I waft this pretty little raman-du-seed?"

Fallon suppressed a smile at the thought of Gazi's heft. "There's a revival of Marian's 'Conspirators' opening in the Sahi tonight. I'll pay for the seats."

Kordaq stroked his chin. "An unusual offer, but—by Bakh, I'll do it, Master Antane! Captain Kyum owes me an evening's duty with the Guard; I'll send him to the armory in my stead. During the eleventh hour, eh?"

"That's right. And there's no hurry about bringing her home early, either." At the gleam in Kordaq's eye, Fallon hastily added: "Not, you understand, that I'm making you a present of her!"

★ ★ ★

FALLON got home for lunch, finding Gazi still in her sunny mood. After lunch, he settled down with a copy of Zanid's quintan newspa-

per, the *Rashm*, a mythological name that might be roughly translated as "Stentor". Soon he began to squirm and complain of feeling ill.

"Gazi, what was in that food?"

"Nought out of the ordinary, dear one. The best badr and a fresh-killed ambar."

"Hmp." Fallon had gotten over the squeamishness of Earthmen towards eating the ambar, an invertebrate something like a lobster-sized cockroach. But since the creature decayed rapidly it would make a good excuse. A little later, he began to writhe and groan, to Gazi's patent alarm. When another hour had passed he was back in bed, looking stricken, while Gazi in her disappointment dissolved into a fit of hysterical weeping, beating the wall with her fists.

When her shrieks and sobs had subsided enough to enable her to speak articulately, she wailed: "Surely the God of the Earthmen is set against our enjoying a moiety of harmless pleasure! And all that lovely gold squandered on my new clothes, now never to be worn! Would we'd placed it at interest in a sound bank."

"Oh, we'll—unh—find an occasion for them," said Fallon, grunting with simulated pain. His feeble conscience pricked him at this point. He felt that he had never given Gazi credit for her virtue of



thrift; despite a normal feminine fondness for gay clothes and fun, she had a much more acute sense of the value of a kard than he.

"Don't worry," he said. "I shall be well by the tenth hour."

"Shall I fetch Qouran the Physician?"

"I WOULDN'T let one of your Krishnan doctors lay a finger on me. They know little enough about how their own people work, and they're apt to take out an Earthman's liver in the belief it's his appendix."

"There's a physician of your own kind, a Dr. Nung, in the Gabanj. I could fetch him..."

"No, I'm not that badly off. Besides, he's a Chinese and would probably feed me ground yeki-bones." (This was hardly fair to Dr. Nung, but served as an excuse.)

Fallon found the rest of the long afternoon very dull, for he did not dare to read, lest he give the impression of feeling too well. When the time for his third meal came he said that he did not wish any food. This alarmed Gazi, used to his regular and hearty appetite, more than his groans and grimaces had done.

After an interminable wait the light of Roqir dimmed and the door-gong bonged. Gazi hastily wiped away her remaining tears and went to the door. Fallon heard voices

from the vestibule, and in came Captain Kordaq.

"Hail, Master Antane!" said this last. "Hearing you were indisposed, I came to offer such condolence as my rough taciturn soldier's tongue is capable of. What ails my martial comrade?"

"Oh, something I ate. Nothing serious; I shall be up by tomorrow. Do you know my jagaini, Gazi er-Doukh?"

"Surely. We were formerly fast friends and recognized each other at the door, not without a melancholy pang for all the years that have passed since last we saw each other. 'Tis a pleasure to encounter her once again after so long a lapse." The captain paused as if in embarrassment. "I had a small unworthy offer of entertainment to proffer—seats to the opening of the *'The Conspirators'*—but if you're too unwell..."

"Take Gazi," said Fallon. "We were going to Kastambang's party, but I can't make it."

THERE WAS a lot of polite cross-talk, Gazi saying that she would not leave Fallon sick, and Fallon, supported by Kordaq, insisting that she go. She soon gave in and prepared to be on her way in her spangled transparent skirt and glittering ulemda.

Fallon called: "Mind that you take your rain-coat. I don't care if there isn't a



cloud in the sky; I don't want to take a chance of getting those new clothes wet!"

As soon as they were out of the house, Fallon bounded out of bed and dressed in his best tunic and diaper. This was going to turn out better than he had thought. For one thing, even if he had been able to take Gazi to Kastambang's, having to look out for her would have hampered him in carrying out his project.

For another, she had been hinting that she would like to be taken to "*The Conspirators*". And Fallon, having seen "*The Conspirators*" once in Majbur, had no wish to witness the drama again. Besides the archaic dialect in which it was usually performed, it had a ridiculous plot and a lot of long speeches wherein the high-born characters urged one another to flee from their palaces and town mansions to seek the Arcadian bliss of simple country life. Altogether, he found it hard to see why the Varastuma accorded Harian (who had spent his adult life in the most disorderly dives of Jaznurian and regarded even a picnic in the country with horror) the same reverence that Fallon's own countrymen did Shakespeare.

Fallon wolfed some food, buckled on his sword, took a quick swig of kvad and a quick look at himself in the mirror, and set out for the

mansion of Kastambang the banker.

★ ★ ★

**H**UNDREDS of candles cast their soft light upon the satiny evening-tunics of the male Krishnans and upon the bare shoulders and bosoms of the females. Jewels glittered; noble metals gleamed.

Watching the glitter, Fallon (not normally a very cogitative man) asked himself: These people are being pitchforked from feudalism into capitalism in a few years. Will they go on to a socialist or communist stage, as some Terran nations did before settling down to a kind of mixed economy? The inequality of wealth might be considered an incitement to such a revolutionary tendency. But then, Fallon reflected, the Krishnans had shown themselves so far too truculent, romantic, and individualistic to take kindly to any collective regime.

As to whether this was inherent in Krishnan nature, or the result of a cultural mold—well, Mjipa and Fredro could argue the question until the shaihans came home. Fallon, active-minded but not at all profound, was satisfied to take the Krishnans as they were, despite their garrulity, touchiness, and streak of cruelty.

He sat by himself, sipping



the mug of kvad that he had obtained from the bar and watching the show on the little stage. If Gazi had been here, he would have had to dance with her in the ballroom, where a group of Balhibo musicians was giving a spiritedly incompetent imitation of a Terran dance-band. As Anthony Fallon danced badly and found the sport a bore, his present isolation did not displease him.

ON THE STAGE, a couple who advertised themselves as Ivan and Olga were leaping, bounding, and kicking up their booted feet in a Slavonic type of buck-and-wing. Although they wore rosy makeup over their greenish skins, had their antennae pasted down to their foreheads, and concealed their elvish ears, the male by pulling his sheepskin Cossack hat down over them and the female by her coiffure, Fallon could see from small anatomical details that they were Krishnans. Why did they pretend to be Terrans? Because, no doubt, they made a better living that way; to Krishnans, the Earth (and not their own world) was the place of glamor and romance.

A hand touched Fallon's shoulder. Kastambang said: "Master Antane, all is prepared. Will you come, pray? All's in readiness."

Fallon followed his host to a small room where two servants came forward, one with

a mask and the other with a voluminous black robe."

"Don these," said Kastambang. "Your interlocutor will be similarly dight to forestall recognition."

Fallon, feeling foolishly histrionic, let the servants put the mask and robe upon him. Then Kastambang, puffing and hobbling, led him through passages hung with black velvet, which gave Fallon an uneasy feeling of passing down the alimentary canal of some great beast. They came to the door of another chamber, which the banker opened.

As he motioned Fallon in he said: "No tricks or violence, now. My men do guard all exits."

Then he went out and closed the door.

AS FALLON'S eyes surveyed the dim-lit chamber, the first thing that they encountered was a single, small oil-lamp burning in a niche before a writhsome, wicked-looking little copper god from far Ziada, beyond the Triple Seas. And against the opposite wall he saw a squat black shadow which suddenly shot up to a height equal to his own.

Fallon started violently. His hand flew to his rapier-hilt—and then he remembered that he had been relieved of his sword when he entered the house. Then he realized that the shadow was



merely another man—or Krishnan—robed and hooded like himself.

"What wish you to know?" said the black figure.

The voice was high with tension; the language was Balhibou; the accent—Fallon thought it sounded like that of eastern Balhib, where the tongue shaded into the westernmost varieties of Gozashtandou.

"The complete ritual of Yesht," said Fallon, fumbling for a pad and pencil and moving closer to the lamp.

"By the God of the Earthmen, 'tis no mean quest," said the other. "The enchiridion of prayers and hymns alone does occupy a weighty volume, and I could remember but a little part of these."

"Is this enchiridion secret?"

"Nay. You can buy it at any good bookshop."

"Well then, give me everything that's *not* in the enchiridion: the costumes, movements, and so on."

**A**N HOUR or so later, Fallon had the whole thing down in shorthand, nearly filling his pad. "Is that all there is?"

"All that I know of."

"Well, thanks a lot. You know, if I knew who you were, perhaps you and I could do one another a bit of good from time to time. I sometimes collect information..."

"For what purpose, good my sir?"

"Oh—let's say for stories for the *Rashm*." Fallon had actually supplied the paper with a few stories, which furnished a cover for his otherwise suspicious lack of regular employment.

The other said: "Without casting aspersions upon your good-will, sir, I'm also aware that one who knew me and my history could, were he so minded, also wreak me grievous harm."

"No harm intended. After all I'd let you know who I was too."

"I have more than a ghost of an idea," said the other. "A Terran from your twang, and I know that our host has bidden few such hither this night. A choosy wight."

Fallon thought of leaping upon the other and tearing off the mask. But then, he might get a knife in the ribs; and even unarmed the fellow might be stronger than he. While the average Earthman, used to a slightly greater gravity, could out-wrestle the average Krishnan, that was not always true; besides Fallon was not so young as once. He would also court trouble with Kastambang and his minions. The banker, surmising that some such attempt might be made, had already warned him.

"Very well," he said. "Good-bye." And he knocked on the door by which he had entered.



AS THIS door opened, Fallon heard his interlocutor knock likewise upon the other door. Fallon stepped out and followed the servant back through the velvet-hung passage to the room where he had received his disguise, which was here removed from him.

"Did you obtain satisfaction?" said Kastambang, limping in. "Have you that which you sought?"

"Yes, thanks. May I ask what's the program for the rest of the evening?"

"You're just in good time for the animal-battle."

"Oh?"

"Aye, aye. If you'll attend, I'll have a lackey show you to the basement. Attendance will be limited to males, firstly because we deem so sanguinary a spectacle unfit for the weaker sex, and secondly because so many of 'em have been converted by your Terran missionaries to the absurd notion that such a spectacle is morally wrong. When our warriors become so effeminated that the sight of a little gore revolts 'em, then shall we deserve to fall beneath the shafts and scimitars of the Jungava."

"Surely, I'll go," said Fallon.

★ ★ ★

KASTAMBANG'S "basement" was an underground chamber the size of a

small auditorium. Part of it was given over to a bar, gaming tables, and other amenities. The end, where the animal-fight was scheduled to occur, was hollowed out into a funnel-shaped depression ringed by several rows of seats and looking over the edge of a circular steep-sided pit a dozen or fifteen meters in diameter and about half as deep. The chamber was crowded with fifty or sixty male Krishnans. The air was thick with scent and smoke, and loud with talk in which each speaker tried to shout down all the others. Bets flew and drinks foamed.

As Fallon arrived, a couple of guests who had been arguing passed beyond the point of debate to that of action. One snapped his fingers at the other's nose, whereupon the second let the first have the contents of his stein in the face. The finger-snapper sputtered, screamed with rage, felt for his missing sword, and then flew upon his antagonist. In an instant they were rolling about the floor, kicking, clawing, and pulling each other's bushy green hair.

A squad of lackeys separated them, one nursing a bitten thumb and the other a fine set of facial scratches, and hustled them out by separate exits.

Fallon got a mug of kvad at the bar, greeted a couple of acquaintances, and wan-



dered over to the pit, whither the rest of the company were also drifting. He thought: *I'll stay just long enough to see a little of this show, then push off for home. Mustn't let Kordaq and Gazi get back ahead of me.*

**BY HURRYING** round to the farther side of the pit he managed to get one of the last front-row seats. As he leaned over the rail, he glanced to the sides and recognized his right-hand neighbor—a tall thin youngish ornately-clad Krishnan, as Chindor er-Qinan, the leader of the secret opposition to mad King Kir.

Catching Chindor's eye he said: "Hello there, your Altitude."

"Hail Master Antane. How wags your world?"

"Well enough, I suppose, though I haven't been back to it lately. What's on the program?"

"'Twill be a yeki captured in the Forest of Jerab against a shan from the steaming jungles of Mutaabwk. Oh, know you my friend, Master Liyara the Brazzer?"

"Delighted to meet you," said Fallon, grasping the proffered thumb and offering his own.

"And I to meet you," said Liyara. "It should be a spectacle rare, I ween. Would you make a small wager? I'll take the shan if you'll give odds."

"Even money on the yeki," said Fallon, staring.

The eastern accent was just like that which he had heard from the masked party whom he had interviewed. So, was Liyara the Brazzer, Chindor's backer, the renegade priest of Yesht? This promised to be interesting. Was he mistaken, or had Liyara given him a rather keen look too?

"Dupulan take you!" said Liyara. "Three to two..."

**THE ARGUMENT** was interrupted by a movement and murmur in the audience, which had by now nearly all taken their seats. A tailed Koloftu popped out of a small door in the side of the pit, walked out to the middle of the arena, struck a small gong that he carried for silence, and announced:

"Gentle sirs, my master Kastambang proffers a beast-fight for your pleasure. From this portal..." (the hairy one gestured) "shall issue a full-grown male yeki from the forest of Jerab; while from yonder opening shall come a giant shan, captured at great risk in the equatorial jungles of Mutaabwk. Place your bets quickly, as the combat will begin as soon as we can drive the creatures forth. I thank your worships."

The Koloftu skipped away out the way he had come. Liyara resumed: "Three to two, I said..."



But he was again interrupted by a grinding of gears and a rattle of chains, which announced that the barriers at the two larger portals were being raised. A deep roar reverberated up out of the arena, answered by a frightful snarl, as if a giant were tearing sheet-iron.

The roar came again, almost deafening, and out bounded a great brown furry carnivore: the yeki, looking something like a six-legged mink of tiger size. And out from the other entrance flowed an even more horrendous monster, also six-legged, but hairless and vaguely reptilian, with a longish neck and a body that tapered gradually down to a tail. Its leathery hide was brightly colored in a bewildering pattern of stripes and spots of deep green and buff. Fine camouflage for lurking in a thicket in tropical jungles, thought Fallon.

**T**HE LAND animals of Krishna had evolved from two separate aquatic stocks: one, oviparous, based upon an architecture of four limbs; and the other, viviparous, on one of six. The four-limbed subkingdom included the several humanoid species and a number of other forms including the tall camel-like shomal. The six-legged subkingdom took in many land forms such as the domesticable aya, shaihan, eshun, and

bishtar; most of the carnivores; and the flying forms such as the aqebat, whose middle pair of limbs were developed into batlike wings. Convergent evolution had produced several striking parallels between the four-legged and the six-legged stocks, just as it had between the humanoid Krishnans and the completely unrelated Earthmen.

Fallon guessed that both beasts had been deliberately maltreated to rouse them to a pitch of fury. Their normal instinct would be to avoid each other rather than to tear each other to pieces, as they evidently meant to do now.

The yeki crouched, sliding forward on its belly like a cat stalking a bird, its fangs bared in a continuous growl. The shan reared up, arching its neck into a swan-like curve, as it sidled around on its six taloned legs with a curious clockworky gait. Snarl after snarl came from its fang-bearing jaws. As the yeki came a little closer, the shan's head shot out and its jaws came together with a ringing snap—but the yeki, with the speed of thought, flinched back out of reach. Then it began its creeping advance again.

The Krishnans were working themselves into a state of the wildest excitement. They shouted bets at each other clear across the pit. They



leaped up and down in their seats like monkeys and screamed to those in front to sit down. Beside Fallon, Chindor er-Qinan was tearing his elegant bonnet to pieces between his own two hands.

*Snap-snap-snap* went the great jaws. The whole audience gave a deafening yell at the first sight of blood. The yeki had not dodged the shan's lunge quickly enough, and the tropical carnivore's teeth had gashed its antagonist's shoulder. Brown blood, like cocoa, oozed down the yeki's glossy fur.

A FEW SEATS away, a Krishnan was trying to make a bet with Chindor, but neither could make himself heard above the din. At last the Krishnan nobleman stumbled over Fallon's knees and into the aisle. Then he climbed to where his interlocutor was shouting his odds between cupped hands. Others in the rear had climbed over the seats to stand behind those in the front row, peering over their shoulders. Another fight broke out, but was not suppressed because the servants were peering and yelling with the rest.

*Snap-snap!* More blood; both yeki and shan were cut. The air reeked of cigar-smoke, strong perfume, alcohol, and the body-odors of the Krishnans and the beasts below. Fallon coughed. Li-

yara the Brazer was jostling his elbow, shrieking something.

The foaming jaws, dripping bloody froth, approached each other, each of the animals watching the other for the first move. Fallon, though he had no money at stake, found himself gripping the rail with knuckle-whitening force.

*Crunch!* The shan and the yeki struck together. The shan seized the yeki's foreleg, but the yeki at the same instant clamped its jaws upon the shan's neck. In an instant, the sand of the pit flew as the two rolled over, thrashing and clawing. The whole mansion shook as the massive limbs and bodies slammed against the wooden walls of the pit with drum-like booming sounds.

Fallon, like the rest of the audience, had his eyes so closely glued to the beasts that he was unaware of his surroundings—until he felt the grip of a pair of powerful hands upon his ankles, lifting. One heave and over the rail he went, plunging downward toward the bloody sand.

He had a flashing impression that Liyara had thrown him over; then the sand smote him in the face with stunning force.

FALLON rolled over, feeling as if his neck had been broken. It was not, as he



found by moving; merely wrenched. And then a thunderous roar banished his personal infirmities. He scrambled up to face the yeki, which stood drooling blood over the shan. The latter was plainly dead of a broken neck, though its legs and tail still moved aimlessly by reflex action.

He glanced up. A ring of pale-green faces stared down upon him. Most of them had their mouths open, but he could not make out what any one of them was saying because they were all shouting at once. His glance did not lasso Liyara, but he hardly had time to pick out individuals from the crowd anyway.

"A sword!" he yelled. "Somebody throw me a sword!"

There was a commotion among the audience. Nobody had any swords to hand, as they all had left them in the cloak-room on arrival. Somebody called for a rope, somebody else for a ladder, and somebody else shouted something about knotting coats together. They milled around, screaming advice but accomplishing nothing.

The yeki began to slither forward on its belly.

And then the master of the house himself leaned over the railing, shouting: "Ohe, Master Antane! Catch!"

Down came a sword, hilt first. Fallon leaped and

caught the hilt, spun, and faced the yeki.

THE BEAST was still advancing. In an instant, Fallon surmised, it would spring or rush, and then his sword would be of no use. He might, with luck, deal it a mortal stab; but much good that would do him if, a second later, his head were bitten off or his guts clawed out by the dying monster.

The only defense would be a strong offense. Fallon advanced upon the yeki, sword out. The creature roared and slashed out with its unwounded foreleg. Fallon flicked out his blade and scratched the clawed paw.

The yeki roared more loudly. Fallon, heart pounding, drove his point at the beast's nose. At the first prick, the yeki backed up, snarling and foaming.

"Master Antane!" shouted a voice. "Drive it towards the open portal!"

Thrust; gain a step; thrust again; jerk the sword back as the great paw slapped at it. Another step. Little by little, Fallon herded the yeki towards the portal, every minute expecting it to spring in its fury and finish him.

Then, aware of sanctuary, the beast abruptly turned and slithered snakelike into the cavenous opening in the wall. With a flash of brown fur it was gone. The gate clanged down.



Fallon reeled. At last somebody lowered a ladder. He climbed up, a slow step at a time, and handed the sword back to Kastanbang.

Hands pounded Fallon's back; hands pressed cigars and drinks upon him; hands hoisted him on to Krishnan shoulders and marched him around the room. There was nothing reserved about Krishnans. The climax came when one of them handed Fallon a hatful of gold and silver pieces which he had collected among the company as a tribute to the gallantry of the Earhman.

There was no sign of Liyara. From the remarks passed, Fallon guessed that nobody had seen the manufacturer throw him over the rail:

"By the nose of Tyazan, why fell you in?" "Had you one too many?" "Nay, he slays monsters for pleasure!"

If, now, Fallon burst into accusation there would be only his word against Liyara's, and he did not think that he would have the advantage in such a conflict. So he said nothing.

★ ★ ★

SEVERAL hours, and many drinks, later, Fallon found himself lolling in a khizun with a couple of fellow-guests, roaring a drunken song to the six-beat cllop of the aya's feet. The others got out before he did, as none

lived so far into the poorer districts to the west. This would mean his paying the others' fare as well as his own. But with all that money that they had collected for him.

Where in Hishkak was it, anyhow? Then he remembered a series of wild crap-games that at one point had him rich to the tune of thirty thousand kardā. But then fickle Da'vi, the Varasto goddess of luck, deserted him, and soon he was down to just the money that he had brought with him to Kastanbang's house.

He groaned. Would he never learn? With the small fortune that he had had in his grip, he could have shaken the dust of dusty Balhib from his boots, leaving Mjipa and Qais and Fredro to solve the secret of the Safq as best they could, and hired mercenaries in Majbur to retake Zamba.

And now, another horrid thought struck him. What with the adventure with the yeki, and his subsequent orgy of relaxation, he had lost track of time and forgotten all about Gazi and her engagement with Kordaq. Surely they would be back by now, and what excuse should he offer? He clutched his aching head. He no doubt stank like distillery. In the last analysis, of course, one could fall back upon the truth.



**P**ERHAPS it would be wiser not to come home at all, but to doss down with one of his Krishnan acquaintances giving Gazi time to cool off, No; she might do something drastic in his absence, such as running out on him.

Well then, what *should* he say? His mind, usually so fertile in excuses and expedients, seemed paralyzed. Let's see: "My friends Gargan and Weems dropped in to see how I was; and I felt so much better that they persuaded me to go round to Savaich's with them, and there my stomach went dooby-o again ..."

She wouldn't believe it, but it was the best that he could do in his present state. The khizun drew up at his

door. As he paid his fare his eyes roamed the exiguous facade, which looked less loathsome in the moonlight than by day. There was no sign of light. Either Gazi was in bed, or.

As Fallon let himself in, a feeling told him that the house was empty. And so it proved; nor was there any note from Gazi. Evidently she and Kordaq had succeeded in being even later in returning than he had been. He only hoped that the cause of their tardiness was a legitimate one.

He stumbled up the stairs, pulled off his sword and boots, threw himself across the bed, and fell into troubled slumber.

[to be continued]

**Did you find part two of this story as absorbing as we did? We're eager to hear from you, because *you* have the last word.**

*Time is running short for Anthony Fallon, and it looks as if Captain Kordaq has betrayed Fallon's trust. Has Fallon made another enemy — one in a position to expose him? **You can't afford to miss next month's thrilling chapters, where Fallon and Professor Fredro make their way into the sinister "Tower of Zanid"!** Reserve your copy now at your local newsstand — the July issue of SCIENCE FICTION STORIES will be on sale May 6th.*

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# READIN' and WRITHIN'

BOOK REVIEWS by damon knight

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**FIGHT VACUUM**, by Charles Eric Maine. Ballantine, 35¢.

Since we seem to be well into the Age of Space, ready or not, novels about the first steps up—satellites, and the Moon trip—have a special interest and importance. Here is one, by a British writer, designed to make any rocket engineer or space-flight enthusiast lie down and cry.

The first manned Moon ship, *Alpha* (why is this the omega of British writers' imaginations when they name spaceships?) unaccountably runs out of fuel just before landing in the Mare Imbrium, and crashes, killing one of the four-man crew and marooning the rest.

The book is about vacuum, and the struggles of *Alpha's* crew to survive in it. The first mention of it in the story itself comes this way:

He listened carefully as he tapped one boot against the floor—the clean sharp impact of the magnetic sole against the metal could be felt as a transient vibration in his leg,

but there was no sound. (Page 2.)

No air, ergo no sound, because sound is transmitted only by air: Right? My God, no. Wrong.

A little later, it develops that Kerry, the surgeon-navigator, has had his radio "intercom" broken along with his leg, so they naturally can't communicate with him. Spacemen in s-f stories have been talking to each other by touching helmets for thirty years, but it never occurs to these characters; Kerry goes speechless all the time he's in a suit, until he dies, c. page 109; and so help me, it isn't until page 114 that anybody discovers solids will conduct sound. Meanwhile, the stow-away who's been in the hold all this time is hammering on the walls, "but there was no sound in the vacuum."

ON PAGE 14, a new peril crops up: the "Geiger equipment" is "giving a positive reaction." Patterson, the electronics officer, looks at the



"spinning strobe" and announcements, "'Around two thousand gamma... It means there's a lethal amount of radiation in this cabin.'" The whole crater, it appears, is one big uranium field: consequently the crew can't stay in *Alpha's* cabin but must find a safe place, live there in spacesuits, and visit *Alpha* only once a day, for food and elimination.

Now, this is simply silly. Uranium occurs naturally in proportions of about twenty-five parts per million. You couldn't get a lethal dose from that, without refining it, if the whole Moon were made of pitchblende.

Swallow it for the sake of the story? What for? On page 15, Commander Caird asks Patterson, "Couldn't it be some kind of contamination from the atomic turbines?" (We will pass over the use of this last word, which heaven knows is curious enough.) Patterson says no, that "the turbines are intact." Why couldn't he have said yes?

On page 33, the author refers to gamma "particles," thus revealing the full extent of his ignorance on this subject.

THE NEXT THING that happens is that the stowaway is discovered: she is Janet Vaughan, nee Ross, the wife of the dead man. It was her added mass which caused *Al-*

*pha* to crash in the first place and kill her husband: this would have been a neat irony, if the author had paused to make sense of it.

Item: Janet lived in a spacesuit, in *Alpha's* hold, for six continuous days—a neat trick. She went without food or water for the same period, and ran out of oxygen just soon enough to be turning slightly blue when found and dragged out of her suit.

Item: her added mass could very well have made *Alpha* crash by using too much fuel; but the way Caird tells it (page 80), "What happened was that the fuel allocation in the main drive tanks ran out just a fraction too soon—a few seconds that's all." In other words, there was no safety factor; *Alpha* was supposed to run out of fuel at the exact instant she touched down. Crikey!

Maine's style is stiff and pompous, full of tautologies ("retrospectively into the past"; "On the surface he was laconic and superficial"), but it moves the story along purposefully; his characters are oversimplified but forceful. The story itself, as it narrows down to a contest for survival between a paranoid woman and a radiation-poisoned man, takes on a classic simplicity. The book has passages of great power and even of eloquence. In between, it dips frequently into unintended farce, as when



Patterson has to repair the ship's radar, two of whose glass tubes have been broken. Glass, mind you; not transistors or even metal tubes. Why?

The unpleasant details of the Moon-castaways' life are soberly and realistically treated. There are bits of interpolated humor, including a popular song bad enough to be genuine. There are sudden poetic insights, as when the castaways grow so accustomed to spacesuits that taking one off is like shedding a chrysalis, to emerge "soft and white and hairy." There are moments of real horror—Vaughan's spacesuited corpse, pinned in the wreckage; Patterson looking in the mirror, seeing the signs of advanced radiation poisoning.

**THE ONLY THING** really wrong with the book, in fact, is the science in it. Maine's physics is bad, his chemistry worse ("Incandescent oxygen ... a bubble of life-giving gas burning itself into inert elements..."); his physiology is pathetic—he naively assumes there is a calibrated, one-to-three relationship between monkeys' reactions and men's.

For the record, again, I don't expect any science fiction writer to do graduate work in physics before he writes a space opera. If a writer makes a blunder in higher mathematics or theoretical physics, he is safe

from me—I am no expert, and will never notice it. The gross errors in this novel are in the area of common knowledge (as if a Western hero should saddle up a pueblo and ride off down the cojones): any one of them could have been corrected by ten minutes with a dictionary or an encyclopedia.

If Maine has no talent or taste for science, but is determined to write s-f anyhow, I admire his nerve, but for heaven's sake let him get a collaborator—any fifth-form science teacher would do.

**THE TIME DISSOLVER**, by Jerry Sohl. Avon, 35¢.

A man named Walter Sherwood wakes up in a strange motel, in bed with a girl he's never seen before. The pants on the chair are not his pants, and the name in the wallet is not even his name. The face that looks back at him from a mirror is his face, but eleven years older. He went to sleep in 1946, just out of the Army; now it is 1957.

From this complex and powerful opening situation Sohl carries his story forward in a direct manner. There are a few discordant notes, some trivial, as when Sherwood discovers on page 16 that his pants pockets are empty (you can't put on a pair of pants without noticing the state of the pockets), some more serious: he walks out of the motel without as much as a "Hello—who are you?" to the



brunette in the bed; later, when a Pavlovian psychiatrist reveals that he knows him, Sherwood fails to follow up the lead. Except for these, the story is plausible and engrossing. Sherwood as a man with eleven years of changes to absorb is well drawn: for instance, he can't get used to the forest of TV antennas and the air-conditioners jutting out of windows.

Sherwood's stubborn persistence, in the search for himself, agreeably parallels his former character as it comes to light. At medical school he is remembered as an overdedicated, brilliant student, single-mindedly trying to equip himself to conquer the mental illness which destroyed his father.

The middle section of the book, told from the girl's viewpoint, is not quite so successful and does not contribute much beyond the fact that she has amnesia, too: but the following section, when Sherwood and the girl meet and discover they are married, is all that could be asked for. The trail ends at a private research institution, where Sherwood evidently invented something that caused his loss of memory. (The phony identification papers turn out to have a prosaic explanation.) The story takes a turn here which is bad for suspense, and eventually is the ruination of the book, but which pays off remarkably in the meantime.

The search for the author of Sherwood's troubles suddenly becomes routine, almost half-hearted; but his curious, tentative re-acquaintance with his wife is beautifully handled. This is the human core of the novel, after all, and perhaps the most difficult part to write without artificiality or sentimentalism. Sohl has avoided both pitfalls. None of this is particularly deep, but it is honest and moving.

The end of the book, unfortunately, is entirely unsatisfactory: the villain's motives turn out to be comically inadequate; the plot drops into pure stereotype and then falls apart. All the same, this book is a long chalk above Sohl's previous novels, and it's ironic that it should be the first to miss hardcover publication.

**D**ANDELION WINE, by Ray Bradbury. Doubleday, \$3.95.

The young Ray Bradbury wrote a story called "Skeleton," about a man obsessed by the fact that he carries a horrid, white, grinning skeleton inside him. The story was raw, exuberant, gauche, pretentious, insulting to the intellect, and unforgettable. *Weird Tales* published it, and later it appeared in Bradbury's first collection, "*Dark Carnival*".

The story did not soothe its readers' anxieties nor pamper their prejudices, nor provide



vicarious adventure in a romantic setting. Far from solving his problem by his own courage and resourcefulness, the hero let it be solved for him by a strange little man named *Munigant*, who crawled down his throat, gnawed, crunched and munched away the bones which had so annoyed him, and left him lying on his carpet, a human jelly-fish.

Time passed; Bradbury got a little older, stopped running quite so hard. His stories acquired depth, smoothness, polish. Little by little he stopped writing about corpses, vampires, cemeteries, things in jars; instead, he wrote about civil rights, religion and good home cooking. The slicks, which had begun buying him as a curiosity when he was horrid, kept on buying him as a staple when he turned syrupy.

*"Dandelion Wine"* consists of sixteen loosely-connected tales without a ghost or a goblin in them; they are familiar in tone and rhythm, but these stories are no longer what we mean by fantasy; they are what Hollywood means by fantasy. The setting is an imaginary Midwestern town, seen through the wrong end of a rose-colored glass. The period is as vague as the place; Bradbury calls it 1928, but it has no feeling of genuine recollection; most of the time it is like second-hand 1910.

Childhood, as I have been saying a good deal lately, is Bradbury's one subject, but you will not find real childhood here—Bradbury's least of all. What he has had to say about it has always been expressed obliquely, in symbol and allusion, and always with the tension of the outsider—the ex-child, the lonely one. In giving up this tension, in diving with arms spread into the glutinous pool of sentimentality that has always been waiting for him, Bradbury has renounced the one thing that made him worth noteworthy.

All the rest is still here: the vivid images, the bombardment of tastes and sounds and smells; the clipped, faceless prose; the heavy nostalgia, the cuteness, the lurking impudence. The phrases, as before, are poignant ("with the little gray toad of a heart flopping weakly here or there in his chest") or silly to the point of self-parody ("lemon-smelling men's room"). The characters are as lifelike as Bradbury's characters ever were: bright, pert, peppermint-stick people.

Maybe Bradbury, like his own protagonist in *"Skeleton,"* grew uneasy about the macabre forces inside himself: or maybe success, that nemesis of American writers, was Bradbury's *M. Munigant*. Whatever the reason, the skeleton has vanished; what's left is recognizable but limp.



Noted

**HIDDEN WORLD**, by Stanton A. Coblentz. Avalon, \$2.75. This is Coblentz's 1935 "In Caverns Below," superficially modernized (by changing dates and inserting a few references to atomic weapons, &c.). I have fond memories of the story, but on rereading find it has aged badly: it reeks of that complacent period before World War II when we thought common sense, indignation and good intentions would keep the peace forever.

**OFF ON A COMET**, by Jules Verne. Ace, 35¢. "Newly abridged and modernized,"

but still deadly dull—at least the first 206 pages are; I couldn't get any farther.

**STAR GIRL**, by Henry Winterfeld, translated, by Kyrill Schabert. Harcourt, Brace, \$2.75. Here is a real surprise—a warm, funny, literate and sensible science fiction story for children. The plot revolves around a little girl from Venus who falls out of a spaceship. The troubles she has with the well-meaning German children who find her, and with their even more confused elders, make delightful reading.

## ***A "New Look" on the Old West***

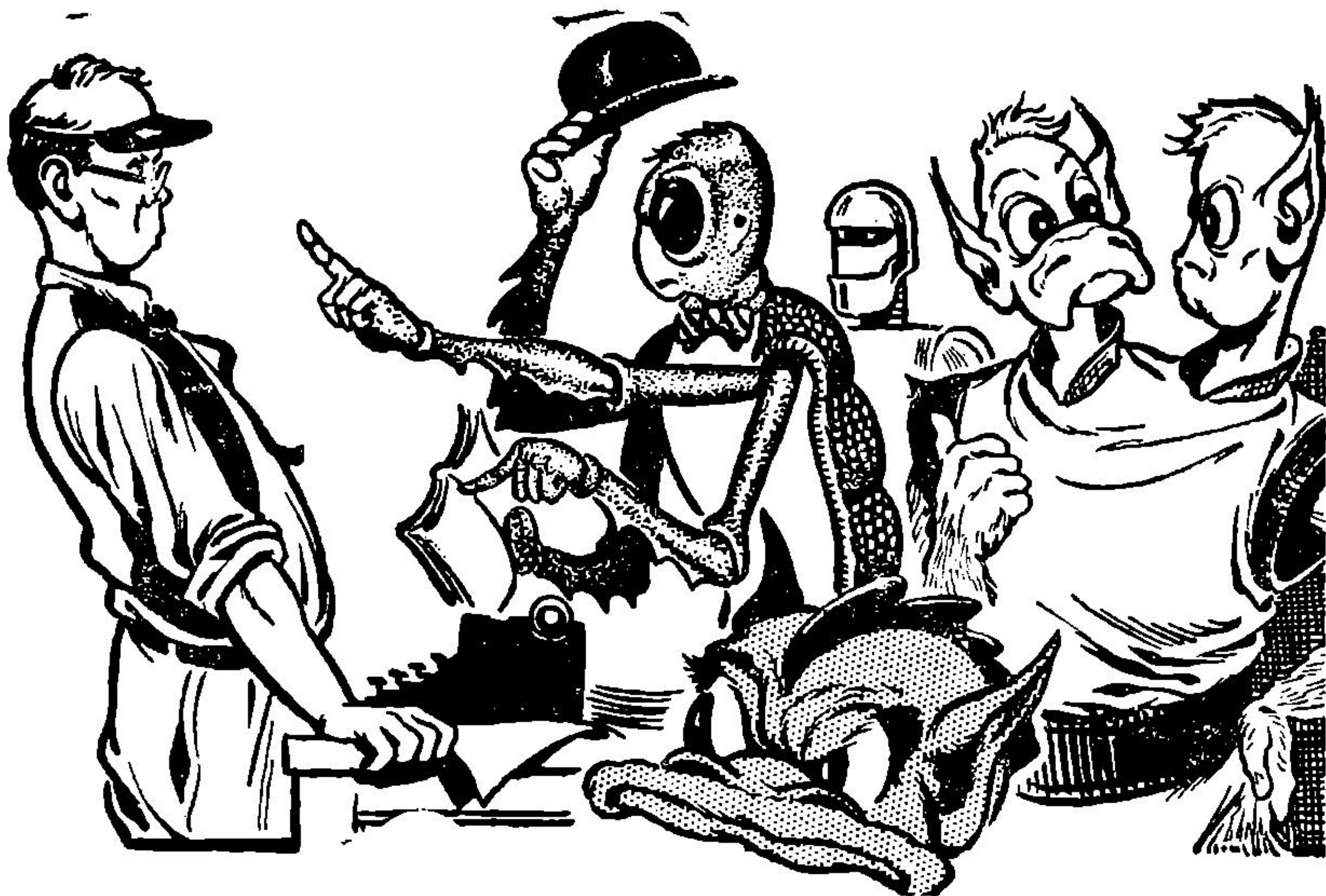
The new issue features two thrillers. (1) **RIPE FOR THE ROPE** by E. E. Clement tells of a man, unjustly imprisoned upon the false testimony of a supposed friend and partner, who found that the only way he could remain free after his escape was to rod the very law who sought him. (2) In the fact department, we have an account of the old days by Pete Carter; **LOOKING INTO THE PAST** relates a sequence of experiences Pete and a friend underwent in the days of his youth when they were "drifting cowpokes".

This issue is now on sale at all stands; don't miss it!

# ***FAMOUS WESTERN***

*THE BEST IN FACT AND FICTION*





# The Last Word

*(Yours, of course, Gentle Reader)*

## GO PULP-SIZE?

Dear Mr. Lowndes:

The January issue makes the third issue I have of *SF Stories*, and is (as usual) excellent.

This month's cover is excellent. The deep hues and black background make it strikingly good.

Here's how I rate the stories: 1) *The Wild Ones*; 2) *Death Wish*; 3) *The Better Egg*; 4) *Prime Commandment*; 5) *Dangerous Weapon*.

"*The Wild Ones*", "*Death Wish*", and "*The Better Egg*" were all about the same; but to avoid confusion in the reckoning, I numbered them. All the stories in this issue were good.

Your "Inside Sf" department is very informative, and so is your "Author Author" page. The editorial is well-written and informative on the subject it covers; but I am not interested in the basic meaning of freedom too much. How about writing an editorial on the prozines, past and present, including the prozines which have gone out of print; why many of the mags which used to be the leaders in the field have degenerated; and why the Sf mags have (unfortunately) changed from pulp to digest size. Many of your readers (such as myself) are new to



the field, and we wonder about these things. I'll bet I'm not the only new fan who prefers pulp-size to digest and wonders why the sizes were changed in the first place.

Now I have only one real gripe about your mag and that is why can't you go pulp-size?

Danny Pritchett  
228 West Bridgeport St.  
White Hall, Illinois

The pulp-size magazine is now a thing of the past, very largely because comparatively few newsdealers have the space on their stands to display a magazine of that size. In most instances, when dealers were taking pulp magazines at all, copies would be piled flat in some corner, where no one would see them without making a determined search. It doesn't make any difference how good a magazine may be—if no one (or hardly anyone) sees it on sale, you can't expect much circulation, and certainly no expansion of readership.

You'll find material on the old science fiction magazines in *Future Science Fiction*, in the "Science Fiction Almanac" and in the running editorial discussions of "Yesterday's World of Tomorrow".

Several very interesting let-

ters were crowded out of *Science Fiction Quarterly*, so we're running them here. Much of their matter is applicable to *Science Fiction Stories*.

FROM DR. ASIMOV

Dear Bob,

I have just begun going over the February 1958 issue of *Science Fiction Quarterly* and, of course, have to answer a couple of letters. First Mr. Brown of Pasadena.

You miss my point, Mr. Brown. I wasn't trying either to disprove or prove any axioms in my article "Axioms For Everybody." Axioms can't be proved or disproved. They are merely assumptions. My point was that there was nothing sacred about any assumption. From the standpoint of sheer mental exercise, all assumptions are equally useful. If you want to get something out of your reasoning that can be applied to handling the universe somehow, you select those axioms which will give you the simplest, most easily handled explanations of the phenomena that your senses observe.

Of course, I usually work on the basis that " $a=a$ " or that " $a$  is not equal to not- $a$ ", but I don't have to. It's just simpler to accept that axiom. Henry Kuttner in "The Fairy Chessman" pictured a world in which that axiom did not apply, and you'll have to ad-



mit it was a confusing world.

I'm glad Mr. Meyers of Chattanooga liked the article, but when he compares most of my articles to "passages excerpted directly from an advanced textbook" I'm sure that he's joking. I can't even understand advanced textbooks, let alone write like them.

And Dr. Macklin need not apologize to me for not answering a letter. My letter to him was one of undiluted appreciation of his articles (and I hereby make that appreciation public); and the only answer that is really required is for Dr. Macklin to write more of the articles. That's all.

*Isaac Asimov*

## TO DR. ASIMOV

Dear Editor.

I should like to make a few remarks about the "clock paradox" fiasco which I found lurking in the November issue of *S-F Quarterly*. Ike Asimov says, "...the flying meson is no more stable than the stationary one, but that time moves more slowly for the one in motion. To us, (but not to the meson), the flying one seems to take longer about breaking down." Essentially, this is the cor-

rect idea. The flying one does seem to take longer. The solution to the so-called "paradox" is simply that the "slowing down of time", whatever that means, is an observational phenomenon.

It should be brought out that, in the relativistic theory, "time" is introduced as a variable, along with the conventional Euclidean space components ( $x, y, z$ ) for the purpose of denoting an event in the four-dimensional continuum. This new variable is appropriately allied with the velocity of light and the squareroot of minus one, so that the metric defined over the space will retain invariance under the transformation of Lorentz. With this in view, then, it seems that saying "time moves more slowly" is rather like saying "length lengthens more lengthly" or "thickness thickens more thickly". Crazy, man! At any rate, it is clear that the phrase in question lacks meaning. This semantic confusion regarding that elusive entity "time" arises from our intuitive, romantic and exotic convictions. In the interests of clarity, let us divorce them from the mind when speaking in the mathematical connexion.

*[Turn Page]*

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THE RECKONING has not been discontinued. You'll see the report on our March issue next month.



It is really with the statements in the next paragraph that I take issue. Ike says, "So it seems that the slowing of time with speed is real, and not just apparent. It seems that Tom Jones would age more slowly with space flight..." This is not a logical deduction. The evidence from the meson experiment does not imply this at all. Let's examine the evidence, to wit:

1. Mesons which are at rest (with respect to us) are *Observed* to live for two micro-seconds.

2. Mesons which are moving at certain high speeds (with respect to us) are *Observed* to live for thirty micro-seconds.

Based upon the premise that the flying-type meson is no more stable than its relaxed counterpart, one may deduce that the one in motion is *Observed* to live longer. That's the end of the line. From this evidence we cannot infer that Tom will age more slowly while in flight. The truth of the matter is that he won't. This is obvious if one takes the trouble to examine the relativistic equations of motion (special theory). In the case of the general theory, nothing is obvious since the entire argument is, as Goldstein put it, "thickly surrounded by fearsome notation".

The truth is, then, that Tom Jones and the meson,

providing it wants to go (integration, you know) can zip out to Proxima Centauri and back while the Earth experiences a lapse of some eight or nine years, providing that their vehicle is capable speeds approximating that of light. They, in turn, will experience the same lapse of time. Nobody misses a thing. Earth gets the latest Galactic news and Anita Eckberg still looks good.

However, as we stand on this old globe, Earth, the Mother of our glorious race (which is a hell of a way to treat your mother, I might add) and watch these two intrepid explorers set out to challenge the yawning void, we may notice a slowing of Tom's and the mesons' movements as they pick up speed. No friend, they are not drinking on the job. It's just the effect of their motion upon our observations of them.

Now, about these loons headed by one W. H. McCrea who claim that "slow time" is "real" and that Tom Jones (and the meson) will be the only ones to experience it, I have a recommendation. Viz: Find a side-show and put them in same. On second thought, we'd better investigate them first. They may be NKVD men sent directly from the Kremlin to sow seeds of confusion among the vast minority of scientifically-inclined young folk.

I enjoy your magazine and



Isaac Asimov's stories immensely. It is my impression that Ike is a scientist or, at least, is involved in some sort of scientific endeavor. For this reason, I am sorry to see him jammed up in this confusion. I hope, sincerely, that his field is not physics. If it is, Hara Kiri is mandatory. This "clock paradox" has been crawling out of the woodwork for years but, I must confess, I don't know a single theoretical physicist who is plagued by it. Perhaps, Ike, you can profit by information which I have gained by sustained and assiduous scientific analysis. *Human Skulls Are Soluble In Thrifty Drug-Store Booze.*

A word to the wise and all that!

*R. A. Powell Jr.*  
Malibu, Calif.

### TOLERATES ADS

Dear Mr. Lowndes,

Laurels for this time's best letter go to Bill Myers, a letterhack who never runs out of something to say. His letters at least have a reason for being written, which is more than can be said for much of the correspondence in *Madge, Amazing* and ilk.

I heartily approve of the return of the old tradition of an illustration to the best letter. Without checking, I'd  
[Turn Page]

## *Now on sale at all stands*

A new author, T. H. Mathieu, leads off the June FUTURE SCIENCE FICTION with a novelet entitled "*Cargo: Death!*" You may recall hearing that a pair of rabbits once got loose in Australia — and nearly wrecked a continent! In this tale, we have a mouse-like creature which is far more dangerous. After all, rabbits don't bite people as a rule — and even when they do, it's usually just a matter of a wound to be treated against infection. But the bite of this creature was fatal in twenty seconds!

David Gordon is back with a yarn innocuously entitled, "Intelligence Quotient", for which Emsh has painted a striking cover. It's a striking and amusing tale, too . . .

*Look for  
the June*

**FUTURE SCIENCE FICTION**



say that the old *Thrilling Wonder Stories* started that hallowed custom years ago. It helps to make fandom the wonderful thing it is—and letterhacks the bloodthirsty hacks *they* are.

I suppose somebody had better have something to say to Mr. Fritsch, of Pittsburgh, or we may start to get more of these type of letters to clutter up the best letter section since *Planet* folded.

Mr. Fritsch, sir, do you *really* think fandom is interested in your views on Einstein's theory, as shown in high school chemistry? (Why not college chem—haven't you got that far yet?) Do you consider the letter columns of SFQ as a fitting place to go on for five column inches about this theory, admit that your version of it has mistakes, and then claim they were deliberate? And if you *are* going to debate with Mssrs. Ayers and Myers on matter traveling through space, why do your debating with erroneous facts?

I have no doubt that both Mr. Ayers and Mr. Myers realize that light does not travel instantly through space, but I wonder if you knew this until recently.

And what is this business about the first two issues? I really got a chuckle out of that. I would imagine that your dealer was sold out of *Science Fiction Quarterly's* first two issues for several

years, and can't really blame him for not keeping them for that length of time.

Bob, the October 1954 issue of *Future* was one of the finest you have ever produced. I read that issue more than three years ago, and still get it out occasionally to compare it with more recent Columbia Pubs. This comparison is usually accomplished only with a large amount of head shaking. I am happy to report that, with the February SFQ, you have completed the cycle, and are again as good typographically as you are in content.

The paper—smooth, thin, pleasing to the touch. The illos—vivid, sharp reproductions of originals, done by master artists. The whole magazine has been needing a face-lifting for quite some time, and I think you've done a fine job on it.

One sour note—don't you think that the girl on the cover looks like she's straight out of an ad? The whole cover looks like a chewing gum ad for 2000 A. D.

You really must have had a shake-up in your typesetting department—the lines are straight, correctly set, and without smudges or light spots. Wonderful!

And now to Richard Brown's letter. The main fallacy in his argument for Campbell is that he assumes that the readers run the magazine, by having the say on



who gets the bonus. Actually, they have no choice in what Astounding contains, and can *only pick from among the stories included*. They don't get their say until *after* the issue. Over a period of time I suppose Campbell could guess what the readers would like—but doesn't every editor try to do this?

The way I see it, every editor decides for himself the policy of his mag, and the reader is left to choose between them. This leaves two or three mags even for the very selective, and several for everybody, be he interested in action, science, or what not.

The fan who claims he

reads every science fiction mag is either trying for sheer volume, or has a most unselective mind. A magazine like F&SF just isn't compatible with *Other Worlds*.

I don't see anything wrong with the white background—in my town, the science fiction mags are stacked by themselves anyway, and seem to get 100% better distribution than westerns, detectives, etc.

Thanks a lot for making my favorite mag even better, Mr. Lowndes—I don't really mind those truss ads; but you'd better quit expressing your regrets about them if you don't want to lose them

[Turn Page]

## **You've Convinced**

## **Us, Pardners!**

We've been thinkin' about all those fine, friendly letters you've been writing us, asking us why we don't make WESTERN ACTION a digest-size magazine like FAMOUS WESTERN. Wal, we've decided to do it, like you-all requested, and we're doin' it right away!

***don't forget the new, digest-size***

# **WESTERN ACTION**

***132 Pages — July issue on sale May 1st***



from your whole string of magazines.

Be good.

*Roger Ebert*  
410 E. Washington,  
Urbana, Illinois

### ADS ASTRA

Dear Sir:

In the February issue of SFQ, Keith Nelson takes me to task for what he regards as either a logical or a grammatical mistake. In an earlier letter I had spoken of certain matters as being "in the control of the editor, who ought therefore to control them, but doesn't."

Mr. Nelson holds that this statement may be paraphrased: (a) they are controlled by the editor; (b) he ought to control them; (c) he doesn't. The result naturally is that (a) and (c) are inconsistent, and he asks whether I said what I intended.

I am strongly tempted just to answer "No," and terminate the matter, frustrating Mr. Nelson and relieving those who are bored by the whole business, or who have forgotten what we are talking about. But although I may have chosen to live by the sword, I am not one to die by it without resistance, so I take up my blade again. Besides, Mr. Nelson very amiably warned me in advance that he was going to

take a slash at me in print, and deserves a riposte.

"In the control of" is not necessarily equivalent to "controlled by." Merriam-Webster defines "control" as "The act or fact of controlling; power or authority to control." It will be observed that the definition has two parts; I rely on the second. One may have power or authority without exercising it, which is exactly what I meant by my original statement.

All this begins to sound as if I were attacking Mr. Lowndes. I am not—or pretty mildly, if so. My statement, like most opinions, was based on rather meager information. The editor knows far better than any of us just how far his authority extends, to what degree it may be proper to exercise it, and how much time he has to do this.

My remarks were intended to be impersonal. The editor understood this, and so did most of the readers, I think. The two who did not, and wrote me extremely querulous letters, could better demonstrate their support of science fiction by sending in their subscriptions, as I am doing herewith.

My interest has moved on to another matter. I should like to quibble with those readers who want the advertising eliminated from the magazine. I like those ads.



For instance, in the February issue there was an ad by a man who wants to teach you at home how to sell junk jewelry to the government; on the facing page was the ad of someone who has learned how to sell it to you. Get those two a little closer together, and they could start a cat-and-rat farm.

Upon answering one advertisement, I made a clear profit of almost a million dollars in cash, untaxable, on an investment of \$2.98. If I had been dissatisfied with the results, the advertiser offered to return my original investment and pay me one hundred thousand dollars for my trouble. What could be fairer?

You can buy a couple of rocks in a genuine *red-flannel* bag for only two and a half. Wouldn't an alien visitor to our planet be as astonished and delighted as I was to learn this? Or for one dol-

lar you can learn how to build a super body with muscles of steel. Isn't this the very stuff of science fiction? They might even throw in a course on the laws of robotics—learn the degree of LL.B. (R) in ten easy lessons!

And to me there is something inexpressibly pathetic about a man who steps forward and cries, "Are you RUPTURED?" Well, almost, friend, almost.

Leave those ads alone!

*Dr. Raymond Wallace*  
324 Burnside Street,  
Bellefonte, Pennsylvania

And now, alas, the ads have mostly disappeared. Well... be of good cheer; we may be getting some of them back. Meanwhile, perhaps the quality of current selections will help make up for lack of quantity.

## **"SELF-HYPNOSIS** *A Guide To Its Wonders"*

Amazing book by hypnotist Nard King reveals his **unique method**. It allegedly provides for **COMPLETE and CONTINUOUS CONTROL** of SELF... (emotions, moods, cravings, talents, memory, speech, sleep, analgesia, **existent PSYCHIC POWERS—known or unsuspected**, power of concentration, clarity of thought, flow of creative ideas, etc.) whereby proficient user, **WIDE AWAKE**, merely tells himself what he will experience, adds cue word, and—it happens! We make no therapeutic claims but enthusiastically recommend this remarkable book to all interested in subject of self-hypnosis. \$2.00—delighted or refund!

**Verity Publications, Newfoundland 21-S, New Jersey**



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