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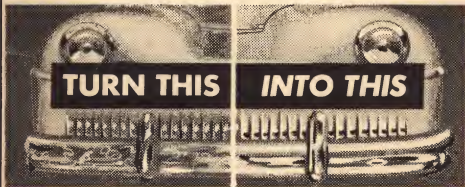
## Dust Thou Art...

by Kris Neville

A  
DOUBLE-ACTION  
MAGAZINE



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# FUTURE SCIENCE FICTION

Volume 4  
Number 3  
September  
1953

Robert W. Lowndes

Editor

## Feature Story

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Was Matuska seeing the future of his own kind here on Earth?

## Novel

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When there's naught but horror in the truth, people seek a lie . . .

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- STAND WATCH IN THE SKY . . . . . Algis Budrys 27  
A strange, absorbing tale of an eerie vigil beyond the clouds . . .
- DOUBLE-TALK . . . . . Charles Dye 35  
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Cover by Milton Luros, illustrating "Stand Watch In The Sky"  
Interior Illustrations by Beachem, Luros, Orban and Sibley

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# Down To Earth

A Department of Letters and Comment

**R**ECENTLY, I read a short tale of the future, written in 1921, telling of the marvellous world of 2231. It starts out with a description of the metropolis at night, a quiet city, even with the air-traffic. The mid-European mail-plane goes by silently; in nine short hours, the authors tell us, it will drop American mail in London. The buildings are so tall that the moon's rays barely touch the bottom of the canyons they form, but at the ends of the avenues at ground level, huge street-fans drain off the day's accumulation of foul air; along the thoroughfare, automatic

atomizers emit pale clouds of gas, sterilizing the atmosphere; and the avenues are lit with pendant phosphor bulbs, "which were never refilled, and which permanently emanated a deep, green light".

Then comes drama, as a small plane eludes the landing-disk atop a particular building (such discs are on the tops of all the buildings) and zooms against the wall of the tallest of the skyscrapers. The plane is equipped with a "suction plunger" at its prow; it doesn't crash, but thunks into the buildingside, and is fastened there, "a

[Turn To Page 8]

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small upright propeller at the stern" keeping it aloft. From this "Vampire plane", as it is called, a pair of crooks emerge, enter the building, and proceed to rob the Continental Reserve Bank.

The police are taken to the building via pneumatic tubes; they fire on the crooks with electric guns, but the culprits are cased from head to foot in rubber suits, and escape. All seems to favor them, until, through miscalculation on the malefactors' part, the plane is caught in the terrific suction of one of the great street-fans, and chewed to pieces, passengers, loot, and all, by the mighty blades of the fans. Thus justice is served.

Obviously, such a story wouldn't go today—but for all the simple-mindedness of the plot and action, and the questionable "science" (one wonders why the giant fans weren't shielded), that story has a fascination in the picture it draws of the future—an appeal I haven't seen very often in the past decade.

And it made me wonder why.

The simple, easy explanation is that I've been reading science-fiction too long; I've lost my capacity for being awed. Science, since Hiroshima, has been going so fast in all directions that my imagination can't even keep up with it, let alone run ahead of it.

But, if that were the case, then I wouldn't have gotten anything out of the story mentioned above but laughs.

No, I think the fault lies not in us oldtime readers, but in the authors who write today's science-fiction. The scribes who told the wonderful tales of yesterday, for all their many faults, had a *feeling* about the greatness of days to come that few show today. This is not to censure present-day writers, who have gained in the quality of expression where they have lost in imagination. Perhaps the trend is irreversible; perhaps the fascination is part and parcel to a certain naive

which the present age has discarded along with its science-plus-socialism-equals-utopia formulas—and with the bathos of the "Skylarks" and their super hat-tricks.

But sometimes I wonder if the young convert to science-fiction, reading the best of present-day writing, has as much fun as some of us oldtimers did.

Getting down to author-facts, we have the following on this issue's lineup.

KRIS NEVILLE came to light with "The Hand From the Stars", in the July 1949 issue of *Super Science Stories*; since then, he's done a number of memorable short stories, such as "Take Two Quiggies" in *Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*. Neville regards "Dust Thou Art..." as his best story to date, and I'm inclined to agree.

HARRY WARNER, JR. beat out all the opposition in our March issue, taking first place with his first-published story, "Cold War". His second appearance showed another facet to his talent—whimsy—and the present story is along similar lines.

ALGIS BUDRYS made a powerful impression on many of us, when his "Walk to the World" appeared in the November 1952 issue of *Space Science Fiction*. Since then, he's shown that he can work equally well with fantasy.

CHARLES DYE has been a "regular" with this magazine, since "Time Killer" appeared in our May 1951 issue.

MACK REYNOLDS started showing up in various magazines in 1950; you'll find another of his short stories in the current *Science Fiction Quarterly*.

ROBERT K. OTTUM didn't cop first place with his first story, "She Called Me Frankie", which appeared in the May *Science Fiction Quarterly*; but that story did receive a good deal of appreciative comment.

[Turn To Page 85]

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The trail of dark drops in the snow led Matuska to a female. "Why", he thought in horror, "it is the one who came to the compound, yesterday; I gave her a blanket from the warehouse."



Looking at these decadent beings of Earth, Matuska saw the future of his own people, the end to which they, too must come. But must it be thus?

# DUST THOU ART...

by Kris Neville

{illustrated by Don Sibley}

**T**HE CEMETERIES on Earth in 2988—it was a bleak, rain-swept March day of that year when the colonists arrived in their spaceship and planted their flag (a ritual, for there was no one to contest ownership) in the moist land warmed by the rocket-blast—the cemeteries were ill-kept and markerless.

The native came less than a week after their arrival. He was a squat, hairy, ugly brute. Matuska was the only one who had bothered to study



the spy-tapes and learn the language, so he spoke to the native. The native made it known that the cemetery to the west was the natives' cemetery; that the natives would continue to use it; and that the colonists were not to interfere. The native, having said what he had come to say, departed.

"Why did you leave the cities?" Matuska cried after him. There was no answer.

Aside from that, the natives ignored the colony completely, for more than a year. When they moved in the forest, hunting with arrows and spears, they refused to see the colonists hunting with weapons infinitely more powerful, more accurate, and more deadly than their own.

In the cemetery, the mounds continued to weather away. Each new grave disinterred unmarked bones. Dry, tangled brambles shackled the older mounds to the earth and drew them down with the dead fingers of promised obscurity. And the newer mounds, those hacked out of the raw, frozen earth during the colonists' first winter, were being compressed by snow and rain and wind-driven sleet. Except for the most recent graves, the cemetery was always a thicket. It had been, for no one could tell how many years.

Matuska was as nearly acclimated as he would ever be to the heavy air and the high gravity. On the first anniversary of their arrival, he stood in the cemetery among the natives and watched them prepare to bury a youth killed during the hunt, a youth whose death had been heralded by the beating of cymbals at dawn—sounds heard even within the central house of the compound where Matuska lived—heard faintly, distantly, like the far-off, brassy throbbing of a giant heart. Towering over the silent natives, trembling with the miserable cold, Matuska waited for the grave to be finished; for the body to be lowered; for the first clod to fall on the naked chest.

A native on his left fingered an age-

less steel knife. The dog at the native's side whined for its dead master; the native petted it and murmured wordlessly.

Matuska bowed his head, listened, heard the clod, then turned and walked toward the central house, leaning into the sheeting rain, moving his feet with difficulty through the sticky mud.

"You must not continue to go out among them unarmed," a colonist told him when he entered the compound.

"I'm safe," Matuska said. He knew that the natives dared not test the universality of the law they knew so well among themselves: violent retribution.

Wet and miserable he stood at the window, moving his hands vaguely, crying sadly without sound or tears.

As custom provided, the native with a knife slit the dog's throat; for all his lesser height, his arms could have held Matuska's frail body as easily as they had held the struggling dog.

Slowly, when all was done—when the mounds were heaped and the equipment gathered—the natives separated in silence, awkward, heavy-chested creatures moving with odd, shuffling steps.

They had completed a ritual of greatest consequence, if Matuska could only understand it. He clenched his hands against the window-ledge as they vanished from sight, one by one, into the dreary forest.

He wanted desperately to thrust himself upon them in such a way that they could no longer ignore him; he wanted to beat with his fists against the hairy chests, against the barrier of indifference, until he was recognized. The world of his co-colonists was a world he could not penetrate. He was alone, alone, outside of everything.

He was possessed of monstrous and incommunicable knowledge. Bottled up without outlet, it had come to infuse his whole being, until nothing in his life was uncolored by it. It be-

came so mixed up with everything else that even he no longer completely understood it.

He had conceived an obsession about the natives: they, also, were possessed of the same knowledge.

FOUR MONTHS later, when the cemetery was drying with parched wind; when the leaves were curling; when the grass was brown, the natives buried their chieftain. That summer (it was 2989 now, a black-and-white mocking bird perched in the dead oak at the far end of the mounds and sang mournfully in the moonlight, reproducing all the various sounds of bird-life without pause, from dark to daybreak, for the better part of a month. It was killed by a native who crept silently upon it with drawn bow.

Matuska could not escape his cultural commitment; most of his waking-hours were devoted to the routine labors of establishing the colony. He had seen the natives near at hand only once between the burial in March and the burial in July. He came upon two of them at the edge of the ruined city—smelling the strong, unwashed reek of them an instant before he saw them facing each other on the sun-dappled grass. A fitful breeze rustled the leaves intermittently. He was a mile upwind from their filthy, squalid village, so the native odor was unexpected; Matuska stopped at once, watching, listening.

Here, at the rim of the forest, at the edge of the city, with lost glory crumbling about him, he peered at their brute eyes and lax faces seeking reassurance that he was not alone.

He held his breath as they circled, knife-armed, ready to leap and slash each other because of some insult, some hot word, some abridgement of pride. Matuska cried out in anguish, rushing, stumbling toward them.

Both dropped into a defensive crouch at the unexpected sound. And Matuska was between them, towering over them—great, sad-eyed, waiting,

not caring if they flung themselves upon him or not.

Their breathing was loud and their breath was stale. Their eyes darted uneasily from his figure and away, and for several heart beats the scene was frozen.

And then the danger was past.

The natives vanished into the forest. After a timeless period, there was thrashing in the grass and then silence. Matuska shuddered.

One native, bloody and proud, came back to the clearing. Unaware of the stink of his grimy body, he surveyed the land combatively. He was master of the planet. Nothing gave him pause; nothing challenged his superiority; nothing made him slave.

The week after the bowman shot the mocking-bird, Matuska attended the funeral of the chieftain. The natives clustering at the graveside no longer had the sweet odor of stale sweat about them; they were scrubbed clean, as if to meet some obscure challenge they only dimly understood. Invisible, Matuska stood, head bowed, waiting for the first clod to fall; then he turned away in order not to witness the execution of the chieftain's dog.

## 2



THE THIRD summer after the colonists arrived, the natives sent an emissary. The colony had expanded, had become fat and prosperous and *rooted*. The compound was now weathered, and the raw wood of the buildings was warped and cracking. Within another three years, smelters would be opened; the top-soil would be strained for metals; huge gouts of flame would lave the night sky, and the million-voiced roar of furnaces would shake the forest. In the third

summer (2990 now) the first stage of colonization was entering its final phase. The farm-lands lay fertile miles eastward. There were vast stands of corn-like grain and of native wheat (of which the colonists were fond); terrestrial and alien vegetables queerly intermixed in the neat-rowed truck-gardens near the compound.

Soon, in their mastery of the land, the colonists would eliminate the forest westward. Already an abraded, fuzed-quartz road stretched through it like a ruled line, to end at the distant mountaintop where the relay-station pointed its aerial finger to the stars. The first stage was passing; the groundwork was laid. A hundred towering silos stood filled and waiting for the second-stage colonists.

In ten years, the compound would be a city of shiny metal and brilliantly-colored plastic; great roads would extend radially outward like clutching fingers, grasping, possessing, retaining the conquered land. But for now, at the end of the first stage, the native cemetery (at Matuska's insistence) remained untouched—a landmark; an anchor to the past; a representation of the old verities to which the natives still clung with tenacious faith, and no longer understood.

They sent a female. Males were the emissaries between hostile tribes.

The female was tall and fair-skinned, lithe and willowy; her hair was combed and knotted neatly in the back; her skin was scrubbed, and the crudely-woven dress she wore was immaculate.

She walked up the hard-surfaced street, keeping equidistant from the log houses on either side. She stopped once and spoke; the colonist, not understanding her words, gestured her on.

Matuska left his window and hurried to the central doorway.

She stood before him, erect, breathing easily, her head coming scarcely

to his shoulder. "You are the one who comes to the burials?"

"Yes."

"I have come for some clothing material," she said.

"Why did you abandon the cities?"

"I have come for some clothing material," she repeated.

"Why...?" But he read in her eyes the futility of questions.

"...Come with me," he said.

"I will follow you; you know the way."

She stood aside for him. She followed close behind him as he led her down the main street of the compound to the community warehouse.

She showed no flicker of surprise, no twitch of envy, as she surveyed shelf upon shelf of clean-smelling merchandise. Without breaking stride, she went to the nearest counter, picked up a packet of brightly-colored plastic yardage and nodded curtly. "This will do," she said, hugging it to her body. She moved quickly toward the door.

She returned within an hour. Consulting no one, she walked through the compound (as if to be sure she were seen) and into the truck-garden beyond. She knelt and began to weed a row of alien vegetables by plucking the individual weeds from around each plant, with meticulous fingers.

An hour before sunset, Matuska put aside his assignment for the day and went to the female. Weary and exhausted, she continued to work, her raw fingers moving mechanically.

Bending, he rested a gentle hand on her shoulder. "Go home," he said. "The work you have done has more than paid for the material."

A casual smile twitched hollowly at her sweaty face. She ignored his hand and his voice. He left her there, back bent painfully, fingers moving, moving; at nightfall, he could still see her until it became too dark to see.

Thereafter it was not uncommon for a female native to come to the compound, to choose from the warehouse

what material she desired, and to perform as an implicit, never-stated term of barter—a more than equivalent amount of labor. The females spoke no more than necessary. Matuska was unable to penetrate their reserve.

**THE MAN**, his name was Kinny, did not come until autumn.

Kinny—a squat block of a figure with long, ungainly arms, tiny, restless eyes, and hair wetted down until it glistened over his skull like a metal covering—stood before the doorway. He did not look at Matuska, but peered beyond him into the corridor. He swung his long arms back and forth restlessly. He said nothing.

"What do you want?" Matuska asked uneasily.

Grunting, Kinny brushed past him with sudden energy and planted his feet wide apart on the corridor flooring. "I came to see the pens." His arms remained motionless while his nostrils wrinkled and his head swung suspiciously from side to side.

It was a colloquialism Matuska had not previously encountered. "You mean the inside, here?"

Kinny grunted.

"But first, tell me, you must tell me: why did your race abandon the cities?"

Kinny glared at him. I answer no questions, he seemed to say. Angriily he started for the door.

"No, no! Wait, wait! I'll show you . . ."

"You go, I'll follow."

In silence, Matuska led him along the corridor. At his own door he stopped. "This is where I live. Would you like to see my room?"

Kinny gestured that he would.

When Matuska closed the door behind them, Kinny stared around wildly as if seeking some way to escape from the sudden oppression of the exitless walls. Then, seeing Matuska's calm, he grinned foolishly and moved his hands limply. He rolled his shoul-

ders and stretched the muscles in his arms. He surveyed the wooden furniture whose size dwarfed him: the massive bed, the high bureau, the tall, narrow bookcase, the sturdy table. "It is well enough."

His eyes traveled again around the room. They rested for an instant on the brilliantly-colored painting above the bed, passed on, came back reluctantly. He bent forward; his mouth grew lax. He moved toward the bed, and at the edge stopped, still staring (transfixed now) at the delicate design and brushmanship, capturing as if alive an alien bird and an alien landscape.

"It is a beautiful picture," Matuska said, towering beside the native. "I . . . I keep many beautiful things . . ." He reached across and handed it down. Kinny rubbed the polished frame eagerly with his heavy, blunt-fingered hands.

"Not as beautiful as the woods in spring." His eyes glistened with excitement. "But well enough . . . I will take it with me." Then, swinging his treasure carelessly from his left hand, he started for the door. He stopped. "The cities drew death."

"Yes, yes," Matuska said excitedly. "They're not enough, and if they're not enough, they're nothing. That's what you mean, isn't it?"

Kinny shrugged. "The cities drew death." And he was gone.

*They do understand!* Matuska cried triumphantly to himself.

Fifteen minutes later, the picture safely deposited beyond Matuska's reach, the native stood at Matuska's doorway once more. Before entering he studied the room carefully as if to detect any trap set in his absence. Then inside, he moved cautiously from one article of furniture to another. "It is dusty."

"I would like to talk to you for a moment."

"You should dust it." Kinny drew a finger over the table and held it up

for inspection, regarding it himself with exaggerated fastidiousness. He ran his other ungainly hand through his new-washed hair, as if to attract attention to it. "Give me something to dust with; I'll show you how."

"Look in the top drawer. Yes, pull it out. There, use that. I want to ask you some questions."

"I dust," the native said imperiously. "I do not answer questions." He brandished the cloth. "You watch."

HE DUSTED slowly, precisely, bearing down with unnecessary vigor at the end of each calculated stroke. He had to stand on tiptoe to reach the back of the bureau. He glanced over his shoulder, now and again to be sure the colonist was observing the mechanics of dusting. He held a semi-transparent globe to the light, turned it this way and that, wrinkling his face in intent inspection. He rubbed it briskly, examined it in the light again, and at length reluctantly returned it to the table. He was exceedingly careful to see that each object went back precisely as it had been—as if he wished to avoid the reprimand that might occur if one were disarranged. His hands moved with unaccustomed gentleness.

The silence had been unbroken.

He replaced the sash in the drawer. "You could do it."

"I must remember," Matuska said.

And so they came together—each an outcast from his own world: the one newly-awakened to an awareness of beauty, and possessed of a curiosity that time and events had relegated to his long-forgotten ancestors; the other, searching and sick at heart, believing that the commitment to proliferation of his fellows was merely a desperate, futile, and lonely protest against the long night of eternity, needing to communicate to someone across the multiple barriers of alienness his primeval, vast and bottomless longing. The two of them, aliens and strangers, met and

spoke and were forever locked away from each other by the worlds they could not entirely forsake.

Dimly, unvocally, Kinny experienced shadows of his racial past among the ornaments and colors of Matuska's room; sadly, frighteningly, Matuska experienced the silence of his racial future among the weathering mounds of the cemetery.

### 3



KINNY BEGAN to come regularly to the compound and to Matuska's room. Within a month, it was not unusual for him to arrive shortly after the colonist left for his work in the morning, to remain within the room (eating a noon meal of dried meats and roots there) until shortly before Matuska's return at dusk. He spent the time cleaning and recleaning everything within the four walls, until the wood of the furniture glistened from his polishing; the floors gleamed; and the often-handled ornaments, and ever more numerous pictures (which Matuska began to purchase from other colonists) sparkled—until there was about the room a brightness and a freshness and a warmth that could not be found elsewhere upon the planet.

They were aware of each other's occupancy of the room; a little of them both was combined and transmuted within the silent walls, so that at first they seemed to draw more closely together as the days progressed. But they seldom saw each other; they seldom spoke; soon their relationship assumed a static quality.

Once, when Matuska came in early, Kinny was fingering the binding of one of the books and puzzling over the tightly-printed symbols of the text.

Matuska said, "I will explain these, the books, the use of books. . ."

Kinny returned the book to the shelf. "I have seen what there is to see. We no longer make them, since they serve no purpose."

And again, not too long afterwards, Matuska noticed that the native had taken nothing further by way of payment, and he delayed until Kinny arrived. He opened the jewel-case he was holding and removed the largest of the iridescent lava rocks. "For you," he said, extending it.

Appreciation flickered in Kinny's eyes; but the native turned from the gift and began to finger over the remaining stones, finally selecting one of the smallest—as if he could have taken any or all of them. "This has caught my eye. I will take it." Only for an instant did he glance back at the one Matuska held, and then he dropped his choice into his fur-piece. Recently he had sewn in, crudely to be sure, a bit of leather as a pocket.

One afternoon—Kinny had been coming regularly for over a month now—Matuska returned while Kinny was still in the room. He watched the native for a moment, then he said, "You are careful never to change the arrangement of the furniture."

Kinny blinked his eyes dumbly.

"You may if you wish. You have my permission; I don't mind. Variety is good."

It seemed to Matuska that their failure at some undefined point to progress further in understanding each other had come to be symbolized by the unvarying sameness of the room.

Kinny turned without answer and was gone. Matuska, in stunned incomprehension, heard his feet hurrying along the corridor with heavy, disapproving slaps, and he wanted to cry out in anguish, "Come back! Come back!" He wanted to run after him and apologize for the insult, even though he could not understand the nature of it.

He felt futility and bitterness, confusion and hurt, betrayal and sorrow remembering how final the feet had sounded as they fled from him.

**S**NOW CAME; Matuska daily hoped for Kinny's return and was daily disappointed. The vocal messages he entrusted to the females were unanswered; perhaps even undelivered. His sense of loneliness increased. He needed Kinny's reassuring if enigmatic presence. The other colonists became more disapproving of his interest in the natives. He was afraid they might even forbid the females access to the compound. The other colonists were interested in only one goal: planting the colony firmly and assuring its survival. Matuska wanted to scream curses against the irony of each new building they erected. Watching the natives troop silently to bury their dead, he wanted to cry to his fellows, "See! They know! They build no walls against eternity! They know, *they* understand!"

Perhaps a message was delivered; perhaps the secret needs overcame the insult. At any rate, Kinny returned. The snow was a deepening blanket now.

Matuska did not see him the first day. The new sparkle of the furniture informed of his return. Matuska was afraid to wait for him the next morning; he dreaded the first meeting, dreaded that he might give some new and unintentional insult, even in the manner of his greeting, that would send the native away forever and restore the colonist's isolation.

It was three days later that Kinny was waiting when he returned from work. The native nodded and stepped to the middle of the room. He regarded the arrangement of the furniture critically. "I will move this," he said as if the idea suddenly occurred to him. Then he began to move furniture frantically, pulling and hauling it this way and that—trying to place it in

some order so that it would be superior to (it was plain he did not understand in what way such things are judged) to the prior arrangement. The muscles in his forearms and back rippled with the effort, and he grunted heavily, lifting, pushing, displaying his strength. . .

Shortly the snow lay deep; it was a huge, endless whiteness upon the forest; it piled against trees and spread across the thick ice of the river. The tree-limbs creaked with snow and snapped brittlely and fell, trailing streamers of whiteness, and plunged silently into the cushion below.

Crude stoves in the villages burned defiantly against the cold. Natives flickered from house to house like wasted shadows. Beyond what little security was there, their world lay in drab hostility. Hunts went out daily and often came back with nothing.

Kinny's face was gaunt.

Matuska wanted to explain that the colonists were not permitted to dispense their food-stores; that the silos stood for those to follow and their welfare could not be mortgaged to alleviate native suffering; a new sense of shame, perhaps as much as fear of offense, made him keep silent. Slowly he came to feel that it was his responsibility to lessen their suffering. It was a frightening thought; his compassion and sorrow filled him with a nameless brooding and discontent. Ignoring the disapproval of his co-colonists, he took a morning from his work. He was polishing his hand-weapon with an oily cloth when Kinny began to stamp the snow off his fur-wrapped feet outside the door.

"I will go hunting," he said without looking up.

Kinny went to the drawer for his dust-rag. He shrugged indifferently.

Matuska dreaded the cold and exhaustion to follow. He lingered as long as he felt decently he could in the warmth of the room.

At the door he found Kinny, his face eager, just behind him. "I will go with you."

Outside, Kinny hopped about nervously, making animal sounds of excitement deep in his throat. His breath billowed hotly before his face.

Leaping across the snow, almost to its belly, came Kinny's mongrel, yapping in shrill joy. The native rubbed the dog's head and silenced its clamor by strangely-affectionate words. Shivering, then, the animal turned and ranged ahead of them. And the three of them, the dog leading, Kinny in the rear, plunged into the white forest.

Passing on the ridge above the village, Kinny had to call the dog in. It had started to race down the slope (it seemed almost too great an expenditure of energy for such a sickly body) to where a female native was driving two cows before her.

They hunted nearly all morning before they jumped a fawn. Matuska's feet had become leaden and icy; his lungs labored painfully against the air that cut like glass slivers. The fawn flashed fleetly beyond arrow-range, within a heartbeat. But the sharp splat of Matuska's weapon did not send an arrow, and the fawn stumbled and collapsed while Kinny held the mongrel, lunging desperately in its desire to fall on the kill.

Matuska approached and soberly poked the cooling carcass with his toe. "You may have it." He watched Kinny's reactions. Kinny shuffled his feet in the snow and panted wetly above the blood-odored kill. "We have no need of it," he said, and they left it lying there, turning the snow dark beneath its body.

Within the hour they shot two does and a rabbit. They left the does. Kinny fed the rabbit to the dog. "I overlooked to bring his food," he apologized. "If we always left all of the kill, the dogs would not long survive

to run more game. They are very valuable."

Matuska struggled to conceal his exhaustion. Each breath seemed fire. He stumbled. "It is enough for today."

On the way back to the compound, they stopped once to rest. While Matuska leaned heavily against a tree, Kinny capered impatiently behind him.

**K**INNY PARTED from the colonist at the gate and trotted toward the village, hurrying, Matuska knew, to retrieve the kill for his tribe before wild animals picked the bones clean. Matuska could not understand the frustrating indirections of their every relationship.

Thereafter he hunted once each week. He forced himself to work longer hours in the colony to make up for the time. He saw Kinny only on hunt-days.

On the fourth hunt, heart throbbing desperately he said, "Tell me. Why do you bury an animal with each corpse?" He held his breath, for fear that even such a harmless question might constitute an insult. His growing need for the physical presence of the native made him almost afraid to talk at all. And yet, in that burial-ritual, he seemed to catch a whisper of assurance: if he could only understand it completely, he felt that he would never need feel alone again.

"It is natural; it must be done."

Matuska judged the tone. There was no hostility in it.

On the next hunt he asked: "Why *must* you bury an animal with each corpse; why *must* it be done?"

"It must."

"Yes, but why? If it must be done, how is it that we do not do it also?"

"But why should *you*?" Kinny said. "Let us go." He waited for Matuska to move. "Why should *you*?" he cried happily. . .

## 4



**I**N LATE January there was a brief period of freak warm weather, when the snow melted rapidly, during which the natives organized a great animal-hunt. Kinny was gone for three days.

Matuska knew the hunt had ended when the cymbals in the village announced a death. Many native hunts ended in that fashion.

Kinny came the same morning. It was one of Matuska's rare free days.

All morning Kinny did not speak. He was listless at his cleaning; he stared frequently out the window and across the compound.

Matuska watched him mutely and helplessly. At last he asked softly: "The cymbals? They were for a friend?"

"For a careless fool; I have no friends."

"But you are sad?"

"...In the night, my animal died. I went this morning to feed him and he was dead."

"I am sorry."

Kinny said nothing.

"You must get another one."

Slowly Kinny shook his head. "They will not give me another."

"But why?"

"There are only so many. It has been a hard winter on most of our animals." He moved to the bed and sat down. It was one of the few times he had sat in Matuska's presence. He began to sob dryly, without shame. "I have nothing else."

Matuska realized how deeply he had become attached to the native. He wanted desperately to comfort him.

"Have you no female?"

"No, I... No. Nothing."

Matuska waved his gaunt hands helplessly. He bent forward and spoke softly. "They blame you for coming here? Is it that?"

"Why should they?" Kinny demanded. "I go where I wish." Tears glistened on his cheeks. "I will come back tomorrow." He stood and was gone.

Matuska had not realized the depth of affection they could develop for even an animal. This revelation—when he remembered their burial-practice—left him chilled and afraid. He had long ago forced the comprehensive evidence of their savagery out of his mind treating each instance of it as a sad but unique phenomenon. He had not really understood its extent; but now, belatedly, as understanding began to grow, he felt somehow personally responsible—as he felt responsible for their winter misery. The discontent that came with sorrow and compassion increased in intensity.

The full, blinding light of insight came early in February; it dissolved all things into perspective.

Throughout his association with the natives he had come to take for granted the absolute degree to which they could be trusted. They were careful never to take unacknowledged payment for their work unless he were present.

He had therefore been surprised to see the jacket missing from his closet. Kinny had never taken anything but objects of aesthetic appeal. And since, just the day before, he had taken a vase (to brood over it, unknown to Matuska, by the dying fire until chill and lateness drove him to the robes and sleep), it was unlikely that he had also taken the jacket.

Matuska discovered the jacket was missing as he dressed for the hunt. Shrugging, he put on the less warm one.

"Your other jacket?" Kinny asked. "... it is not here."

Kinny's lips tightened...

That evening, after he had rested

from the exertion of the day, Matuska went out to inspect again the ruins lying under the new-fallen snow. It was a clear, moonlight night. Beyond the forest, there was a splash of small animal-tracks where once cars had moved, and natives walked proud with power and civilization. A lonesome owl called throatily, to send field-mice scampering.

Looking at the past lying before him, Matuska wanted to erect some eternal monument to deny impermanence. But he knew how impossible that would be. The sun itself would fade; all before him would vanish. There was nothing in the universe but defeat and irony. The cities of even his own race would grow cold and dead and crumble. As would all works all dreams, everything...

He stood motionless for a long time in the frosty air. He turned away at last and skirted the native cemetery—still ageless and timeless, but as impermanent in the cosmic scale as snow is in sunlight. Beyond it he could see the sparkle of lights in the colony and hear (if he ceased walking; his feet made brittle crunches breaking through the frozen crust) if he listened closely, the hum and throb of the generator within the central compound.

**I**T WAS early February, 2991 now, and Matuska's last winter here. Limb-shattered moonlight lay across the snow.

Panting thinly, he stood on the slight rise and looked down at the native village, monochromatic and lifeless with sleep. After long minutes he noticed the iron dark drops in the snow, almost at his feet. They trailed to the right, complimenting a set of shuffling tracks that came up from below.

Skin prickling with dread, his eyes resting on them with terrible fascination, he followed the drops until he came to a female, naked, frozen, hud-

died in the snow, her body a mass of savage welts that could only have been administered by a community lashing. Her face was pillowed sleepily against her arm, and snow glistened in her stiff black hair. *Why, the colonist thought in horror, it is the one who came to the compound just yesterday; I gave her a blue and orange blanket from the warehouse . . .* Heartsick, he turned away.

Tears formed in his eyes. He shuddered to think that this was the ultimate consequence of the knowledge he shared with the natives: savagery. He wanted to wring his hands in agony.

It seemed to him then—and this was his insight—that even the self-delusion of building was preferable. Truth was not as important as falsehood; ignorance was a shield against suicide. He suddenly hoped that his own race would never discover the pathetic futility of erecting walls against the long night of eternity. He wanted to cry out: *Never leave the cities! There is a love and a goodness in them! Because of that, they are worth while! Because of what they prevent, they are worth while! You must never leave them! Hear me! Hear me! You must never . . .*



The next morning, Kinny returned the jacket. "I have no use for it. You may have it back."

Matuska's hand trembled.

"We do not want to take too much," Kinny said. "We must see that you retain enough for your own needs."

"I saw a dead female in the forest last night," Matuska said softly.

Kinny's eyes did not meet his. "She was accused of stealing from her neighbor." He hesitated. "There are some things we must not steal. . . ." He shuffled his feet. "Her whole family should have received the same," he said defiantly.

Matuska said nothing. He went to the window, opened it, and breathed the clean air that seemed to promise spring.

SPRING came early.

Out in the new air, Kinny hopping slightly to his rear, Matuska asked gently, "The rest do not approve of you talking to me. Why are you all so distant from us?"

Swaggering with warmth and vitality, Kinny seemed not to hear.

"Your people cannot control a male like they can the females, isn't that right? Isn't that why they don't like for you to come? They're afraid that, if you work for us, you may accidentally reveal the secret." He felt a lump rise in his throat. "You don't want to see it destroy our cities, too. You. . ."

Kinny broke stride. "I do not work for you," he said. He walked a few steps in silence, bent for a rock, sent it whirling away in a long arc, waited for it to ricochet from the tree-trunk. "I do not work for you. . . . You are very useful, and yet it is all so. . . so difficult. . ."

"What do you mean?"

Kinny turned away from him then: not in anger, merely no longer wishing to be bothered with questions. "I do as I please," he called back to the

colonist. He walked proudly, defiantly, master of the planet; that was the important thing.

Matuska felt a lump continue to tighten in his throat.



He felt drawn to the ruins. He went as often as he could. He dug just beyond the first broad cross street in the foundation of a forgotten building. He uncovered a queer piece of electrical equipment. He could not understand its function. He cleaned it until it shined and placed it on his table. He pointed it out to Kinny, and waved his hands, and tried to explain how he felt.

"They made many useless things long ago," Kinny said. "We do not bother with them any more."

"Don't you see... I understand," Matuska protested. "It's not necessary to pretend. I know; I understand why you left the cities. You can talk freely to me." It seemed to Matuska that he had lived with the horrible knowledge for so long that he was the father of it. He felt a great love for the natives, and a great desire to undo the disaster that the knowledge (and he himself, indirectly and unwittingly) had caused. And strangely he was no longer alone.

"You must listen, Kinny. We're all wrong. Not wrong. I mean..." Words struggled to rise. He had to convey not only the idea but all the undercurrents of it. He had to convey his emotions. "You've got to regain your faith in the cities. Turn away from truth; stop looking at its hideous face. Stop it, stop it. Reality doesn't matter; it's the dream and the delusion that matters... You've got to understand this, Kinny."

"There's nothing to understand," Kinny said.

"Listen, listen, listen... I've got to make you believe this. Before I leave.

I'm going to leave very soon now. You've got to find meaning again. There's so little time left; that's the..."

Kinny suddenly appeared agitated. "You are going to leave?"

"Yes. I've got to leave, now that my work is done. I have so little time left..."

And Kinny, as if some hidden barrier were suddenly lowered—some unvocalized, even unadmitted necessity removed—went to the colonist and began to pat his head and caress his skin and croon softly to him in rhythmic, non-sense syllables.

Matuska was motionless with uncomprehending amazement.

And the native voice from the doorway came with sharp disapproval: "We should not become fond of them. You should go away now."

Kinny jumped back and whirled guiltily. Matuska, waiting with his heart in his throat, breathed almost soundlessly.

Kinny turned back to the colonist. "I do as I please." He touched the colonist's head. "This one is going away."

As if the emotions he was showing might entail some abhorrent obligation, the female said, "One must watch one's feeling. The Chieftain will not like it."

And then, for a moment, they both seemed puzzled. Something had been put into words, some moral commitment expressed, that they knew to be correct; but they could not understand the reason for dreading. They knew that the Chieftain would disapprove equally of Kinny's conduct, without knowing any more than themselves whence his disapproval arose.

"It is natural," Kinny said belligerently, stroking Matuska's shoulder. "Let me alone."

**M**ATUSKA saw him only twice more. Once alive—the next day,

the day preceding the native hunt—and once dead at the cemetery.

The day after the hunt, Matuska awakened to the cymbals at dawn. He lay listening on the brink of sleep until he was roused by the loud rattling at his door. He arose to answer it.

A strange native was standing fearlessly in the dim, morning-cool corridor. His face was infinitely weary. And he stepped uninvited across the threshold as if across the barrier between life and death.

"Kinny was killed in the hunt."

Shocked by the sudden impact of sickness and sorrow, Matuska moved his lips soundlessly.

"Come," the native said sternly.

Matuska's mind hummed dully with disbelief. There was the sense of unreality that always crowds upon the knowledge of final, personal loss. It was impossible that Kinny's awkward arms were stilled; they had been so alive and active. "I will come immediately."

Sad, trembling now, his face wrinkled, almost crying, the native said, "Hurry. We are waiting to bury him." The voice was unsteady. With sudden shame, he squared his shoulders as the master of the planet should.

And drawing his wrap around him, still in his night robe, Matuska prepared to leave. Grief and bitterness and defeat filled him. The gravity clawed at him with lifeless fingers. He tried to tell himself that even with Kinny dead, even in the few remaining weeks he had left on the planet, he could still somehow convince the natives to return to their cities.

Matuska unarmed and unsuspecting, preceded the native down the corridor to the funeral-dirge of cymbals, heard from the direction of the cemetery, like the far-off, brassy throbbing of a giant heart.

★

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*It appears in the big August issue of*

# DYNAMIC SCIENCE FICTION



Let us pause for a moment to consider the havoc that our favorite reading-matter may cause sometimes, somewhere . . .



Mr. Pwrert tried to get a word in edgewise . . .

# FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

by Harry Warner, Jr.

(Illustrated by Tom Beecham)



THE GIRL asked, "Are you planning another vacation so soon, Mrs. Pwrert? You really must be getting the urge for space-hopping."

"I am not planning another vacation, young lady," Mrs. Pwrert snapped

at the smiling receptionist in the office of Worlds Wide Travel Agency. "Mr. Pwrert wants to lodge a strong complaint about our last vacation."

The receptionist's smile narrowed from cordiality to politeness, as she looked at the large Mrs. Pwrert, and small Mr. Pwrert at her heels. The receptionist selected a complicated form from a desk drawer, and said: "If you'll just have a chair, Mr. Pwrert

can tell me what went wrong, and I'll investigate."

Mr. Pwrert opened one of his mouths, but he was too late. Mrs. Pwrert declared: "We were frightened to death. We were just starting to relax at the resort when we read that war had broken out at Alpha Centauri. We have relatives there, so Mr. Pwrert spent a small fortune in ethergrams to find out if they were safe. Well, they not only were safe, but there wasn't any war. The emotion-dampers were working perfectly all over the Alpha Centauri system; we'd been hoaxed."

"Oh, it was something that happened while you were at the resort—not during your trip?" The receptionist's brow started to go around in circles.

"Yes. Moreover, after we'd been there—"

"I'll refer you to the person who planned your resort-accommodations," the receptionist said, relievedly. "This form covers only your traveling-experiences."

The tour-manager exuded good will and personal magnetism, basking in the mauve light that streamed through the windows from the twin suns. It found a comfortable chair for Mrs. Pwrrert.

Mr. Pwrrert was about to say that he would like a chair, too, when Mrs. Pwrrert erupted: "You sold us that vacation by telling us that we'd be free from worries, that we'd get a complete rest in rural surroundings, away from all the galactic squabbles. What happens? We nearly have a nervous-breakdown, because some yellow journalist wrote a fake war-story to try to boost circulation."

The tour-manager waved its foot in placating fashion. "Now, Mrs. Pwrrert, you really should forget the news while you're vacationing. Writers often don't have the highest standards in such out-of-the-way areas as we have in civilization."

"Then it's high time the standards were raised. We had more than one unpleasant experience of the kind. We read about an interesting race of giant lobsters on the very next planet in the system, so we paid for a side-trip on our way back home. There weren't even any *little* lobsters there; it was a dead world.

"Now, what Mr. Pwrrert wants to know, is why there isn't an honest, respectable press in a resort for which you arrange vacations."

The tour-manager looked hurt. "Mrs. Pwrrert, I'm really surprised. You must remember that you picked that resort simply because of its native, unspoiled charm. We asked you folks to remain in the background, not to make yourselves known as foreigners, so the same charm could be pre-

served from year to year. How can we mix into the publishing business and still keep the charm of the resort? If we interfere in a few things, pretty soon the resort would be just as vulgar and commercialized as Vega III. A couple of your taste—"

"Does all that simply mean that you won't give us a rebate for the money we wasted?" Mrs. Pwrrert's lip flashed.

"You must see the director concerning rebates," the tour-manager said, politely but finally. "Three doors down and to the left," it pointed. "Tell the secretary that I sent you to Mr. Vluv."

Mr. Pwrrert's eyes broadened. "Mr. Vluv—" he began.

"—uv!" Mrs. Pwrrert completed. "Why, that's an old friend of Mr. Pwrrert's. He'll give us satisfaction!"

MR. VLUV greeted Mr. Pwrrert warmly, and bounced heads with Mrs. Pwrrert in more formal fashion. Then he listened attentively to the couple's misfortunes.

"I'll admit frankly that you aren't the first person to complain about this resort," he told Mrs. Pwrrert. "We used to average a hundred-thousand vacationists each year on that excursion. But so many are coming back angry, that demand for the tour is dropping off. The natives are amusing; the food is good; the weather exciting; the scenery unique. But the news—"

Mr. Pwrrert nodded emphatically. Mrs. Pwrrert said: "Why don't you deliver some reliable publication regularly for vacationists there?"

"Well, it's out of the way, to begin with; and importing the news would mean using big spaceships that might attract too much of the natives' attention. So we simply supply the editors with the latest facts, and let them do the publishing. . . I'll tell you what; you come back to see me next spring, and I'll give you a big discount on

the next Coal-Sack cruise. Think you'd like that?"

"I'd—" Mr. Pwrrert said. Mrs. Pwrrert took him by the middle arm. "We'll decide," she said. The couple stalked out.

Mr. Vluv pushed a button, sighing. The tour-manager responded promptly. Mr. Vluv motioned for it to squat. "We'll have to de-emphasize our Earth excursion," Mr. Vluv told it sadly. "I hate to do that, because it's a profitable tour. But it's giving Worlds Wide Travel Agency a bad name, just because of those fake accounts of inventions and interplanetary affairs."

"When did this trouble start?" the tour-manager asked.

"Oh, six or eight years ago. Earth magazines used to pay us for the facts and published the facts as fiction; our tourists bought the magazines to keep up to date on what the galaxy is doing, and everything was fine.

"Then for some reason the Earth-natives started to buy these same magazines, and some of them assumed that the science-fiction stories really were fiction—and started to write similar accounts out of their own imaginations.

"The editors mixed those fictional accounts with our news-reports without any distinguishing marks. Then, to make things worse, some of the natives started to read the magazines, too. They bought so many copies that a lot of new magazines were started, and we can't even fill the demand for accounts. So we can't crowd out the fake stories with our superior factual accounts. Our tourists never know whether to believe any given story or not..."

"Oh, to Hxewrt with it! I'm going to try to forget the whole thing. I feel like I need a vacation..."

★

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SCIENCE FICTION  
QUARTERLY

From all corners of the galaxy they came to watch this birth, to watch, to search, and to fear.

# STAND WATCH IN THE SKY

A Strange, Unusual Tale

by Algis Budrys

(illustrated by Milton Luros)



A beaked and leathery thing flapped from the space in front of them . . .

**L**ADIA SILENTLY found a place beside the others.

As always, there seemed to be so many stars. They cradled her, held her, surrounded her with silver dagger-points. Ladia shrank within herself and faced the spinning world below her. She came from the Rim. Even here, so far from the great Central Cluster, the sky was too full of alien stars. She could not look at

them for long without feeling that she was a stranger here; someone with no business in this corner of space.

*Here—or anywhere?* she thought, and looked at the others. They stood confidently, close together. And yet, with each group there was somehow the feeling that it stood apart, that there were borders and demarcations, that this was not one unit of—how many were there, counting herself?—

twelve?—parts, but a loose assemblage. From each group there was an almost shouted statement: "We are we. We are rulers. Do not trespass against us." So, though they stood together, the representatives of the Six Peoples stood apart.

I stand apart, too, she realized, but I stand as my kind has stood for so long—marked by our weakness.

The Six Peoples, she thought. Once it was Seven. Yes, and once her people had not been a timid remnant, clustered on a handful of worlds that clung to the scattered suns of the Galaxy's edge.

She swept her glance along the group.

Beside her stood two of the Waterworlders, their heads encased in bulky, transparent tanks of the fluid which was their source of oxygen. The Waterworlders. Wherever there was a planet wrapped in deep seas, there were the Waterworlders, with their coral cities draped in traceries of seaweed, touched with polychrome sunbursts of anemone.

Beyond these, a Sirian. *Cold, solitary thing, what will you find here to measure with your instruments? When your people find no more to measure, Sirian, what will they do?* But that time would not be soon in coming. There was much left to be weighed and charted and entered, in this Galaxy alone. The people of the Sirian suns would calibrate the Universe for many, many years.

The Aldebars stood heavily together. Squat, unhelmeted, unbreathing, some said they were robots. No one knew, and the Aldebars themselves said nothing. They merely conquered, coming in hordes out of the depth of space, brutal, smashing, ravaging. Their senseless empire stretched far to all sides of their parent sun.

Two of the cats stood beyond them. The male was armed.

Ladia wondered at that. The Aldebars would have seemed incomplete

without their weapons, but the cat...? She glanced at the inevitable Danae opposite her, and saw that the man, too, cradled a slim projector in his arms.

She smiled. *So, cat, if what comes from this planet is not feline, you will try to kill it? And the Danae—the great, overlordly Danae—will kill you to preserve their kind of justice.* She smiled bitterly.

Between the cats and the graceful Danae couple stood two of the androids. Cast in flesh, they stood like twin statues with hungry faces. There was a legend. The androids tracked it endlessly.

*Millenia, Ladia thought. Millenia of holding to your territories, vat-born creatures—and still you search. Do you think you'll find your makers here?*

And then, the Danae. The Danae were everywhere, aloof, impassive. The self-selected overseers of the Galaxy, pursuing some plan, following some purpose none could guess. They came, dictated, and their commands were obeyed. Blindly, without attempt at question. The peoples of the Galaxy had long ago learned that the Dana word was Law.

The Dana woman looked across the semicircle of figures and saw her. Her lips curved into a faint smile.

"A Teischa girl," she whispered. "And alone..." The delicate brows curved upward. "Tell me, Teischa virgin, are you a gift to the god who stirs below? Will you bribe your people into alliance with him? Say, Rindweller—do you want your suns back?"

A bubbling titter echoed from the Waterworlders beside Ladia; the cats glanced at her silkily; the androids turned their hungry, ironical faces toward her. Only the Aldebars and the Sirian made no sign.

The Dana man laughed. "Let her be, Tyri," he said. "It is enough for her already, to know she's on a hopeless mission."

"Hopeless, eh?" the male cat

growled unexpectedly. "Because you'll tell it what to do?" His claws clicked on the metalwork of his weapon.

"Down, puss," the Dana woman murmured. The female cat arched her back almost visibly.

"Words!" the Sirian abruptly said, its voice driven in like the point of a spike. "Listen, instead. Feel!"

The group fell silent.

*Beat.*

Like a racing comber, the wave from the planet below reached out and broke over them.

*Beat.*

Again the racing telepathic tide washed up, struck them, and rolled on, flooding out and filling all space.

LADIA SAW the stars overcast, as the almost solid force of those waves radiated out of the world that hung under their feet. Even the sun was momentarily dim to her senses.

The Waterworlders gasped. The Sirian nodded, its lips pulled back in a lupine, fascinated smile. The cats recoiled, spitting; the androids leaned forward, their faces eager. The Aldebars gave no outward sign, but only the Danae were truly imperturbable.

"Formless," the Dana man said casually and contemptuously. "A baby's babbling."

"Were you such a baby?" the Sirian asked drily.

"Perhaps."

"I doubt it."

The Dana man raised his weapon almost negligently.

The Sirian shifted the instrument in its hand. "The emission would be analyzed and telemetered," it said casually. "We would know the secret of your weapon, and then you would have to go to all the trouble of inventing a new one."

The Waterworlders laughed as the Dana lowered his projector again, but stopped suddenly as he absently turned it toward them.

The old, familiar, bitter smile of

her people came to Ladia's lips. *The gods squabble*, she thought. *And over what? A miracle is taking place on that world—that planet, Earth—and each of them sees in it no more than something to be taken and used to further whatever plans and desires each has.*

On Earth, a telepathic mutant had been born—and the first, faintest ripples of its dawning consciousness had been the pulsing signal that had called them here.

For the Waterworlders, here was water—mile on mile on cubic mile of it, deeps and chasms, caverns and canyons. *If the Earthman let them come—or, perhaps, if it was too weak to resist them. Who knew?*

For the Sirian, a fledgling science. Atomic fission and fusion. Rocketry, cybernetics—a million familiar pathways trod again, and perhaps, with *this* race, a stone of discovery turned that had never before, in all the Galaxy, been touched.

The Aldebars? She frowned. Conquest? This one planet, so far from the rest of their holdings? But, obviously, they had a purpose here.

And here, on a world where *genus felis* lived side by side with the simian offshoots, might the telepath not be a cat?

And always, always when a new race reached awareness, the androids came with their hungry faces. A new race? Or one that had risen once before, long ago, and sent the offspring of their biological vats a-wandering into the stars?

The Danae. As constant as the androids. Ruling, regulating, overseeing.

And she. Ladia sighed. She, too. A bribe for the god? No, rather, a supplicant. For help, for comradeship—admit it, for any crumb she could beg, so long as the Teischa people could lift their heads even so much as a fraction higher.

She sighed again. *Poor babe. You'll*

learn that even supermen are tools for supermen.

THE ANDROIDS stirred. "Look at the moon," one of them said. "See the craters? Argue for asteroid-showers, would you?"

The male cat twitched an ear disdainfully.

"The belt of asteroids, then!" the other, female, android cried. "You'd deny an interplanetary war? *There was another civilization in this system, I tell you!*" Her entire body quivered with her vehemence.

"And, so?" the male cat said with boredom. "Likely as not, if this *is* the system of your origin, mind you, you were brewed on the destroyed planet." He rasped his claws up the thigh of his heavy suit.

"Brewed!" The male android leaped forward.

"PEACE!" The lance of the Dana projector stabbed between the two males and hung there, dead.

Only Ladia heard the Sirian's tiny exhalation. She saw the dial of its analyzer quiver, and only she looked to see the faint twitch of satisfaction on its lips. It looked up at her suddenly, across the intervening space. She smiled, and the Sirian flicked a side-long glance at the oblivious Danae, and then smiled back.

"One less Overlord secret," it whispered for her alone.

The Aldebars had turned toward the cause of the disturbance. "All intelligence fights," one of them rumbled. "A previous civilization might have been. Maybe they spawned pseudolife and maybe not. What matter? They were like us. They fought."

From the Aldebars, the androids took the insult without protest.

So, 'Like us.' The Aldebars took the Earthmen's constant wars for a sign of a belligerent race, and hoped that even a super-Earthman would share that heritage. *What will you do if he turns on you?*

"Look under the largest sea," one of the persistent androids was saying. "There are cities under that water—roads, walls, temples. All broken, all in ruins—but there!"

The cats had fallen back into velvet inscrutability. They yawned at the androids.

"Cities?" The Waterworlder woman searched eagerly, but her mate laid a restraining flipper on her arm.

"Not ours," he said shortly. "Not yet."

The Sirian interrupted. "An older civilization, yes—but a primitive one. Look closer. Hand-cut, clumsily levered and pulleyed stone piled on stone with the blood of slaves to bind the mortar. You'll find no space-travelers among the aborigines that built there." It smiled, baring its wolfish teeth. "Would you care to see the true former rulers of Earth? Look, then!"

The vibrating aura of its consciousness bloomed out and enfolded them, and they saw into the past with its mind.

Jungles exploded into green and howling life. Tarps bubbled, and shrouds of stinking steam drifted in layers among the giant ferns and through the loops of the writhing creepers.

Ladia gasped. What nightmare of the Sirian's mind was this?

"No nightmare, little Teischa," the Sirian's whisper touched her. "This is how it was. And this, too, that I will show you now, also could have been. I show you a real world, and real creatures."

The jungle wall erupted. A huge and desperate thing, clad in the mail of its own hide, trampled into a clearing and whirled clumsily, at bay.

Its face streamed with blood. Great furrows scored the armor of its flanks, and blood seeped from under some of the scales. Swaying hopelessly on its stumpy legs, it faced the gap its flight had torn in the interwoven mass of the forest.

The pack of killers danced out after it. Smaller, swifter shadows, they slipped in and out of the mists, springing from powerful hind legs to slash and slice with taloned forepaws and serrated teeth.

The harried stegosaur parried fumblingly, twisting and rocking as it tried to keep its armor toward the searching claws, but the little killer-lizards wove a pattern of baying death around it. They cut deeper and deeper, each time reaching closer to the exhausted life in the huge and quivering body.

Moaning, the stegosaur collapsed. The killers danced in, and began to butcher. A pterodactyl fell out of the air, smashed its back into the tortured eyes, twisted, and rose again.

The sightless stegosaur groaned.

**LADIA SCREAMED**, and the picture broke. All but the Sirian and the Aldebars shuddered apart.

"So, things—" the Sirian's scalpel voice lanced out, "do you claim your patrimony here?"

The Androids glared whitey at the Sirian. "Thing yourself," the female hissed.

Quivering with rage, the male snarled at the impassive Sirian. "No," he said thickly. "The search goes on. But we will not leave." The great shout of his frustrated voice beat against them all. "We'll stay—and see you all in your disappointment!"

"Poor stegosaur," Ladia murmured. "Poor, hunted, helpless thing." So like her own people, hemmed in on every side, a prey to scavengers even before they were dead.

She reached out her hand, and a chubby, unarmored little replica of the murdered stegosaur waddled into being beside her. It stared up at her with frightened eyes, and she knelt and stroked its head. Slowly, its trembling stopped, and the little creation of her mind rubbed its flank against her calf.

The Waterworlders recoiled; the

cats laid back their ears, paws twitching; the Aldebars stared uncomprehendingly, and the Danae laughed cruelly. Only the Sirian smiled.

The bitter faces of the Androids contorted.

Suddenly, a beaked and leathery thing flapped from the space in front of them and whirled at the tiny stegosaur. "We'll have none of *your* mockery, Rimdweller!" the female android cried.

Ladia's eyes snapped wide with confusion at the suddenness of the vengeful attack. She felt her footing waver as almost all her energies gathered in a desperate attempt to halt the oncoming reptile. But she was alone, and weak, and the paired strength of the androids beat her down. She screamed again and gathered her pet in her arms. The androids laughed with unreasoning triumph. The pterodactyl clacked its beak and rushed at her.

Unexpectedly, it smashed into a barrier—and fell back, flapping its wings confusedly.

The Dana man negligently maintained the barrier. "Leash them!" he ordered disdainfully. "If you must have such playthings, see to it they cause no disturbances."

Ladia knew better than to protest. Silently, she projected a collar and leash for her bewildered pet. The androids scornfully chained their own creature.

*Beat.*

The pulse rocked out of the Earth.

*Beat.*

And, suddenly borne on the wings of exultation, a shout: "*I am I!*"

Deep within herself, Ladia felt the echoes of that cry as the force of that superb revelation washed and washed against her. There was so much of soaring human triumph, of pinnacled aspiration in the mind that had come into wakefulness on Earth. It was as though one of her own kind, multiplied a score of times, had suddenly burst from an age-old chrysalis.

*It could have been I that cried so, she thought in wonder. And, for the first time, the faintest hopes stirred within her. She understood that mind, felt as it felt. Could it be that she had somehow found a kinsman, a friend for her people?*

*The others. What are the others doing? Her glance dashed around the grouped semicircle.*

"Ahh!" the Sirian sighed with satisfaction. Its gaze challenged the Danae. "So, Overlords—an infant?"

The Waterworlders bubbled their disappointment; the cats were half-crouched, unsure; the Aldebars stood rock-like.

The Danae were silent. Never before could Ladia have thought she detected the first brushings of tension tingeing their calm and ice-cold self-assurance.

"Well, Overlords?" The Sirian's voice cut deep.

"SILENCE!"

Was that uncertainty in the Dana man's voice?

*Beat.* And now a questioning, a probing, rode the wave.

QUIETLY, Ladia answered along the radius of the rippling swell. *You are not alone. There are others, here, in space. Come to us. We are waiting.*

The beating faltered. *Not alone? Who are you?*

The watching group stirred. "Who contacted it?" the Dana man asked coldly.

Ladia had no attention for him. She pictured herself as well as she could, and sent the image drifting down.

"Answer me! Who?" the Dana demanded furiously.

But Ladia could not answer. The Earthling was talking to her, and it did not matter if all space heard.

"You? You are out there, waiting for me? And you're like me?" The voice was awestruck. "Someone like me," it murmured, "and a girl."

*Beat.*

An image rode the swell. A young face, deep-eyed and eager. "This is I," the young man's voice said. "Wait for me—please—you—wait for me!"

"Yes," Ladia whispered. "Yes, I'll wait."

*Beat.*

Like a cataract, the thoughts of the Earthman tumbled over the watchers. Images—dreams—music, poetry, sunsets, all rushed into space and blotted out the stars.

Ladia trembled. She felt the blush rise to fill her cheeks with happy scarlet. And, as the Earthman had felt the bond between them, so did she. And there were dreams of her own. Dreams of her people, glorious again—but more than those, much more, there were sunsets and music and poetry.

*To be doubly lonely—to belong to a lonely people, and to be alone myself—all my life. To be despised—or, crueller, to be tolerated. To stand under Dana insult, to be mocked by androids—to be a stranger.*

*And he asked me to wait for him. Shining-eyed, she raised her head. And the androids laughed.*

The Waterworlders smiled secretly. And the Aldebars—even the Aldebars—twisted their graven faces in derision.

The cats glared at her with their great green eyes. "Apeling calls to apeling," the female snarled.

The Danae were looking at her out of merciless faces. "So, Teischa wench—" the woman could not resist murmuring, "you are a bribe after all."

The man's fingers touched the settings of his projector. "The Danae rule the Galaxy, Teischa!" he said. "These others have their puerile dreams—but the Dana Law is supreme. You'll hatch no schemings of your own."

He fired.

The Sirian touched a button on the heavy belt that girdled it. The Dana

beam thinned out, shook itself into particles, and was gone.

"What now, Overlord?" the Sirian mocked.

The Danae stood posed for a moment. The man still pointed his useless weapon, and did not remember to lower it. The woman did not move from where she was, her mouth soundlessly open, her aristocratic eyes blank.

"You dared!" the man finally said, awe-struck. Then the murmuring began from both of them.

"You will pay, Sirian—and you, Teischa wench. You'll pay, and your peoples will pay. Your suns shall die, and your races wither. Your worlds shall grow cold. The Danae curse you. All the Danae of all space curse you. You will pay. You will scream, you will grovel, you will beg. Your peoples shall scream. When you are dust, when your suns are ashes, when your planets are pebbles, if there is anywhere a wretched remnant of your crawling peoples, they will be screaming. We curse you. . . ." On and on and on, the Danae chanted vengeance.

The pterodactyl in the male android's hands beat its wings and strained against the chain as though it understood, trying to break free and hurl itself at Ladia and her pet.

The little stegosaur, too, seemed to hear. Ladia bent to stroke the spiny ridge along its back. "There is nothing to fear, little one," she murmured, but, in spite of the warmth that flooded up to her from Earth, she was afraid herself.

Like a physical force, the murmuring beat against the watchers.

**T**HE NERVES of the cats gave way. They began to scream, adding a counterpoint to the Danae chant. The male edged closer.

The Sirian touched its fingers to its belt. The cat slinked back.

"Better, puss," the Sirian said. "Purr as you will—but stay where you are." It turned to the Waterworlders.

"And you?"

The male shrugged. "It's not our quarrel—nor our curse." He pointed to the world. "The seas remain."

The Sirian's mouth stretched in its wolflike laughter. "Hope eternal, eh, and allegiance for the side with the power?"

The Danae litany went on.

"Your suns shall die, and your peoples wither. Your worlds shall grow cold."

"Hate. Claw, slash, catch, rip, tear. Hate."

Under the constant flagellation, Ladia stepped closer to the Sirian.

A new note entered the chanting. The Aldebars stood without expression, but they, too, took up the beat.

"Break. Grind, smash, club, crush."

The Sirian's face was grave, but its acid tongue was not stopped.

"Listen, little Teischa! We have injured their pride. Their hopes and plans have been snatched away. Earth spins rapidly below—time whirls, the Earthman matures. Listen to the disgruntled clamor of the Galactic super-beings!"

"Trample, kick, crack, cru—"

The rhythm of hatred shuddered, broke, and stopped.

The stars went out. The sun was gone. The Earth radiated. They stood on the rainbow.

BEAT!

BEAT!

BEAT!

The tidal wave struck them, flung them, and passed on.

Silence clasped the watchers. Only the pterodactyl croaked once, harshly.

And then it was as though a storm unfolded in their faces.

**E**VEN LADIA, the little stegosaur clutched beside her, searched deep before she found in this Earthman the boy who had touched his mind to hers—how long ago?

He had grown.

The androids felt his justice first.

"So, you are searchers? You would find the race that made you?" Idly, he wrung the pterodactyl's neck and flung it at their helmets. "I know which."

They forgot everything else in their eagerness. They strained to hear him.

He said, "I know, and I will not tell you. Search, things! May your race go hungry all its life."

He tore the Waterworlders out of space, and flung them at the Pacific.

"Drink deep," he said as they hurtled into the sea.

He looked at the cats. "I am an apeling; know that an apeling rules you."

He swung toward the Aldebars. "Crush, eh? You've seen your last massacre."

The two creatures stood impassively. Suddenly, one of them tipped up its weapon and fired at him. It died as though a swung oaken beam had met it. Blood trickled through the breaks in its massive armor.

The other Aldebar rushed forward and flung itself weeping on the crumpled figure. Kneeling, it picked up the body of its mate and walked off into the darkness.

Nodding, the Sirian followed them with its eyes.

"You had analyzed them, of course," the Earthman said to it.

"Centuries ago. They are the poets of conquest." The Sirian nodded toward the Earth. "May I?"

"Certainly."

"Thank you." It set the dials of its analyzer and began to drift Earthward. "Goodbye, little Teischa," it said softly.

"Goodbye," Ladia whispered. She felt the Sirian's pity, and her eyes were wide as she followed the Earthman's actions.

The Danae sauntered up to the Earthman. "Well done," the man said.

The woman's lips curved into a silken smile. "You are very powerful," she murmured. The Dana man had no room in his thoughts to hear her.

"We offer you an alliance on equal terms," he said. "The Galaxy needs strong hands like ours to guide it."

"You'd offer me *that*?" the Earthman said incredulously. "Half the rule of the Galaxy?"

The woman raised an eyebrow covertly. "And more."

"Of the Universe," the man said.

The Earthman looked at them quietly, catching them both in his gaze. He said nothing.

The Danae waited for his answer. They waited confidently. Then they waited impatiently. And then they licked their lips and waited frantically, until finally they broke. Their eyes fell and their shoulders slumped. The woman began to cry.

"Do you know the plan?" the man mumbled, his eyes on his feet. "All the generations in which we ruled the Galaxy, we tried to find a plan for it all, and a purpose. We never found it. Do *you* know it?" He looked up at the Earthman pleadingly, but he could not keep his eyes on that face.

"Yes," the Earthman said. For a moment, Ladia could hear the old echoes of the waking boy's triumphant shout in the calm thunder of the man's voice. "I know it."

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### Remembered Words

Paul Mittelbuscher, Cal Beck, and Tom Clareson are the letter-writers who should notify us which originals, from the May issue, they want to receive. Beck is requested to make two selections, and Clareson three, in the event that winners ahead of them want their first choice.

There was little joy in being a prince, when all the language he learned was a flat denial of everything he felt . . .

# DOUBLE-TALK

by Charles Dye

(Illustrated by Milton Luros)



Helman Holas had been in ill-health . . . the duel was considered little better than murder.

**H**E WAS PICKED up by the seat of his pants, kicking and squalling, and told in a voice of solemn thunder, "*A prince doth not boot an ambassador.*"

That was how he learned he was a prince.

He learned many such lessons, some of them applied to the seat of his

pants by his uncle, speaking firmly between whacks.

"*A prince—doth not—steal—cookies.*" It seemed like an untrue remark, since he had just done that very thing. Perhaps he was not really a prince at all. What would they do to him when they discovered that he was not the right person? That catastrophic ques-

tion frightened him, and he tried harder to do what they said a real prince did. He quickly forgot the reason for his fright, but the feeling remained—a lurking feeling of guilt, as if he were a war imposter and someone someday would find him out.

He learned: "*A prince is proud and doth not beg for favors like a little commoner.*" His nurse told him that. And thereafter he asked for nothing; but when he needed something, he merely stood in silence, and would uncomplainingly have suffered much deprivation had not the servants been alert in judging his needs.

"*Soldiers die gloriously for their country.*" He found that one in a book about old wars and planetary conquests, and it fascinated him; it seemed so simple to die gloriously. How he longed to be a soldier and die gloriously—or do anything gloriously, for that matter. The number of things a prince had to learn to do seemed endless and it seemed impossible to do them right.

"*A prince doth not associate with commoners.*" That one was harder, and cost him a good friend and pal at play.

There were other interesting things he learned while growing. "*Gentlemen do not shout. . . . A sword is worn to the left, a dagger to the right. . . . Gloves are carried in the left hand and the cape is worn slung back over the right shoulder, to allow freedom to the sword-hand.*" His tutor told him that one. At that stage he learned the most from his tutors, but his old nurse still came by occasionally with a stern word. "*A prince doth not smile at servant-girls; it encourages them to presume.*" He was getting older now.

There were other things to learn in studying to be a king. He studied the geography of his planet; its economics and mechanics and social dynamics; and especially its history.

There was a preface to all history-books inserted by the Solar Confeder-

acy, which explained in the odd empire dialect that all planets were allowed to work out their own destinies, and their own governments, according to their philosophy and desires, with these two provisos: that they have no economic or cultural intercourse with any planet on a lower cultural or economic level; and that only hand-weapons be manufactured on any planet.

It was explained in a footnote that this removed the power of any minority to abuse an oppressed majority without revolution, and thus kept excessive power from any government. He snorted at that, for it was obvious that no good member of the aristocracy would ever abuse his control over the commoners below him, anyhow. It was unthinkable; it was just not done. And no honest man on the twin planets would use any weapon but a sword or bow; it would be unsporting.

The footnote was insulting in its implications that such a law was necessary to prevent people from breaking custom. Perhaps it was necessary on other planets, yes—but not on Alandria, his planet, or Melosandra, its companion.

He customarily skipped most of the history and went directly to the planetary history to read, over and over, the chapters on the history of Alandria—his country—and its glorious wars. The pages on the recent wars with Melosandra were thumbed and underlined and their military strategy commented on along the margins.

**T**HERE CAME a time when he went to his Uncle Cleve.

He was not king yet, merely a young man, Elron Degale, a prince without authority, a good citizen who should not presume upon the time of his superiors. So he bent his knee deeply and apologetically when his uncle appeared. "I'm sorry, sir—"

"No apologies—glad to see you." Cleve gripped his shoulder. "My, how

the boy has grown." He was a youthful-looking man with a soldierly directness; but there was also something in his manner that deliberately reminded others of their positions. "What can I do for you, Elron? Advice or help—I'm an old hand; is it trouble with the girls?"

Prince Elron hesitated. "I don't think my education is adequately fitting me for the kingship, sir."

"A sober complaint. What do you want added to it?"

"It's too much at second hand. I thought I could take a job a while as a commoner, be incognito." The prince took the plunge. "I thought I could take a walking tour in Melosandra... maybe... learn the... uh... language." He blushed.

"Spying them out, eh?" Cleve exclaimed with energy. "Planning military strategy? Thinking of a war?" He clapped Elron on the shoulder and turned away abruptly to look out a window, becoming thoughtful. "Some people would say you are over-enthusiastic; don't think your father would like it."

Prince Elron touched his forehead submissively, giving up the idea, his heart sinking. "The king's will is my will."

"He doesn't have to hear of it, though," Cleve said energetically, turning back. "He can't have any will on the subject unless he's heard of it; promise me you'll stay out of trouble on this and you can have it."



When Prince Elron reached Melosandro, he boarded at a farm house under the name of Ron Degannon. He could not tell them he was a prince, though he could admit being of the nobility. "I'm a—" He groped for a word and realized suddenly that there was no such word in the Melosandran language. "—a—" He finally used a word which sounded as if it should

mean noble—although he had heard it used only for goodness—and his questioner giggled, while her husband concealed a smile behind his book.

"Thou canst not just be noble for a living." She turned smiling to her husband. "Would that we could, eh, Altréd?"

Her husband still smiling lowered his book. "No, lad, try again; I see you still have not learned the language well."

Prince Elron searched his mind, thinking of all the professions and tasks for which he had learned words, and comparing them with the activities of his life for a parallel that they could understand. What kind of useful work did he do, in their terminology? He found himself blushing and feeling ashamed, wishing oddly that the subject had not come up. He found the simplest and most general word for those who directed as opposed to those who obeyed. "I'm a superior."

Her husband hid his face behind his book.

"Yes," she urged gently, "but superior in doing what?"

He thought of nobles, and their duchies and sovereignties over farms and towns. "I am responsible for land—large areas of land."

"Oh, an agronomist," his hostess cried happily. "Now I understand; you are in the same profession as Altréd and myself."

He was silent, feeling himself confused and inexplicably desiring to say yes.

"Do not embarrass the lad, Ammy," said the agronomist, rising heavily and coming over. "He's not finding the right words this morning." He addressed Prince Elron again. "What was thee educated in, lad?"

"Everything—a little bit of everything," Elron said helplessly, despairing of being understood. He added automatically—"So that I might better understand the problems of the people and the land."

"There you are, Ammy—" said the husband, sitting down on a more comfortable chair to view the movie broadcast. "It's simple."

"Thee art an administrator!" she exclaimed, clapping her hands.

Later that night when he had retired to his own room, he looked up through the lucite ceiling at the starry sky. "I am a noble." He said it easily in his own tongue, and it was the explanation for everything—a word like distant trumpets blowing, calling to duty, valor.

HE LEFT after a few more days, although he called them Altrad and Ammy by then; but he wanted to be free from pretending. He went to one of the great cities and wandered its streets looking and listening.

The people were richly clothed and seemed happy—perhaps a little fat for his standards, but fit. They had almost no sense of the value of time and wasted much of it in looking at art, listening to music and discussing it afterwards. The food, as everywhere on Melosandra, was delicious past words and wonderfully varied.

Every man worked at some job, apparently with great earnestness; no man feeling degraded by any form of labor, but instead proud of working. But they did not discuss their work, or anything else serious; this difference was the most difficult of all to grow accustomed to. He never saw Melosandrans totally solemn—they always seemed cheerful, although sometimes they laughed at things which Elron would have thought deserving only of condemnation or righteous anger, so that he saw at last that there was an odd streak of sorrow or resignation in their humor.

They never spoke of Alandria, the smaller twin planet with its high desert mountains and stern inhabitants. And they never seemed aware that the Alandrians considered themselves enemies to Melosandra, and called its way

of life dissolute and immoral. But the prince found he liked the Melosandran way—innocent and amoral, it seemed to him, kindly and pleasant. The question puzzled him after a time as exactly how to put to words the reasons *why* the Alandrians needed conquest here. But after tossing sleepless one night, and rising to litter the floor with sheets of paper on which he tried to write out convincing arguments, he saw at last that the Melosandrans were children—good children let out to play, without any sense of duty, or position, or sternness such as was considered adult responsibility. Children who needed parents and did not know it. They would be the better for conquest, and the discipline conquest would bring to them. He went back to bed and slept, reassured.

He had joined a group of foreign people as a new friend, and he took from them many friendly insults and liberties which would have meant instant death on his own world. Yet here it did not mean insult, and there seemed to be no humiliations to losing dignity and being laughed at. They seemed to admire honesty instead of pride; he liked their ways and liked them.

At the end of the year he was a Melosandran, without accent, and as at home in the surroundings and ideas of Melosandra as if he had been born to them. And he found that he did not want to go back to Alandria. He packed reluctantly, forcing his hands, feeling as if puppet-strings were pulling him back to the rigid, narrow life of a prince. Rebelliously, he thought of never going back, of vanishing; but such a luxury as the freedom to vanish could not be permitted to the crown prince; he knew it would be futile. Cleve would send detectives to drag him back. There was no escape from being a noble.

On the space-trip back, he cheered himself up with a resolve that someday he would look that pleasant group up

again and drink, talk, play records, and laugh together as before.

CLEVE MET him at the spaceport, looking exactly the same, and greeted him heartily; the prince heard the sound of the familiar Alandrian and answered automatically in Alandrian with a strange shock, as if he had almost forgotten his own language in a year. For a few minutes it seemed to be another person who was answering his Uncle Cleve—the younger self who had never left his own planet; then as the talk continued, and he looked around at the familiar buildings and encircling sky-towering mountains of his country, the strangeness faded and with it all the new desires and rebellions. He was just Cleve's nephew, Prince Elron Degale of Alandria.

After a long talk, Cleve admitted himself pleased with Elron, that he had returned with so much information that would be useful in the conquest of the twin planet.



Elron's father, the king, died two years later, and he was crowned king a week after that.



He was king; he looked out of the wide, curved window at the high rolling hills, the farms, and small handsome factories of his country. "A king is wise, just, and moderate," he said doubtfully. *Was* he wise, just, and moderate? He touched the bell for the official beginning of his day.

The Ambassador from Melosandra entered, asked, "What is your decision?"

King Elron said firmly, "Unless our terms are met within twenty days, we shall declare war."

The excuse was good. Two young Alandrian noble hot-heads, vacationing on Melosandra, had challenged the

well known Melosandran statesman, Helman Holas, to a duel after a private quarrel. Holas had consented to the duel. It had been held privately on two successive days; in the second one the statesman had been killed. It was stressed in the newspaper-reports that Helman Holas had been rusty at swordsmanship and in ill health, and his physician had recently advised him that he was overworking and needed more rest. In this light they considered the duel little better than murder. In a wave of indignation Melosandra had indicted all parties to the duel: the doctor; the two seconds; and the two young Alandrian duellists, and sentenced them to personality-erasure.

Alandria was outraged at this; her ambassador on the twin planet protested that the duel had been a legitimate duel of honor, and demanded that the young Alandrians be released, with their memories intact. The Melosandran government would not—could not—give any man up from their hospitals after he had been sentenced. No matter how conciliating they wanted to be, they could do nothing now to prevent war.

All of Alandria had been hoping and training for war ever since she had signed a treaty of defeat fifty-five years before, and left Melosandra the victor; but there was no doubt who had won, and Melosandra now held sovereignty over their mutual moon. The moon was valuable for a shipping-base for stellar trade. It was worth little to Alandria, for her trade was small; but to hold it, and have the Melosandran traders request their licenses from the Alandrian capitol, would symbolize much in conquest and pride. It would be a glorious war.

It would not be a glorious war from the Melosandran point of view. From what he had learned from his friends there, Elron saw that they would simply be surprised to find themselves in battle, with all the business of their

lives interrupted for the need of defending themselves. They would not understand the reasons for the invasion; but that would be due to their childishness.

King Elron tried to settle down to the reading of acts of parliament that had to be signed, but a headache came and got between him and the work—a dull persistent ache behind his eyes. He called the staff physician; a king must be kept fit.

**C**HIEF STAFF PHYSICIAN Corlaya was a foreigner—an immigrant Solarian who still retained a slight Solarian accent—but she was better-trained and more capable than any doctor that could be found on the twin planets, and he trusted her ability.

When she finished the examination she said, "Anything bothering you?"

He hesitated a moment, making the possible connection between politics and a headache, and mastered his reluctance to confide to someone not directly concerned. "Perhaps; I've just issued an ultimatum to Melosandra."

The doctor nodded, her fingers on his pulse. "Your pulse went up when you said that; it could be mental conflict. Any conscious indecision?"

"No."

"You spent some time in Melosandra once, I understand."

"Yes."

"You made friends there?"

How cool the doctor's fingers were on his wrist! "Yes," he said, smiling slightly, and for an instant he was in the midst of a remembered crowd coming laughing from a theatre...

He returned reluctantly to what she was saying.

"There is a faint possibility of some physical ill; but the most likely is that there is a sub-personality trying to protest your decision with pain—a secondary personality-pattern and value-set learned on your trip, in opposition to your dominant personality

and ideals." She smiled reassuringly. "Everyone has troubles with ambivalence sometimes; all you can do is ignore it. Take these euphorics." She handed him a small bottle of white pills. "When you get a headache, if it's psychological, they will get rid of it in a hurry; if they don't, we'll have to give you a physical check-up."

He went back to his office to give a second audience to the Melosandran Ambassador.

The ambassador's face was pale and rock-hard. "I am authorized to present a settlement...it was certain terms."

King Elron inclined his head. "We are willing to consider anything commensurate with honor." He did not expect that the proposal would be a concession; Melosandra could not make any concession breathing its own system of justice.

"The recent negotiation has brought to the attention of Melosandran government that the people of Alandria are ill-disposed towards them; therefore there is always danger of war coming on minor pretexts." He recognized the king's growing anger with a nod. "I speak bluntly, and I apologize to your lordship. We are aware that a point of honor is far from being a minor matter from the Alandrian point of view; and we have also become aware that the Alandrian view of honor differs from ours. This difference of view is the basic source of our friction; therefore we demand, as the condition of peace, that the top ten percent of Alandrian students each year be educated in Melosandran schools, on scholarships we will provide."

**T**HE TERMS were intolerable. Their intention, obviously, was to permeate the best Alandrian students with Melosandran culture, so

that the Alandrian ideals of life would be blurred and changed towards the good-natured, unfighting Melosandran way. It was the equivalent of giving up all ideals and aspirations as a unique people and a dedicated fighting-machine, and becoming instead, just a good-natured mass of individual human beings. It was the equivalent of cultural suicide.

King Elron cleared his throat. "As representative for my people, to whom they have given all decisions, I declare that it is impossible for Alandria to accept the second provision of this offer."

The ambassador said, his face slightly whiter, "I have been authorized to say that in the event of war there will be no peace; Melosandra will not cease to fight until the provision for the exchange of students is accepted, and written into your national constitution."

"That will never be!"

The Solarian Ambassador was next. He was an old man, thin and dried-up and light, and he spoke in a way that was neither formal nor informal—merely *un*formal, as if he were exchanging telegrams rather than face to face talk.

"As you know—" he began immediately upon accepting a chair and crossing his legs comfortably. "The powers that we of Sol wield over wards and members of the confederacy is severely limited by our own constitution, as well as by the provisions of our treaties with the other members. Beyond forbidding certain classifications of weapons, and taking upon ourselves the policing that enforces that ban, we disclaim any policy of interference in local wars and revolutions."

He paused, his clear old eyes scanning, inspecting the king's face to make sure he had understood; then,

satisfied, he went on. "However, according to our best sociological diagnosis, it is never healthful for a society at this stage in industrialization to indulge in a war; for the civilization of Melosandra, it would be disastrous." He paused again, looking for understanding in the king's face. "Melosandra would be corrupted by the confusion and accept demoralization as a new norm in a *disgust* against Alandrian asceticism."

The king said simply: "It is a matter of honor; Alandria was defeated fifty years ago, and must redem herself."

The ambassador blinked several times, as if about to speak and restraining his words. "I can't refute that, of course," he smiled at last.

The king smiled back, liking the dry old man, but wondering what he had meant.

The Solarian Ambassador added, "But you understand that we of Sol, representing the controlling vote in the Confederacy, are totally against war in this case. We do not enforce our recommendations—we merely announce them publicly—but they are usually followed."

Mild as the statement was, it sounded like a concealed threat. The king stiffened. "We subscribe to all the constitutional provisions of the Confederacy; any attempt to enforce additional rules we will resist to our last living man."

"I believe you," the ambassador said. "The Solarian Confederacy would be stupid to shed blood to enforce a recommendation against bloodshed, would it not?"

It was an incomprehensible statement. Surely Sol could not allow its opinions and desires to be flouted publicly, without losing honor. The pride of their people—but had they any pride? Perhaps they were not gentlemen, and the ambassador meant no more than he said; the king lost some of his respect for the ambassador.

"The Solarian Confederacy is sending a Board of Arbitration to study the problem and make further recommendations," the ambassador said blandly. "This implies no pressure on Alandria to accept such recommendations; I hope your Majesty understands that."

Again it sounded like a concealed threat. The ambassador was so extremely bland and friendly, like a victor.

THE KING puzzled over the ambassador's last remark after he had gone, and his headache came back. He tried one of the pills; after it took effect he felt bappy and relieved. The sun shone more brightly, and he didn't mind the fact that his head now felt dizzy, but it still ached.

He began to wonder if he were sick.

The chief staff physician gave him a check-up the next day. It only took a half hour, but it seemed a long process, as he was moved from one odd looking machine to another and strapped in, or enclosed, for an instant while they buzzed or whirred or hummed and gave out an incomprehensible record of their findings on tape and photographs.

Corlaya finally sat down behind her desk and looked at all the mechanical reports, spreading them on the desk top in a row as one would an unsatisfactory dummy hand of cards. "You have a small tumor on the surface of the left hemisphere of your brain; the tumor will have to be removed."

"Should I resign?" he asked, bolding himself upright and unyielding against a desire to slump and sit down to support his head in his hands.

"No; you won't die or be incapacitated, my Lord. There will be no symptom but the headache or dizziness; we can arrange an operation quietly."

"As soon as possible, please." The headache, when it came, made it almost impossible to concentrate on what

he was saying or doing. He could not go on indefinitely pretending he felt all right.

She said crisply. "You will be able to return to work three days after the operation. We will inform the planet that you had a fall and a broken vertebrae, which required three days total immobility. We will arrange the operation for Sunday—for the surgeon we need is a Solarian practicing in Melosandra—and he will have to give the appearance of arranging himself a short vacation, without hastily canceling prior appointments. Will that be satisfactory, my Lord?"

The operation would come ten days before the war began; he would be fit and ready to coordinate his generals in three days more—seven days to spare before war. "Fine. Is there any possibility of failure in the operation?"

"One in fifty or a hundred, no more than that."

He smiled. "Then you and the other doctor will be risking yourselves in this operation; for if it fails Alandria would suspect you of conspiracy. I thank you for being willing to take the risk."

The chief physician dismissed that possibility with a gesture of a small brown hand. "We always take such risks; it is a reasonably safe operation, although I would recommend that you leave instructions for a successor. Something can go wrong even in the safest operation."

He found himself watching the motions of her red lips instead of listening, and pulled his gaze away quickly to the impersonal examination-room with its aseptic grey and white colors, and squat streamlined machines, and levers and buttons that were both intimidating and reassuring in their impression of power.

DURING THE next ten days, Elron shifted his brother to a more responsible position, and invited him to

stay with him while he looked for a new place to live. In the evenings, he talked over problems of state with him casually—on the excuse that there was a remote chance of his being killed during the coming war. Several times, when he was discussing the conquest of Melosandra—using the names of Melosandran cities that had grown so familiar to him during his half-forgotten year there—the pain in his head intensified from a dull ache to a point where he had to use all his self-control to keep from faltering. But he had been forwarned against this and was ready, the doctor had warned him that the tumor was located somewhere in the speech-centers between the early-learning section, where was located the integration of thought in his own language, and the later learning of Melosandran that linked all his memories of his year on the twin planet. He expected it, so his control was good; he did not think that his brother noticed anything.

The night before the operation he wrote a letter to his brother explaining the circumstances of the operation and giving careful analysis of the situation and the respective positions of Melosandra and Alandria in the coming war—with the behavior and degree of resistance that should be expected from the Melosandrans. He stayed up most of the night writing it and, when he finished, the pain in his head was throbbing so that he could barely sign his name. He read it over with a strange sense of fate.

This was going to be more than just a minor operation, he was quite sure.

When he went under the anesthetic he was thinking of death.



He awoke quite rested and happy. Above him was a pleasant smooth expanse of pale grey, with an oval of reflected sunlight glowing on it. He turned his head. The light was being

reflected from the shiny surface of a large square object that sat beneath a square opening to the outside sunshine and sky. He knew he knew the names for these things, but it didn't seem important to try to think—

Beside the bed, looking at him attentively, stood a luciously pretty woman in a flame-orange business suit. He smiled. She smiled. He whistled appreciatively and made a grab at her—She laughed and moved out of reach.

"Know any words?" she asked. The words vanished as soon as she said them, leaving no echo in the ears and no memory of them; but he remembered what she meant and the musical low voice, even if he couldn't remember what she had said.

He shrugged and reached up to feel his head. There was a section that was covered with some smooth, artificial material with a bulge in the center. It was about the size and shape of a fried egg; he laughed at that and opened his mouth to tell it—and then made the interesting discovery that he could not talk. Words were not only hard to find, they eluded him entirely. He laughed again and pointed to his open mouth.

"No words," she nodded, dropping two white pills in a container of water that stood by his bedside. "Here, sit up and drink this."

He drank the water, wincing humourously at the taste, and handed her back the empty container, noticing the way the light sparkled in its pure transparency. And noticing also the way light glowed softly in her brown-gold hair and in the clear depths of her blue eyes.

MEMORY sharpened as he stared at her, and the long moment of now no longer seemed insulated from all past and future, but was crowded and jostled by memory, like voices in the next room adding an undercurrent of sound. But they were memories of his escape to Melosandra, and

the pleasant times; and it did not make him feel less peaceful.

"Hi, babe," he said softly in Melosandran. "How long have I been blind?"

"All your life," she said softly in the same tongue. "What do you see?"

He looked around at the sunlight streaming in the window, the shadow cast by the table and the light reflected and diffused from its shiny top in sparkles and spatters of brilliance around the silver-grey walls. Warm air came in the window with a scent of earth and green growing grass.

The woman stood beside his bed, small and lithe and trim; alert and intelligent with an expression that could be something better than mere friendship. He had known her a long time, and yet this was the first time he had seen her.

"Chief Staff Physician Corlaya," he said hesitatingly, the Alandrian words sounded clumsy and strange, with no connection to the smiling person who looked at him. He relapsed into Melosandran. "I am seeing things—things and people—instead of words—and I like it!"

"Get up, please," she said smiling. "Here's your shirt."

He pushed back the light cover and swung his feet down to the floor, discovering that the "bed" was the movable stretcher table, and he could see the examination room out the door. He was still wearing his trousers as he had been on the table when he went under the hypnotic long ago. It must be still the same day, then, merely a few hours later. He bent and slipped his feet into his sandals. His memory of the days before the operation seemed a lifetime away in some dim previous incarnation. Colors and sounds were bright and vivid now, where they had been dim and remote before. He accepted the green iridescent uniform shirt with the military orange tabs on the shoulders. The vividness of seeing and hearing and feeling continued,

although he expected it to fade. And he was thinking in Melosandran. That puzzled him.

"I like it," he repeated, finally buckling his sword around him. "What is it? When does it stop? When do I wake up?" He stepped into the examination room and saw it as if he had never seen it before. She followed, and her presence was disturbing, like being too near to a magnet. He realized he had spoken in Melosandran again, automatically.

"It might not stop; it might last," she said, looking up at him with intense remote interest suddenly showing in her eyes. "In a rigid hierarchical culture, the culture-ideals and regulations are unstated and unconscious, and contained in conditioned reflexes to the words in the language. The surgeon did his best to conserve as much tissue as possible, but he had to take out about a four inch circle somewhere in the language section. He must have taken out Alandrian, and your inhibitions with it. Come over to the encephalograph here and we'll—"

"I don't like that snakelike, scientific glitter in your eyes," he drawled, looking down at her with one eyebrow lifted. "If you're going to try to cure me, bring into consideration that I don't want to be cured just yet. Let's do the town first."

She chuckled and stepped closer. "If you were cured you'd be shocked at what you just said."

"All the more reason I should never be cured," he said softly and soberly, looking down into her upturned face. "And if you get any closer, I won't answer for the consequences."

She stepped back, openly half laughing. "Kings don't talk like that."

"I do, and I am." He smiled grimly. "You can't frighten me with word-mottos any more; let's go."

**S**HE HELD the doorway, barring it with outspread arms, and whispered in the harsher Alandrian tongue,

"But what of Propriety, Rectitude, Duty, Honor, Nobility, your dedication to Kingly Office, the Preparations for the Glorious War?" Her eyes were dancing with glee.

He paused, visualizing his people—a whole planet of good, lean, fit, hand-trained people preparing to kill and die for something which had no existence; prepared to slaughter and suffer for a mere word which he even had trouble remembering. What had she said... what was it? Oh, yes, *hiner*... no, that wasn't it— *Honor* a word which was something like the good Melosandran word *honesty*, but had no such good solid meaning.

"Ptah!" he exploded suddenly, half laughing. "The Glorious War! I'll fix that!" She stood out of the way as he strode through to her office and sat down at her desk, taking out his pen.

Pen poised, he hesitated, and turned to her. "I don't want to write in broken Alandrian with a Melosandran accent," he said appealing to the doctor. "It would look fishy."

"Write left-handed," she said. "That will bring the right side of your brain into dominance. We only operated on the left half that controls the right hand, and dominates your very right-handed thinking. The opposite weak half wasn't touched; it's probably a good Alandrian patriot still."

He shifted his pen and began to write clumsily with his left hand. As he wrote, the Alandrian words came back, bearing sorrow, and dignity; pride and pomp; and with them an understanding of how he could bring his people the sacrifice and honor they wanted, without war.

She looked over his shoulder as he wrote.

The people would congregate to hear the speech by the king, standing silently in all the public squares, listening as the national anthem was played quietly and then, after silence,

hearing the even voice of the king from t-v speakers.

*"There will be no war.*

*"We will submit ourself to the Melosandran provisions of peace.*

*"We will welcome a Solarian committee of adjustment and accept all of their recommendations; and there will never again be war with Melosandra.*

*"You are my people; you have sworn fealty to me and put the power of decision in my hands. But in this decision, there is not one man on this whole globe who would agree; I have no power against you to make you do my bidding.*

*"You may do as you choose."*

He reread it and saw it was what he had wanted. To the people of Alandria, the suggestions of the commission would be dishonor and disgrace; but because he had chosen it and challenged them to break their allegiance to him, they would accept the loss in silence—and by the unreasoning, voluntary sacrifice would prove themselves loyal as no sacrifice of blood in war could have proven it. They would gain from the pride of their submission to his disgrace; they would think that he had betrayed them or gone bad, but they would obey.

And their contempt and loathing for their fallen king would be unending.

"You'll resign, of course," said the doctor, reading over his shoulder.

"Of course," he said, signing his name to it, realizing that with the signature, he changed the future history of the twin planets, and thinking. And the thought suddenly struck him that the Solarian ambassador would be pleased. And he remembered that his headache began getting worse *after* he had taken pills from Corlaya—who *was* a Solarian.

She kissed the back of his neck, and he swung around and gripped her arms. "You witch!" he said, shaking her gently. "Now I know why Sam-

son was given a haircut. We'll go away and live in Melosandra, or on a Sol planet, or wherever you please; but if I ever start getting a headache after you've given me some mysterious pills—" He stopped for breath, looking into twinkling blue eyes. She was saying nothing smugly with a very feminine self-satisfied smile curving her lips.

He raised his head and addressed one last appeal to the rigid formal

walls of the medical office in the upright formal unbending palace of the King of Alandria.

"Does a king ever embrace and kiss his chief staff physician?"

"No," voices within him answered silently, as he bent forward towards the red lips. "No," they screamed with all the voices of his ancestry. But he couldn't hear them; he didn't talk their language any more.



## READIN' and WRITHIN' (Book Reviews)

FLATLAND, by A. Square (Edwin A. Abbott). Dover Publ., New York, 1952. 109 pp. \$1.00 in paper, \$2.25 in cloth.

There have been many old science-fiction "classics" reprinted in recent years, but I doubt that I'll provoke much argument by remarking that most of them are rather dull going. I don't know of any such book as old as 70 years which can be counted upon to hold the modern science-fiction reader's attention from the first page to the last.

Except "Flatland." The originally-anonymous author was a theologian and Shakespeare scholar with a number of "serious" writings to his credit. His claim to fame now rests, however, solely on "Flatland", the first popular account of a four-dimensional world, written 20 years before Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity.

If that description makes the book sound formidable, it's unjust. "Flatland" is a sheer delight from beginning to end. Dover's own publicity for the book compares Abbott to Lewis Carroll, and the evidence for such a comparison is persuasive.

The Flatland of the book's title is a land of two dimensions, or in other words, a plane, like a tabletop. It is populated by triangular tradesmen; square businessmen and lawyers; pentagonal physicians and other professionals; and circular priests. The women of Flatland are straight lines, with a mouth at one end and a sting at the other—a brainless but dangerous lot. The rules and regulations of Flatland, as well as its customs and traditions, may strike you as more than usually goofy, but after a while you'll discover that, like Abbott's two-sided women, they carry stings in their tails.

The test of a satirical fantasy such as "Flatland"—or, for that matter, "Gulliver's Travels"—is how well its observations on human (or geometrical) behavior hold up under the passage of time. Abbott's romance passes this test with a mark of A-plus. Remarks on Flatland society which

apply equally well to our own—not 70 years ago, but right now—crop up on nearly every page. In describing the government of Flatland, for instance, the square narrator remarks piously on p. 30: "...the toleration of Irregularity is incompatible with the safety of the state." That sentiment could safely be put into the mouths of such policy-makers of our time as Sens. McCarthy and McCarran. Or take this one, on p. 45: "It is the merit of the Circles that they have effectively suppressed those ancient heresies which led men to waste energy and sympathy in the vain belief that conduct depends upon will, effort, training, encouragement, praise, or anything else but Configuration." Our local Circles haven't gotten quite that far yet, but if the statement nevertheless sounds familiar to you, rest assured that it's no accident. The Rev. Abbott knew his human nature bitterly well.

Dover notes that the book "has had a marked impact upon scientific education, not a few of today's scientists having received their first impetus from a boyhood reading of "Flatland". I can add that at least one science-fiction writer got one of his first shoves from the same source; I was lucky enough to fall upon a decrepit copy of an early edition in my high-school library. I'm pleased to see the book back in print—and I envy those of you who may be encountering it for the first time.

If you've ever felt a little puzzled by the descriptions of the Fourth Dimension with which science-fiction abounds, it's possible that you haven't yet quite grasped what a strange thing the Third Dimension is. If so, try "Flatland". It's a wise and funny fantasy, and among its many attractions are the Rev. Abbott's own illustrations, of which there are a round dozen.

The author may have been a square, but "Flatland" is real gone.

—James Blish

[Turn To Page 84]

# PLEASE TO REMEMBER

by Mack Reynolds

(illustrated by Milton Luros)

Obviously, Uncle Manfred was off his rocker—imagine a person remembering what he was going to do years and years in the future!



IT WAS JIMMY, the whining brat, who started it off. Uncle Manfred had been quiet all evening, showing no signs at all of his—well, his peculiarity; and the rest of the family had been figuratively holding

its breath in hope.

Jimmy must have read it in a comic book, or heard it on TV or something; he wasn't smart enough to have thought it up by himself.

He wrinkled his nose in disgust, pushed his potatoes—which had been cooked with their skins on—to the side of his plate and whined, "I hate potato skins, and I'm glad I hate 'em, because if I liked 'em I'd eat 'em—and I hate 'em."

Bertha screwed her plump face into what was meant to be a mildly reproving frown and said, "Please, dear, you have better manners than that." Which was a gross exaggeration.

Mike Wheaton, the guest, winked at Jimmy and said seriously, "I remember once when we were in Korea. All our fresh vegetables ran out and for a spell of nearly four months the nearest thing we had to fresh vegetables was the skin on our potatoes. We grew real fond of them."



Uncle Manfred was at it again.

Jimmy sneered, "You're kiddin'."

Mike shook his head seriously. "I mean it. You see, the vitamins and minerals in a potato are practically all in the skins; when you can't get your vitamins any other way then you..."

Uncle Manfred said thoughtfully, "I remember once on the Mars-Callisto run when we didn't have any Terran food but dried chili-peppers for nigh onto a year. We'd crashed on Gany-mede and they took that long to rescue us."

There was a pregnant silence.

Finally Bertha cleared her throat and said hopefully, "There's peach cobbler for dessert."

It didn't work. Mike turned to Uncle Manfred and said, "The *what* run?"

Uncle Manfred took his time. He mashed his potato, poured on some gravy, stirred the two up until they were a satisfactorily homogeneous mess, then repeated, "The Mars-Calisto run. I was a jetman." He added, reminiscently, "It was a hell of a job."

Jimmy, whose recently-acquired thirteenth year had put him among the ranks of those who have discovered that their elders aren't necessarily omnipotent, sneered, "I'll bet."

Bertha kicked him under the table, which was a mistake.

He yelped, then whined, "Aw maw, whatza difference? This new fella of Veronica's is gonna find out the old jerk is missin' half his marbles anyway. Whatza difference, huh? Whatcha wanta kick me for?"

Veronica maneuvered Mike Wheaton out of the dining room as quickly as possible and into the parlor, while Bertha went to work, as prearranged, at attempting to get Uncle Manfred to bed.

"I don't want to go to bed," he said irritably, "I'd like to talk to that young man. Most sensible youngster I've seen in some time. What war was he talking about, the scrap with Calisto?"

Bertha drew up her five feet two of plumpness and her face began to go scarlet with rage. She snapped, "Of course not, you stupid old fool. He's talking about Korea; Michael Wheaton's a veteran." She added, completely irrelevantly, "Besides that, he's Joseph Wheaton's son and will undoubtedly inherit the Wheaton Chemical Works. I'd think that with such an eligible young man, you'd watch the nonsense you..."

Uncle Manfred wasn't listening. "Korea," he said, in surprise. "Doesn't look old enough to have been in that." He shook his head. "Wonderful what

cosmetic-surgery and those immortamines'll do these days." He scowled worriedly. "Or have I got my dates mixed up again? What year is this, anyway, Bertha?"

The impossible fool! She just wished there was some way of... of knocking him over the head or something. He ruined everything, just *everything*; her bridge club, her social acquaintances—she *knew* she was the talk of the town. A psychopathic case in her home. And poor Veronica, how would the girl *ever* be able to hook... uh, that is, make a suitable match, with a notoriously crazy uncle to scare away the young men.

Finally she was able to wangle him up to his room.

**B**ACK IN the parlor, Mike Wheaton was saying, "He wasn't kidding, was he?"

Veronica's usually washed out eyes began to flare, but she controlled herself. After all, she wasn't getting any younger and if she was ever going to get a husband and escape from this madhouse. Well—

She forced a smile, remembering to keep her lips down over her overly prominent teeth, and said in her shrill voice, "Oh, let's not talk about Uncle Manfred. Tell me more about your thesis; about the moddlecules and everything."

"Molecules," he corrected absently.

She clenched her teeth together and could feel her face going white. It was no use now. It would be better to tell the whole thing. "He was working, last year, at Los Alamos," she blurted, almost nastily. "There was an explosion or something—you know, you can never get the *details* of these things—and everybody else on Uncle Manfred's project was killed. He was in the er...hospital for months but finally they released him and now he lives with us."

Veronica stopped, as though that explained everything.

Mike frowned. "But what's the matter with him?"

Lord! How she hated this subject. Everybody—but everybody!—learned about it sooner or later.

"He thinks he remembers living in the year 2050," she snapped.

"I beg your pardon?"

She repeated slowly, irritatedly, "He thinks he lived in the year 2050; that he was a member of the crew of a spaceship, and that he traveled between the stars. He's always talking about the cities of that time and the other planets and space and the other things he 'remembers' having seen."

Uncle Manfred had come back down from his room and entered the parlor unheard. He said, mildly, "What a foolish thing to say, Veronica. I think no such thing."

She came hurriedly to her feet and spun around to face him. "You... you mean you've recovered," she shrieked. "You don't..."

He lit his pipe carefully. "I don't remember *having* done those things; I remember *going* to do them. After all, my dear, that's a hundred years in the future, and hasn't happened yet."

**THEY HELD** a tearful family conference afterwards. That is, it was tearful as far as Veronica and her mother were concerned. Uncle Manfred was more bewildered than anything else, and Jimmy, draped teenage-wise in a chair, stayed on the sidelines drinking it in with satisfaction.

"But, how can you?" Bertha wailed. "My own brother, making me the laughing stock of the town." Her various chins quivered.

Uncle Manfred puffed on his pipe and said mildly, "What's the matter now, Bertha?"

"That nice young man, that Michael Wheaton, he'll never want to see Veronica again." Her voice rose as she reached the end of the sentence. Had she only known it, young Wheaton was to remark later that old Uncle

Manfred was the most likeable member of the family.

Veronica was in a screaming mood too, but she restrained herself. "Uncle," she said carefully, "don't you realize what people think when you start talking about spaceships and Mars and those other fantastic things? This is the year 1953—how could you possibly remember things that haven't happened yet?" Her voice began to go shrill, too. "And never will!"

Jimmy sneered, "He's missing his marbles," and earned a glare from his mother.

"I've gone through this before," Uncle Manfred sighed, "but I'll do it once more."

He took his pipe from his mouth and pointed the stem at his sister. "Bertha, most people have memories going only one way, into the past; mine—I don't know how or why—goes both ways, since my accident. I admit that sometimes it's confusing to me, but I'm quite lucid. I remember things that I will do as a young jetman in the space service a hundred years from now; I can..."

Bertha interrupted impatiently, "But don't you see how impossible that is?" she snapped, her face almost as red as the henna in her hair. "Even if you could 'remember' both ways, as you put it, how could you possibly remember being a young man a hundred years from now? You're fifty-five! A hundred years will see you dead and forgotten like all the rest of us."

He shook his head patiently. "You don't understand, Bertha. You see, the immortamines weren't discovered until 1960. When I say a 'young jetman', it might be somewhat misleading; actually, of course, I just *looked* young." He added reminiscently, "Cosmetic surgery and the immortamines sure are going to make some big changes in the world. As a matter of fact, it was their discovery that drove man to the conquest of the other planets."

The population increase after death was conquered was such that we *had* to find new worlds."

Jimmy shook his head. "Sometimes the old jerk gets me to thinking maybe *P'm* batty. First he says it's going to happen, then he says it has happened."

Uncle Manfred looked at him with mild reproof. "It amounts to the same thing, just about."

Bertha's lips were tight with peevishness. "Please, I refuse to argue further with you about this, Manfred; but I think it impossible of you not to do what the doctor has suggested. It would solve everything."

**HIS** EYEBROWS went up. "You mean for me to go to the sanitarium?" The oldster squirmed uncomfortably in his chair.

Her little eyes snapped. "Only for a year or so, perhaps."

He snorted. "Once they get me in there again, I'd never get out. They don't understand any more than you do." He knocked the ashes out of his pipe reflectively. "I remember once on the old *Venusian Princess*—what a rusty tub that was!—we had a psychotechnician that had the whole ship on its ear. By the time we reached Luna, he had more than two thirds of the crew confined under guard to quarters; claimed they all had space cafard."

Jimmy asked, "So what happened? Sometimes you're better than TV." His ferret-like face held its petulant sneer.

Uncle Manfred said mildly, "When we got to Luna, it was found that the psychotechnician was the only mentally-upset case on board. It just goes to show—half the time the docs don't know what they're talking about."

Bertha glowered at Jimmy. "Please," she snapped, "don't encourage your uncle, James."

"Whatza difference?" he whined. "He's around the corner, ain't he? He don't know the difference."

Veronica stopped her sobbing and said, desperation in her shrill voice, "Uncle Manfred, if we could prove you're wrong; that these insane stories you 'remember' aren't true, would you go willingly to the sanitarium and let the specialists try and cure you?"

He clicked the stem of his pipe on his teeth reflectively. Finally he sighed, "All right, Veronica; it's a deal. If you can prove, *to my satisfaction*, that I'm er... crazy, I'll go willingly."

The girl's eyes gleamed triumphantly. "Now don't forget!"

Uncle Manfred smiled ruefully. "You don't have to worry about my forgetting, my dear. My trouble is *remembering too much*, not too little."

**A**NOTHER family conference was held later that night, but this time between daughter and mother alone and in the secrecy of Veronica's room."

The girl explained carefully. "Don't you see? If we can get him to go on his own, we won't have criticism from our friends. After all, we could have him *sent*, but what would everyone say? Uncle Manfred is a hero, of sorts. We don't know just what happened at Los Alamos, but the government *did* decorate him; you can't just send a hero to an institution."

"But that's not all of it," her mother said petulantly. "If he goes to the institution, we'll probably be able to get his pension to keep the family going, but you know how little that is; we're also dependent upon his other income." She quivered heavily in exasperation. "If only we knew its source—just where he secures the rest of the money that he gives us; obviously, he doesn't work."

For a brief moment a qualm touched Veronica. "In a way, we sound coldblooded, mother. After all, it's Uncle Manfred's money that supports us. And here we are..."

Her mother interrupted impatiently.

"Please, darling; I think I'm better qualified than you to discuss my own brother's welfare. He'll be happier in a sanitarium where he can...well, where he'll be able to be with others like himself.

"Besides, I must think of you children. Young people today must have all the advantages if they are to keep up. Since your father's uh...disappearance, life has been a great burden to me, Veronica, a great burden. Now the problem, obviously, is to get your uncle to go willingly to the sanitarium, assigning, during his stay there, not only his pension but this other income of his—wherever it comes from.

"Of course, while your Uncle Manfred is in the institution we shall pray every night for his recovery."

"Of course," agreed Veronica earnestly.

Jimmy stuck his ferret-like head in the door. "You still talkin' about Uncle Manfred?" he whined. "He's screwy; everybody says so."

They glared him into silence.



Everything went quietly the next morning at breakfast, except for a mild protest from Uncle Manfred that the oatmeal hadn't been neo-vitaminized.

Veronica pounced on the statement. "There," she shrieked, "don't you see, Uncle? There is no such thing as neo-vitaminized. Doesn't that show that you're...well, unbalanced?"

His eyebrows went up in surprise. "There isn't?" He wrinkled his forehead. "Guess you're right at that; the process wasn't discovered until 1955. I always was bad at dates."

Bertha's chins trembled in exasperation.

Jimmy sneered, "The old jerk was tellin' me this morning that we wasn't going to have to brush our teeth after 1963. They'd just stick stuff in

the drinkin' water that'd keep your teeth clean."

His mother scolded him absently and half-heartedly. "Please, dear, you mustn't talk that way; you might hurt your uncle's feelings."

"Not at all," Uncle Manfred said mildly.

But the campaign to put Uncle Manfred into a sanitarium where he'd be "happier with people like himself" didn't progress any too well during the next week. The theory was to convince the old boy that he was wrong but it didn't work out any too well.

It was something like an argument between a Baptist and an atheist. Both *knew* they were correct, but neither's argument admitted of satisfactory proof to the other. Bertha and Veronica couldn't prove that Uncle Manfred hadn't memories of the future; but, on the other hand, he couldn't convince them that he had.

**T**HE CLIMAX came as a result of an accident, since it was only an accident that Veronica stumbled upon the magazine in Jimmy's room. She'd called him twice in regard to mowing the lawn and finally came seeking the brat out.

He should have been in his room, but he didn't seem to be; the bed was mussed, as though someone had been sprawled upon it, but there was no sign of Jimmy. A magazine lay on the bedspread.

Veronica sighed with disgust. "*Dumfounding Stories*, indeed! No wonder he brings home such report cards," she shrieked.

That brought indignant response. "What'd'ya mean?" Jimmy whined, sticking his head out of the closet. "That mag is plenty educational."

She whirled, and he suddenly remembered that he'd just revealed himself. "Aw cripes," he mumbled, "I don't wanta do the grass. Why don't you get the old jerk to do it? He wouldn't know the difference."

Veronica took up the magazine and shuddered at the cover, but then her eyes narrowed. "The Mars-Callisto Run", by Jets Larsen." Her forehead wrinkled. "That sounds familiar, somehow."

"It's a swell mag," Jimmy was whining. "I got to readin' it after listenin' to all that hokey that Uncle Manfred gives out with."

Her eyes went wide. "Uncle Manfred!"

She flipped hurriedly through the pages, triumphantly opened to the story whose title had puzzled her, and let her eyes run through it rapidly.

"Jimmy," she shrilled, "go get your uncle and tell him that mother and I want to see him in the parlor."

Something in her voice called for obedience. He scooted out of the room, and she followed more slowly, her forehead still wrinkled with thought, but her eyes beaming satisfaction.

Uncle Manfred came in cheerfully, his foul briar making its presence known throughout the room in seconds. Both Bertha and Veronica sat primly, their hands in their laps, satisfaction oozing from them. The magazine lay face down on a coffee table.

"You wanted to talk to me?" he said easily.

Veronica leaned forward triumphantly. "Uncle Manfred, you remember the bargain we made, don't you? That you would agree to go to the sanitarium if we could prove your... well, your memories of the future aren't memories at all."

"I remember," he agreed, making himself comfortable in a chair, "but, of course, the bargain isn't exactly fair on my side."

"What do you mean," Bertha snapped, her chins quivering in agitation. "You promised..."

He waved his pipe stem at her negatively. "I'm willing to stick to it, but, you see, I know I'll never go to the sanitarium again."

"Please," she snapped, "why?"

He shrugged and put his pipe back in his mouth. "Because I can't remember doing it."

"Like a fruitcake," Jimmy sneered. "They don't come any nuttier."

VERONICA took a deep breath. "But you'll admit, Uncle Manfred, that if I can prove these memories of yours aren't memories of all, you should go to the sanitarium?"

He nodded agreeably.

She took up the magazine. "Uncle, I don't know why you've been reading these awful things, but, obviously, this is where you've been getting your impressions."

She turned to "The Mars-Callisto Run". "Now here's a story about a young jetman of the future whose ship crashes on Ganymede, and for nearly a year the only earth food they have is chili-peppers. *This is exactly the same nonsense you told Michael Wheaton the other night.*"

Uncle Manfred looked embarrassed. "What's your point, Veronica?"

She shrilled excitedly, "Can't you see? The experience didn't happen at all. It's not a memory or your future; it's a story by" —she glanced quickly down at the magazine again— "by Jets Larsen, and you must have read it somewhere."

He took his pipe from his mouth and ran a hand through his hair in irritation.

Bertha jumped into the breach, her chins quivering in excitement. "There's the proof, Manfred. Now will you do what we say?"

He got to his feet in disgust. "Proof, nonsense," he snorted. "I'm Jets Larsen. Just for something to do, I occasionally write up one of my experiences and sell the story to a science-fiction magazine. If you'll look in the back of the magazine at the fan letters, you'll find that I'm one of the most popular authors in the field. Why not? My stories all sound authentic, because they *are* authentic."

Veronica slumped back into her chair, reduced to shocked silence. Bertha said, "Then this proves nothing at all Manfred, nothing; I still say it's all your imagination, and if you really loved—"

"Cripes," Jimmy sneered, "I wouldn'ta thought the old crackpot was up to it."

"Please," James, Bertha reproved half heartedly, "You mustn't talk like that to your dear uncle. Don't you realize that he might possibly resent it?"

Uncle Manfred took the pipe from his mouth and smiled at the two of them. "Don't bother, Bertha; you'd be surprised how little I mind. In fact, the frogs in my bed, the cut up rubber in my tobacco, the thumb-tacks in my shoes, and even the occasional hotfoot, don't irritate me especially."

He returned the briar to its place between his teeth and puffed contentedly. "Ever since your husband ran off and left you—by the way, I never thought he had it in him—and I came to take care of you, I knew what it would be like. But, I thought it was more or less my duty; and, as I said, it doesn't irritate me especially."

"You see, a person who can remember the future as well as the past, has a considerable advantage; he can contemplate the fate of those around him."

Uncle Manfred smiled almost fondly at Jimmy. "You little will-be jail-bird, you."

His smile turned forgivingly on his sister. "And stop worrying about your social position, Bertha; you'll be able to forget about it after Jimmy is sent up as a juvenile delinquent and after Veronica gets desperate and marries that fruit-peddler."

The three of them stared at him, speechless and unblinking.

"By the way," he said, "the whole routine around here seems upset since you've been trying to prove my insanity, and I notice that the mystery of my five hundred a month also agitates you. Possibly this will clear things up."

He took an envelope from an inner pocket and tossed it to Bertha's lap, then strolled leisurely from the room.

"He's crazy," Veronica sobbed, "he's crazy, mother."

"Brother, his roof really leaks," Jimmy sneered.

Martha took up the envelope and drew the letter from it, almost fearfully. She read, blinked, then reread.

"Well, what is it, mother?" Veronica shrilled, "More of his insanity?"

Martha said, "It's from the President of the New York Stock exchange. It says, '*Dear Sir: Please find enclosed your monthly five hundred dollars, which we pay you, as agreed in return for your abstaining from stock-market speculation. In view of your abilities, which could easily disrupt the entire financial system, let us again thank you for being so moderate in your demands.*'"



**Another Unusual Tale**  
**by Mack Reynolds**  
**ADVICE FROM**  
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**SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY**

The things that a precocious kid—with the best, and most constructive of intentions—will do!

# ANYONE HERE SEEN HERBIE GREEN?

by Robert K. Ottum

(illustrated by Paul Orban)

**H**ON. J. EDGAR HOOVER  
Director  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Hoover:

I've told your agents the same story three times now, and still they don't seem to believe me; so I guess I'd better take this thing right to the top. If it goes on like this, some senator will hail me up before a Congressional committee. You're my last hope.

To start with, little Herbie Green might have pulled off the whole deception if he hadn't grown bored with it all, and started a house on fire simply by pointing his finger at it—or put the history teacher into a death-like trance which lasted 33 days. And wherever Herbie Green is now, I'll bet he's paying for making those mistakes.

It's hard not to start in the middle, Mr. Hoover, or where Herbie hijacked the...well, the recipe...but I'll try to get it down in one-two-three order. You see, as principal, I was there from the first day little Herbie showed up at Emerson school, all blond and cherubic, with his transfer-papers pinned to his coat. Most children are accompanied by their parents, but sometimes they start school

alone, and we try to make them feel at home.

Those transfer-papers are right here on my desk now, and show Herbie Green came from Baltimore ready for the sixth grade. Good marks, excellent deportment and all that.

But, Mr. Hoover, I've since checked the Baltimore school system and found out the truth: there was no Herbie Green.

Right from the start, he was different.

He showed an unusual interest in sex. And I'll bet he's paying for that right now, too.

I've thought back and it always comes out the same: the first words I remember Herbie saying to me were not, "Hello, Mr. Pratt," or "I'll study real hard, Mr. Pratt," but instead, "Hey, Pops, let me borrow that book there on Reproduction of the Species."

And I was so amazed I almost loaned it to him. "Now why in the world would a youngster like you want to borrow that book?"

"I'm going to be a doctor when I grow up." Herbie played it deadpan.

"Fine. Fine. Grand. I'm glad, son." I fished up the first excuse which came to mind. "But first, Herbert, there are many things you must study. You've got to take things in their stride, son. There's history and arithmetic, then simple hygiene and..."



Herbie pointed at the house, and it burst into flame . . .

"I know all that."

"You . . ."

"What I mean is—I feel I'm ready for more advanced stuff." Herbie looked as though I had caught him in a lie.

Frankly, Mr. Hoover, Herbie *did* know all the answers. He could rattle off world history; he knew his multiplication and verbs, and I still have on my desk a theme which starts: "Assuming that a hydrogen reaction would form a chain of destruction . . ."

That from a sixth-grader. I gave him an "A" on it and hoped it was correct.

But Herbie's intellect was Herbie's undoing.

THREE DAYS after he started school, my office was ransacked.

I came back from lunch and found the room looking as if a tornado had wheeled through the tiny space. (It's not a big office like yours, Mr. Hoover). Papers littered the floor; the books had been pulled out of the bookcase—some of them with pages ripped out and naked binding showing; and the drawers on my desk hung out like tongues. The office safe was hanging open. The money—about three dollars and some pennies—was still there in plain sight.

But the health records, with intimate details on every child in Emerson school, were missing.

The safe-hinges looked as if they had been melted right off; yet I know it would have taken a gigantic blast to open that old Akron-built job.

There had been no blast.

And the history-teacher thing happened right then.

Parl Jones came running into my office when he saw the damage. He did one fast double-take and said: "Why I know who did this. I saw him leave just before you came back. It was . . ."

Mr. Hoover, I think I must have screamed right then.

I yelled because Parl suddenly stopped talking and his eyes rolled back in his head. He went sort of slack-jawed and choked for breath. Then he slumped to the floor.

The whites of his eyes were still showing when the ambulance crewmen carried him out.

They said he was dead.

But the doctors picked up a faint flutter of heart and pumped Parl full of adrenalin or something. He stayed that way for thirty-three days, Mr. Hoover, and he didn't move a muscle. They fed him through a rubber tube in his arm. I couldn't stand to see him like that, and I only visited him once.

The detectives came back every day for two weeks, and they promised

every day they'd find the burglar. We questioned the children singly, in groups and by classes. Because of the way the safe had been melted down, the police discounted the kiddie theory. But no matter how many times they photographed the office, or analyzed the safe, or lifted prints from everything in sight, they still lacked the most vital item:

Motive.

"Do you know anything about it, Herbie?"

"No, Mr. Pratt, I don't." He had dead-panned it again, his blue eyes wide open. "I think it was an international ring of jewel thieves who used your safe for a smuggling hideaway and..."

"All right, Herbert, that will be all. Thank you."

But it didn't end there, Mr. Hoover.

**T**HE TRI-STATE Laboratories were ruined overnight.

And that's where your men came in.

Even the out-of-town newspapers carried stories about the mysterious raid which turned the laboratories into a wreck. Its files were scattered; the safe containing secret and classified materials had been melted right down; all the formula bottles had been spilled, and the floor was sticky and slippery with chemicals. You know, we could only guess at it, but there was talk around town about uranium and atomic secrets being stolen. Then you sent the two agents into town.

Tri-State used to handle all sorts of research for livestock breeders and farmers; issue monthly reports on grains and ores, take blood-tests. They also handled metals, and handled some U. S. contracts on secret data.

"What do you think about the burglary, Mr. Pratt?"

"Huh? Oh, it's you, Herbie. It looks serious."

"Has anyone released any information on what was stolen?"

"No. The investigators are keeping it pretty much a secret. Frankly, I

don't think they know—after seeing all the mess in the laboratories."

I could have sworn Herbie looked relieved.

And the next day Herbie dissolved.

He had poked his curly head into my office. "Mr. Pratt?"

"Hmmmmm?"

"I'd like to speak to you for a moment."

"Come in, son."

"You've been wondering about the burglary at Tri-State."

"Why, yes, I suppose we all have..."

"Well, I've got the answer."

"Hmmmmm?"

"But I haven't much time, so I'll have to tell it to you fast."

I nodded in a go-ahead manner.

"No doubt it's occurred to you the Tri-State was raided by person or persons in search of some vital, war-making secret. The newspapers all hint darkly about how we're all in new danger."

Herbie paced a little, looking suddenly more grown up.

"But had it occurred to you the burglary might have been for some nobler, more worthy purpose? No, probably not. But let me put it this way:

"Suppose there was life on another planet. Now, don't look so surprised; science-fiction writers have to make a living, and besides, that was purely a rhetorical question. Suppose this life was far advanced—so far advanced, in fact, that atomic and hydrogen secrets went out with high-button isotopes."

Are you with me, Mr. Hoover?"

"Then suppose, in searching out all those scientific mysteries, all these wise minds one day found they'd overlooked one thing in dealing with radioactive materials. One thing so simple that everyone thought that everyone else had taken the proper precautions. Strictly a sophomoric mistake, but

they made it. And suppose they discovered that folly too late?"

"You don't mean..."

"Precisely. The leaders on this planet found that, after long years of working carelessly with radioactive substances, they had in effect secured their own future and at the same time destroyed it. They were destined to die off...because everyone on the whole damn planet was sterile!"

He said it like a punch line and I got it the same way.

**H**ERBIE came closer, his blue eyes wide and still full of innocence. "Wouldn't you," he said, "if you were faced with the decision, make an emergency move? You've studied the planet Earth for years, watched its lazy progress: medicine, social-sciences, stuff like that. And you know the Earth has the one thing you need badly: the formula, the means for reproduction. You know...test-tube babies, cells preserved in deep freeze and all that." He completed it with an airy wave, almost like he was embarrassed.

"I..."

"Wouldn't you pick a missionary, someone unsuspected, to go down to earth and get some of that formula?"

Herbie walked over to the window. "Honest-to-Pluto, you earth-clowns make me so mad. You're so far behind. I'm so bored with you sometimes I..." He turned and looked at me with a grin. "Look at this."

Little Herbie Green pointed one of his pink little fingers at the house across the street from the school.

It burst into flames.

In another second, it was covered with a roaring sheet of fire.

Mr. Hoover, Herbie didn't even stay to look. He turned and watched me stare. "See?" He said.

Then he dissolved.

That didn't even surprise me after seeing the house. I just sat there and brooded, looking at the spot where Herbie had been.

Then the phone rang.

"Herderson of the FBI, Mr. Pratt. Remember me?"

"Huh...oh, yes, Mr. Henderson."

"Thought I'd better report to you what we've found after a pretty intense search. We've got our report back from headquarters and found out what it was that was stolen."

*Here it comes, I thought.*

"It was material on artificial insemination, of all things."

"Yes. Of all things." I kept thinking of Herbie and what he had just told me. I guessed there'd be a lot more little Herbie Greens around again after his project got going up there—wherever that might be.

"The burglars left behind all sorts of classified data. Most of it was important. But, instead, they even took along some samples on insem..."

"I know," I said.

"You do? In that case, there are some questions we'd like to ask you."

"Incidentally," Mr. Henderson added, "I can't understand why anyone would want the recipe on artificial breeding of livestock. Breeding cows and horses and animals is pretty common stuff, I'd say."

And that's what happened, Mr. Hoover. And I wish you'd call off the agents now. After all, I don't know where Herbie is either, or even if he's back in his cosmic home. But wherever he is, Mr. Hoover, I'll bet he's got one helluva licking coming sometime in the next nine months.

Sincerely,  
W. E. Pratt,  
Principal, Emerson

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Shall we continue to trim the edges on *Future*? If you are in favor, how about dropping us a letter, or a postcard, and letting us know how you feel about it?

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# THE PHANTOM PHOENICIANS

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by L. Sprague de Camp



AMERICANS who do not know a single other historical date are usually aware of the fact that Columbus discovered the country in 1492.

Did I say fact?

Perhaps "generally accepted opinion" would be more exact.

For if you go to Portugal, you will, I am told, be startled to see, in Lisbon, on the Avenida de Libertade, in the mosaic of the pavement, the words:

JOAO VAZ CORTE-REAL DES-  
COBRIDOR DA AMERICA—  
DESCOBERDA DE AMERICA  
1472.

Your surprise would be quite justified. Here you have been taught all these years that Columbus did it, and now these Portuguese are claiming that somebody you never heard of, this Joao Vaz Corte-Real, was the true discoverer, and that he made his discovery twenty years before Columbus touched at Guanahani.

As a matter of fact, a great many people in both Portugal and Brazil take the Corte-Real theory seriously and teach it in their schools. Not only that, but the Corte-Real theory is only

one of a number of opinions, hypotheses, and cults, which flourish in Latin countries and which purport to prove that Columbus' voyage was not what it seemed. These beliefs have something of the place in Latin countries that pyramidology, Baconianism, Atlantism, and the search for the Lost Ten Tribes have in the Anglo-Saxon world. Either they assert that Columbus was not the first discoverer—that he was anticipated by Corte-Real or some other fifteenth-century Portuguese; or by the medieval Norse or Welsh; or by the Chinese, or the ancient Phoenicians; or by the mythical Atlanteans—or they claim that Columbus himself was not the person he is supposed to have been. Instead of being, as everybody thought, a Genoese travelling drygoods salesman turned sea-captain, he was a Portuguese, a Spaniard, a Corsican, a Majorcan, a Frenchman, a German, an Englishman, a Greek, an Armenian, or a Jew of variable nationality.

What sort of evidence are these ideas based upon? Sixteenth-century travel-tales, medieval legends, inscriptions found here and there in the new world, and such cryptic relics as the Round Tower of Newport, Rhode Island.

To begin with, we may take it that the story that the Norse discovered North America about the year 1000

*A. D.* is substantially true, despite Lord Raglan's effort, some years ago, to show up Leif Eiriksson as a mere sun-god. While the sagas that tell of this discovery may contain some fictional elements, it is most unlikely that they could have hit upon so accurate a description of the North American natives: "Dark men and ugly, with wide cheeks," fighting with clubs, bows, and slings and obviously ignorant of cloth, iron, or cattle, unless somebody had been there to see.

Then how about the others? Let us take up the remarkable Corte-Real family first.

All that is known for certain about Joao Vaz Corte-Real ("Joao," Portuguese for John, is pronounced "zhwo" with the final diphthong nasalized.) is that he was a fifteenth-century Portuguese gentleman who begat four sons, of whom three became famous. One, Jeronymo, was a noted soldier, poet, and painter; two, Gaspar and Miguel, were explorers. Gaspar *did* discover Laborador in 1501, but was lost at sea on the way home. The next year, Miguel set out in the direction that the surviving members of Gaspar's expedition said that they had gone—and disappeared. Nothing more was heard of him, so that the Atlantic has one genuine mystery from this period, as well as all the spurious ones.

That is, nobody heard of Miguel Corte-Real again until...

But before we go into that, let's finish with old Joao Vaz. The only evidence for his having ever been to America is a very unreliable book of anecdotes and gossip, "Saudades de Terra", which one Gaspar Frutoso wrote about a century after this alleged voyage. This book, quite worthless in all other respects, asserts that Joao Vaz Corte-Real sailed with Alvaro Martins Homen (pronounced "o-may," the final diphthong being nasalized.) and discovered Newfoundland in 1472. This account is too flimsy to be taken seriously by anybody

unmoved by patriotic pan-Lusitanian sentiments.

There were a number of other claims to anticipation of Columbus during the fifteenth century, as by Fernandes and Barcelos, or by Teive and Velasco. These stories have a certain adventitious plausibility because of the fact that, when they are supposed to have taken place, Portugal *was* actually sending out expeditions, under a veil of secrecy, in order to extend her colonial possessions. However, the particular claims to anticipating Columbus turn out to be individually pretty feeble when examined closely. Thus Teive and Velasco were supposed to have sailed west from the Azores in 1452 and to have reached the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. One trouble with this claim is that they would have had to sail into the teeth of the prevailing westerlies, and against the Gulf Stream all the way—which, with the ships of the time, would have been impractical. To get across with any degree of certainty, you had to do what Columbus did: drop down south to the Canaries; sail west before the trade winds and helped by the Equatorial Current; and then to get back work north to around the latitude of Baltimore to pick up the prevailing westerlies.

**T**HEN THERE is a family of tales about Welsh discovery of America. This is the saga of Prince Madoc ap Owain Gwynedd. (pronounced "gwun-edh.") Madoc seems to have been a real twelfth-century Welsh prince, a noted sailor and fisherman, but a person about whom practically nothing else is known.

The Madoc myth, however, sprang into being in the years 1583 and 1584, in the form of books by Sir George Peckham and Humphrey Lloyd. These books told how Madoc, disgusted by a war raging between his father and brothers, sailed away with some followers into the Atlantic. He returned

some time later, telling of a fertile country beyond the seas, gathered a larger group of colonists, and sailed away again, this time for good.

There is no outside corroboration whatever for this story, aside from the stories of Peckham and Lhoyd. Why should these men make up such a tale? Because England was just awakening to the fact that she had been so preoccupied during the last century, with religious wars and revolutions, that the Spaniards and Portuguese had gotten a long start on her in overseas conquest and colonization. Therefore anything that purported to prove that Englishmen—or at least Britons—had discovered America before Columbus was sure to be popular; it afforded Queen Elizabeth an excuse for claiming possessions in America, and for ignoring the Pope's gift of half the non-Christian world to Spain and the other half to Portugal.

(Here, by the way, is a question that you can catch people on some time. What monarch was suzerain of the largest area in the world's history? Not Jenghis Khan; not Emperor Trajan; not Alexander or Harun al-Rashid or Timur Lenk. He was King Philip II of Spain and Portugal—the Armada king, who ruled not only Spain, Portugal, Sicily, southern Italy, the Spanish Netherlands, and other miscellaneous possessions in Europe—but had nominal rule of most of Africa, of large possessions in Asia (especially Indonesia) and *all* of North and South America! Of course he only ruled effectively where he had viceroys and soldiers to enforce his will, and then only to the extent that they obeyed his orders, which they seldom did.)

When Europeans first landed in the Americas and met the natives, they often jumped to fantastic conclusions—such as that the Indians were practicing Hebrew rites, and so were the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel, or were speaking Welsh and were the descendants of Prince Madoc's colonists. In

1704 there appeared a book that told of how a Welsh preacher, Morgan Jones, was captured by the Tuscaroras, and how his life was saved by a Lidian of the Welsh-speaking Doeg tribe, a tribe otherwise unknown to ethnology. As North America became better known, the Welsh Indians retreated before European discovery, flitting as any good ghosts do from the light of day. For a time they were identified with the Mandans of the upper Missouri River, a farming and bison-hunting tribe a little more civilized and lighter-skinned than their neighbors the Sioux and Cheyenne. The Mandans' light skins may have been a matter of normal inter-tribal variation in pigment, or they may have been connected with the fact that the Mandans, at this time (the early 1800's), had been in contact with French trappers and traders for over a century, during which time their women had tendered the ultimate in hospitality.

Hjalmar Holand, the Kensington Rune Stone man, believes that the Mandans were descendants of the Norse expedition to America in the fourteenth century which he thinks also inscribed the Kensington Stone and built the Round Tower of Newport. Strictly speaking the Norse expedition was to Greenland; it is Mr. Holand's idea that they went on to the mainland.

Be that as it may, a smallpox epidemic almost wiped out the Mandans in 1838, and the survivors settled with other tribes and lost their identity. The search for the Welsh Indians resumed, and at last accounts a man named Pritchard claims to have identified them with the Kutenai of British Columbia. The usual argument asserts (as does Mr. Pritchard) that the Indian tribe suspected of Welsh origin—whether Mandans, Flatheads, or whatever—uses Welsh words in its language, such as the Welsh word for "cow," *buwch*, (pronounced "bewkh" or "bee-ookh.") As there were no cows

in the Americas before Columbus, it is hard to see what any Indians were doing with a word for "cow."

**I**N 1951 A NOVELIST with the good Welsh name of Vaughan Wilkins brought out a story, "The City of Frozen Fire", based upon the Welsh-Indian hypothesis. An English family in the early years of the nineteenth century goes to South America, where they find an enclave of medieval Welshmen living on a small coastal plain ringed by impassable mountains. The story has pirates, priceless gems, volcanic eruptions, and all the other ingredients of a rousing if juvenile adventure-story.

Another source of speculation about pre-Columbian transatlantic voyages was the rumors of the island of Antillia—which corresponded so closely in size, shape, and location with the real Cuba that when the latter was found, it and its neighbors were named the Antilles. Antillia was sometimes identified with the Isle of the Seven Cities, to which seven Spanish bishops and their flocks were supposed to have sailed to escape the Saracen invasion in 734. This story first appears in the form of a caption on a globe made by the geographer Martin Behaim in 1492, and it is repeated in more detail by Columbus' son Ferdinand; but there is no evidence that it existed between the actual Moorish conquest of Spain and Behaim's time.

Brazil and California got their names in similar fashion. There was a mythical island of Brazil, supposedly a few hundred miles west of Ireland, and credited (according to a later story) with giant black rabbits and an evil magician who kept castaways captive in his castle. When Cabral touched at South America on his way to India he named the new country Brazil. And some medieval maps showed an East Indian island of California, inhabited by warrior women in golden armor, so when the Spaniards reached the west

coast of North America they applied this name to the land they saw.

For that matter the whole naming of "America" seems to have been largely a matter of confusion, misunderstanding, and plain hoax. There was a bank-clerk, Amerigo Vespucci, who worked for the great Florentine banker Lorenzo di Medici. Lorenzo sent Amerigo to Spain to run a branch bank, and Amerigo seems to have obtained supplies for Columbus on his second voyage. In 1503-04 Vespucci wrote letters to his boss Lorenzo, and to an old schoolfellow, Soderini, in which he told of having made four voyages of exploration. The second may be true—that he went with Alonso de Ojeda to South America in 1499; at least such a voyage did take place. But the first and third...

Well, on the first, he said, he sailed west to about where British Columbia is in fact and reached the "province of Parias" on June 16, 1497. He visited the "Iti people" and returned home, presumably sailing right across North America for the second time without seeing it. On his third voyage he claimed to have reached a latitude of 13 degrees south, which would strand him in the middle of the Antarctic ice-cap. The fourth voyage may have happened, but Vespucci gave too few details to tell.

Despite the improbability of the first and third voyages, a translation of one of Vespucci's letters was published at St. Lie in Lorraine in 1507, and Martin Waldseemüller, a professor of cosmogony at the University of St. Lie, suggested in a book he was writing that the new lands should be named after "that great and good man Amerigo" who first discovered them. He argued thus because the day when Vespucci claimed to have reached Parias was eight days before Cabot touched Newfoundland (or Labrador). This would make Vespucci the first to reach the American mainland, as opposed to its offshore islands.

Waldseemüller printed AMERICA in large black letters on his maps, and the fashion caught on, despite the fact that the Spaniards long protested against the extension of this term to North America, and despite the pleasing suggestion made by Queen Elizabeth's pet wizard, John Dee, that North America should be called "Atlantis."

It is only fair to say that there is a school of geographers that hold Vespucci to be a truthful man, even if he got his navigational data mixed up, and believes that he did reach the American coast when he said he did. But at any rate, this was how the term "America" came to be applied to two continents and a republic, joining that equally ambiguous term "Indian" in befuddling generations of school-children.

ANOTHER travel narrative appeared in 1558, when an Italian named Nicolo Zeno told how his ancestors Nicolo and Antonio Zeno in the fourteenth century went adventuring in the Far North. They served under one Zichmni, Duke of Sorano, in Frislandia. Nicolo died, but his brother Antonio, surviving, heard a tale from a fisherman of being blown by a storm a thousand miles to the west, where he came upon the civilized country of Estotiland between Greenland to the north and the land of cannibal savages, Drogio, to the south. Geographically Estotiland corresponds to the real Laborador. But we can be quite sure that there was no civilized society in Laborador in the fourteenth century. Therefore, while Zichmni, Duke of Sorano can be identified plausibly with the real Henry Sinclair, Earl of Orkney and Caithness, and Frislandia with the Faeroes, the Estotiland story seems to be a pure tall tale.

Some pursuers of shadowy transatlantic voyages have gone back farther than Madoc—farther even than the seven bishops, to the ancient Phoeni-

cians. In the 1850's a German poet, Robert Prutz, wrote a book in which, by bending to his service every reference in Classical literature to islands in the Western Ocean or possible lands beyond it, tried to show that the Phoenicians had colonized America back in pre-Christian times.

These references do exist. Some refer to the real Madeira and Canary Islands, some possibly (but not probably) to the Azores, and some appear to be sheer romancing. As the native Phoenician literature has almost entirely disappeared, and as there are no Phoenicians nowadays to ask questions of, the handiest method of attacking this question is to ask whether the Phoenicians *could* have made the trip with the ships of that time.

The answer is *no*. It is barely possible that an exceptional storm might have blown a single ship across the ocean, but a premeditated round trip was an impossibility. Their war-galleys could not have carried enough food and water to last the rowers the fifty or sixty days the trip would have required; and the rowers would probably have collapsed and perished from the hardship of trying to sleep in a ship that had no accommodations for them to do so. The sailing-ships of the time, with their single square-rigged masts and steering-oars of quarter-rudders, could not tack against the wind; and the Phoenicians had no magnetic compass to prevent them from sailing in circles during the frequent overcasts of the Atlantic.

Nevertheless the Phoenician-American theory has been kept precariously afloat by the finding of a number of rocks with cryptic designs scratched upon them, which some have taken for Phoenician writing.

Brazil is the place where most of these petroglyphs have been found, for the good reason that many Brazilian Indians have the custom of incising these marks—sometimes for magical reasons and sometimes just for fun.

The petroglyphs have been studied for nearly two centuries, and there is no mystery about them. Ethnologists have seen modern Indians carving them and have asked them what they were doing. The carvings are conventionalized pictures of such things as men, animals, fish, houses, maps of sections of the nearest river, and so on.

North America has also turned up some controversial inscriptions. Aside from the Kensington Rune Stone there are the Grave Creek Mound Stone from West Virginia and Dighton Rock in Massachusetts. Grave Creek Mound Stone was thought to be inscribed with Etruscan, Runic, Phoenician, Old British, Keltiberic, and Greek writing. Then in 1930 an elderly antiquarian, Andrew Price, solved the puzzle. The inscription said simply "Bill Stump's Stone, October 14th, 1828." This bit of carving was presumably inspired by the story in Dickens' "Pickwick Papers" of the finding of a similar stone in England, and of the excitement it caused among local antiquarians until the inscription turned out to have been made in his spare time by a shepherd named Bill Stump. And "Pickwick Papers" appeared only a year or so before the date on the Grave Creek Mound Stone.

As for Dighton Rock, this is a boulder or ledge sticking up out of the estuary of the Taunton River in Massa-

chusetts, covered with carvings: dates, initials, little pictures of turtles, and marks that look like nothing in particular. It was credited to Phoenicians, Druids, Persians, Trojans, Hebrews, Libyans, Romans, Norsemen, Chinese, and Atlanteans. Finally in the 1920's Professor Edmund B. Delabarre went out with a boat, black filling-material, flood-lights, and a camera. After much hard work he made out, under the carvings of modern campers and earlier Indians, the words

#### MIGUEL CORTEREAL

followed by some letters that he took to be initials of REX INDIORUM ("King of the Indians") and the date 1511.

So it seems that Miguel Corte-Real was not drowned on his expedition after all. Even if his father never reached America, he did. Presumably he was wrecked, but survived, and set himself up as a chief among the Naragansetts or whoever the local Indians were. And one day he chiseled this inscription in the hope that, even if he never saw another European, the knowledge of his fate would not be utterly lost.

So one of the Atlantic mysteries seems to have been solved, anyway.



Ordinarily, You'd Think We'd Plug One of the Stories  
and you'd be right, nine times out of ten — but this is  
the tenth time, the time when an article has already  
brought in such glowing praise, that we want to draw  
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Bosworth couldn't take anything off Ceres — except a girl.

# IXTL IGO, SON!

by Raymond E. Banks

(illustrated by Milton Luros)

What else could Bosworth do, since he'd built up credit on Ceres, and the only thing that they'd permit him to take home with him was a person? And how could he explain this surplus redhead, who was supposed to represent his profits?

**A**T TIMES, James Bosworth pinched himself on that return trip to earth. "I am under the impression," he told himself, "that I am returning to earth as the sole owner and proprietor of one young female, aged twenty, with red hair, blue eyes and an excellent figure. This is obviously an illusion."

But the admiring glances of the other male passengers, the envious comments of the other women passengers on the Ceres-to-Earth rocket assured him that it was no illusion. The girl sat straight and silent by his side, quite content and unworried.

"Since this is no illusion," he told himself. "Since she really exists, we come to problem number one:

"My wife.

"This brings us to problem number two:

"My boss, my job and my future."

Then he sighed and wandered into the bar. He hoped that when he came back the redhead would be gone, or that some aggressive male would steal her from him. Neither happened. The rocket was less than a half-day from earth now, and it was not only likely, but inevitable that when his wife met him at the rocket-port, he would still

be encumbered with the redhead.

A couple of times he had tried to bring himself to giving her to a careless crew member. All that he would have to do, he knew, was sign over the Contract paper and the girl, with a shrug, would go willingly. But that solution was too dangerous.

After all, she represented his expense-account money on his selling trip to Mars, Ganymede and Ceres. Eleven hundred and forty dollars and fifty-two cents, to be exact. It was just that the rate of exchange was uncertain between planets.

"Except for you," he told the girl, "I have had a very successful trip. I have taken orders for ten Peerless Oxygen Makers on Mars, fifteen on Ganymede and forty-one on Ceres." He paused and studied her serene face, the cream-skinned cheeks with the good-looking freckles, "With attachments," he nodded. "Old Dugan said I couldn't sell on my first trip in space. He said I was too young and too dumb. I have proved him wrong."

"Ixtl igo," said Marie, the last of his expense account.

"Don't give me ixtl igo," he said. "When my wife sees you, she'll give us both ixtl igo—and maybe a frppp."

There was a look of sane good humor in the girl's face. She didn't exactly smile, but Bosworth had the irritating idea that she understood exactly what his problem was and enjoyed his distress.

"Ixtl frpp," she murmured in a seductive fashion that always brought out the hackles on his neck. A Cerean girl could do that, for they all had sultry voices. Even the clothes were objectionable, for this girl wore dainty, filmy black things that set off her clear skin and red hair in an astonishing fashion.

"Ixtl frpp," said James, "is what worries me. Old Dugan will skin me when he sees you. He'll fire me. He'll blacklist me for booting around his expense account. He may even prefer

charges against me." Bosworth closed his eyes and shuddered.

IT HAD ALL been so simple when he left New York. With him, besides samples, Bosworth had taken enough food to last him the trip, and enough clothes, and there was even room for a few books and a deck of playing cards. That of course was the rule of space-travel in these still-immature days of interplanetary contact. "Take what you need. It is a long way home."

But there was the problem of extra expenses. Old Dugan, glowering at him over the fat bulk of his stomach, handed him a voucher for eleven hundred and forty dollars and fifty-two cents.

"If you waste a penny of this," said Old Dugan, "I'll follow you to Arcturus and cut your heart out."

Old Dugan was the Sales Manager. He was onto what he called the tricks of salesmen. He had been known to call half-way around the world to verify the price of a dinner in a hotel restaurant. Beneath the hard upper reaches of his bald-shiny head lay a deadly calculating machine that easily thwarted spendthriftism.

Old Dugan had one other pet hate.

"If ever," he told his men, "you so much as wink at a waitress I'll have you sent to prison. We want clean, moral men here—that is why we pay the best salesmen's salaries in the world."

And it was true that Old Dugan could make trouble for a salesman he fired. He had done so in the past. He was vindictive, as shown by his treatment of Bill Moss who dated a customer's secretary. Unable to get evidence, Old Dugan had spent a goodly sum to hire a showgirl to tempt Moss and had created a front-page newspaper scandal that had broken up Moss' home and made him completely unemployable for about two years.

This was not hard to understand,

since Old Dugan had—once in the murky past—gone to prison for juggling expense accounts while having an affair on the road. He was the Reformed, and like all wild young men who survive had become an exceedingly stern old man.

James Bosworth chewed his fingernails. His wife, Ruth, was no slouch when it came to trouble-making. She was a fine wife, but she couldn't stand to see James look at another woman—she was not very attractive and therefore was always on the offense against attractive women. Once, when James had innocently danced with a friend's wife at a social affair, she had destroyed five hundred dollars' worth of household-furnishings in a tantrum. Besides paying off his host and apologizing to all present, Bosworth had had to buy her a new fur coat; he figured that his error had cost him about twelve hundred dollars all told.

These, then, were the adversaries to whom he had to introduce Marie, the redhead from Ceres. Or if he failed to do so, he would have to go to jail for losing the Company's eleven hundred dollars. He was clearly a victim of the rate of exchange in space.

OUT OF THE crowd at the rocket-port assembled to greet the Pluto ship, Bosworth had no trouble in finding his wife. The serious look, the sharp-pointed nose made a perfect flaw in a sea of faces. She was wearing a ridiculous hat, of course, and when James saw the imitation-bird weaving towards him, and heard the muttered curses of the people she shoved aside, he remembered again her sharp elbows with a sense of home recovered.

"You were gone long enough," she said in that well-remembered, strident voice which made a man next to him move away, guiltily.

"Old Dugan was wrong," he said. "I had a good trip."

Behind him, holding her bag of things, stood Marie. His heart failed him. But there was no easy way out. "This," he said, turning to her, "is Marie. Marie, this is my wife, Ruth—the one I was telling you about. Uh-ixtl snpp."

The two females surveyed each other. There was a shocked silence. Two dull red spots appeared in the parchment skin that Ruth used to cover her skeleton. She hefted her umbrella. The ridiculous bird on her ridiculous hat trembled. She jabbed Marie in the ribs with the umbrella point.

"You've brought—back—a—woman!"

Marie had been smiling in faint amusement. Now she looked slightly startled.

The side of the rocket fell off on top of James. At the same time there came a high monotonous shriek in his ear.

Two rocket-men were standing to one side of the battle arena.

"Did you see her bash him with that umbrella?" exulted one.

"Ninety pounds, and she floored him with a one-two," said the other.

A policeman touched the speaker's arm. "Why," he asked, puzzled, "is that lady sitting on top of the redheaded girl, slugging her?"

THE STEAM-KETTLE was steaming. Then things cleared for James, and it was his wife's high-pitched voice simmering along at him. He bathed his aching head with cooling water and tried to listen. They were finally home. Marie was in the kitchen baking a banf; Marie was durable, rugged. Bosworth had a great deal of respect for Cerean women now. Hardy people from earth had gone out to Ceres, and colonized and had children who were hardy, and Marie was one of them. The scene at the rocket-port had not fazed her at all. Although she only outweighed Ruth by ten pounds she had resisted Ruth's

charges, physical and verbal, with a stoic near-smile, patiently staring Ruth in the eye and not saying a word. True, Ruth had leaped on her and knocked her down; but Marie had calmly gotten up again, setting Ruth on her feet and continuing to give her the level, sane stare.

"O, pioneer stock!" thought James. "O rugged women, thin-hipped men of Ceres!"

For it had worked. Ruth's tantrum had ended before that level, sane stare. Ruth had given up attacking the girl and turned on him. He had snapped back and they had had a juicy fight all the way home. Marie had followed them.

"I am his," she said in one of her rare English-speaking moments. Not for the rugged people of Ceres to waste good words. "I will do work, be maid."

He hadn't the heart to tell her that she really belonged to the Peerless Oxygen Company; and he couldn't explain this to Ruth either.

So once home, the girl from Ceres had prepared supper in a practical, sane fashion while Ruth threw a tantrum in the living room and another in the dining room. Yet it was all directed at him. A great thought flitted into his brain, paused and started to go—but he grabbed it.

Ruth was afraid of that level, sane stare.

Now she came tearing out into the kitchen. She had half-packed a suitcase. "Hear me, James Whitfield Bosworth! These are my last words, you toad! I will not stay in this house another second. I am going to the police. I am going to send you and that immoral hussy to prison. I am going..."

She started to lift the suitcase to hit James, but he turned away and sat at the table. That was the calm, sane thing to do, since Marie had just rung the dinner bell. He picked up a fork and tackled the banf. "Have some

banf, Ruth. It's very good, a Cerean dish."

Ruth snatched the plate and shoved the banf in his face. In the old days he would've started to spiral into defensive anger. But Marie had taught him and shown him the way. He wiped away the banf in a dignified fashion, giving Ruth a sane, level look. "Sit down and eat," he said.

She grabbed the potatoes ready to hit him again, but his look held her. "I will not sit at the same table with an adulterer!" she shrieked.

"Ixtl igo," said James, calmly.

The close-set eyes were wet, the pinched face was trembling as she sat down and began to cry. Suddenly he felt enormously sorry for this peppery, tiny woman he had married. So very ugly; so very hostile; so very insecure in her ugliness. With it all she was a woman, and a very good wife, and he loved her. Whistle he might at girls with bodies like Marie's, but this woman was unique and distinct of her kind. Her angularity was so singular—her ugliness so complete that there was a special excitement about her. In her ugliness she needed him desperately, and it is something in this world to be desperately needed. "Please pass the potatoes," said James.

Marie, waiting table, started to do so, but Ruth brought her sharp heel down on Marie's foot and passed the potatoes herself.

**JAMES BOSWORTH** felt very old and gone. Somehow he had gotten through the afternoon and evening with the dangerous situation at home. He had even gained, having learned the level stare technique. But Ruth was a foothill—now he was about to face the mountain, Old Dugan.

He sat outside the Sales Manager's office with Marie. Inside came a steady roar, like Niagara Falls, as another salesman, back from Duluth, went round on the treadmill. He was

trying to explain something about snowshoes on his expense account. Old Dugan sounded doubtful. Cheerful, calm Marie, dressed in an appealing but oh-so-right-fitting black dress with cute Cerean ruffles, stared past him as if dreaming about her own home, yet completely at ease here. Wonderful stoic.

The Duluth salesman staggered out, white-faced. He was carrying a pair of snowshoes under his arm.

"Do you know what that black-hearted old pirate told me to do with these?" he asked James indignantly. "He told me to—" Then he saw Marie. "Oh—excuse, me," he muttered and hurried on.

James hurried in, fearful of Old Dugan seeing Marie before he could explain. Old Dugan, as awe-inspiring as ever behind the desk allowed a sneer to creep over his face. James tried the sane, level look but Old Dugan merely asked if he were sick. In seconds it was the old relationship with James stammering and chattering away like a frightened bird. A ham-like hand stopped him. Old Dugan picked up his paunch and rested it on the edge of the desk. His tie fell away in two parts over the stomach. He glowered at James.

"Just a minute, son. Don't give me gibberish. I want to know about eleven hundred and forty dollars and fifty-two cents."

"There was some difficulty," began James.

An inner light sprang in the crafty tiger eyes. Old Dugan leaned forward. His enormous bulk began to curl up like a taut spring and James felt his innards turn to water.

"I want to know all about your difficulties, son," rumbled Old Dugan. "I like to hear salesman's troubles." There was a fly on the desk. With a sudden flick, Old Dugan slapped his mighty hand down, turned it over and carelessly disposed of the remaining speck. "Go on, son."

James started talking fast. . . . "On Mars, the first stop there was a law against taking any money out of the planet. New colony, y'understand, wants to keep all the money they can get circulating on Mars. They let me bring in the eleven hundred, y'understand but I couldn't take it out—"

There was a copy of the "U. S. Criminal Code" on Old Dugan's desk. He began to idly leaf through it. His mouth was a hard slit. He said nothing.

"On Mars," said James, his voice shooting an octave higher, "well, I had to turn my eleven hundred into a Martian diamond. Diamonds they let you export. And I took my Martian diamonds to Ganymede, but on Ganymede—"

"I have taken money out of Mars," Old Dugan cut in.

"On Ganymede—" cried James, "they let me bring the Martian diamonds in, but I couldn't take jewelry out. They need precious metals for precision manufacture. The law says—"

"When I was on Ganymede, any fool could take precious metals out," said Old Dugan relentlessly.

"—so I had to trade my Martian jewels for a Ganymede aircar. I left Ganymede with the eleven hundred dollars, as an aircar—"

Old Dugan turned to his intercom. "Get me the police," he said to his girl.

"—when I got to Ceres," James rushed on, "they wouldn't let me take out the aircar, because they have very few material things and they lack aircars and they wouldn't let me leave with the aircar. In fact, on Ceres, the only thing they have that's surplus is people. They are very poor, rugged, and short on aircars. But people are the only things that can leave Ceres. And so—"

He felt a creeping paralysis as he came to the final moment.

"Just lay the eleven hundred and forty dollars and fifty-two cents on the table, son," said Old Dugan. "Then we'll see what expenses out of it we might allow."

"—and so I came back with a girl, a redhead," gibbered James. "Her name is Marie, and she has a very sane, level look, and, honest, I haven't laid a hand on her; but she can work, work, work until we get our money back."

THERE WAS a silence. A look of mad delight came into Old Dugan's eyes. The way a batter feels when the foolish pitcher throws a straight one down the middle; the way a quarterback feels when the opposition line opens up to the goal line; the way a bus-rider feels when the man he stands next to gets up and vacates a seat that no one else can reach—

"You brought back—a girl?" asked Old Dugan.

"—on Ceres," whistled James in terror, "they only have a surplus of people—"

"A redhead?"

"I never touched her. My wife will tell you— Chief, I couldn't have touched her—"

"For the Company's eleven hundred dollars, you, a married man, brought back a good-looking redheaded girl?"

James was out of his seat almost screaming. "There couldn't possibly have been a thing between us. She is used to rugged men. They are all pioneers up there, Chief! They are all good-looking. All of her life she has stared at nothing but guys with rugged faces and big muscles. They all have deep-space sun-tans. I am just a skinny, white-skinned, loose and flabby salesman. She wouldn't look at me—"

Old Dugan got up, heaved himself around the desk. He grabbed James by the lapels and jerked him up. Their faces almost touched. "I am going to

plaster you to the wall and frame you, Bosworth! You're a card. I am going to spend eleven thousand dollars in framing you so hard that little children will shudder at the sound of your name. I am going to smash you so completely that the general populace will go around scraping the name of "Bosworth" off tombstones. Bosworth—*You're Fired.*"

With that the volcano began to erupt. Thrust from the hands of the master, James sank into his chair and listened to the rattle and thunder of smoky fury. The room shook, the whole building seemed to shake, a whimpering secretary crept in to take a personal letter to the Company president, there was the sound of running feet as employees remembered errands that took them beyond the fire and sulphur of that dangerous voice.

"And furthermore," boomed Old Dugan, "we charge this impertinent scoundrel with—"

Marie appeared in the door. She looked at Old Dugan.

Old Dugan looked at her.

There was a sudden silence.

A blush came to Marie's cheeks, spreading prettily in both directions to her dazzling eyes and her excellent cleavage. Her lips, usually so calm and sure, trembled. "Madam," said Old Dugan, somehow uneasy, "what's the matter with you?"

"A fat man!" she breathed in surprise.

Old Dugan surveyed his girth. "My dear young lady—"

"A fat man!" cooed Marie, coyly casting down her eyes. She stretched out her lovely arms. "On Ceres, nothing but pioneers—thin, hard men. All the same, thin and hard."

She looked at James scornfully. "Not hard," she said, "but still thin."

A LOOK OF reverence came into her eyes. "A big, fat, soft man,"

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Any student of history knows that human beings tend to avoid "truth" as they avoid a plague. But sometimes it's a matter of self-preservation . . .

# TO SAVE A WORLD

Novelet of Ironic Destiny

by Irving E. Cox, Jr.

(illustrated by Paul Orban)



JEB STARED up stupidly at the enormous signboard glittering above Pershing Square. The red neon letters blinked monotonously, *Man is not meant to leave the earth! Bring down the Sats!* —C.

J. Bowman. Smaller blue letters extended an urgent invitation, *Join your local Truth Committee Today. Save America! Save the World!*

Jeb shuddered. In less than five weeks, the backwater lunacy had become a nationwide hysteria. And the campaign had still a month to run.

Jeb pushed slowly through the sluggish crowd. The night was hot; smog lay heavily over Los Angeles; sailors, soldiers, and street-walkers mingled with the flotsam of the city on the brick walks of the park. Outside the Biltmore, Jeb saw a band of men and women parading in the Truth Committee uniform—a rough-woven, burlap-like tunic, belted at the waist with a cord of hemp. They were bare-footed and bareheaded and they were singing

the lusty Truth Hymn. Some of them carried placards lettered in red, *Bring down the Sats!* Other signs blazed with the legend, *Shake off the yoke of science!*

Jeb leaned against the trunk of a palm and lit a cigarette. A seedy old man, reeking with the stink of stale wine, sidled up to him. "Ain't you never seen a Committe before, Mister?" he wheezed.

"I've been in Alaska for a month."

"Working on the new Sat base?"

"Not exactly. I'm a writer; I've been doing a series of articles on the base personnel."

"Won't be no need for that after Bowman gets elected. He's got the answer, Mister." The old drunk glared furiously at the murky sky. "What do we need to keep them things up there for, anyway? They'll go off someday and kill us all."

"My friend, the Satellites have kept world peace for—"

The old man spat. "The gov'mint spends all that dough on 'em. An' for what? Tell me that, Mister! So's you scientists can play around with stuff

you was never meant to have in the first place."

Jeb realized that argument was pointless; he picked up his bag and crossed the stream of traffic. The old man pursued him with his panhandler's wheedling as far as the door of the Biltmore. Jeb went into the quiet bar. He ordered a straight whiskey. When he reached for the glass, his hand was trembling.

A large telescreen hung above the bar. The program was nearly over, but Jeb caught the tail end of Cyril J. Bowman's daily telecast.

For the past seven elections, no presidential candidate had made a nationwide tour; far larger audiences were reached by the all-network telecasts. Personal contacts at the grass-roots level were made by party underlings and local candidates for Congress.

Instead of delivering a straight talk to the voters, as the regular party candidates did, Cyril Bowman staged a panel discussion. Jeb had seen program-relays while he was in Alaska. The format was always the same: panel-members fed Cyril Bowman loaded questions, and he responded with equally loaded answers. The conclusion of each telecast was the same. A massive choir of Truth Committee members, garbed in the rough-woven robes, began to chant the stirring Truth Hymn, while the camera panned to a close-up of Bowman's handsome face.

"And so we close another impromptu discussion of world problems," the candidate boomed in his rich, organ tones. "Truth is everybody's business. On this program, we do not give two sides to every question; that is a sophistry invented by the scientists to confuse us. There is only one side to any issue—the right side; the moral side; the side of Truth. I give you that. We invite you to join us in our great crusade for Truth. There are fifteen thousand local Truth Commit-

tees. Join one today. Send your weekly dues to our National Headquarters. Do your part to rid us of the yoke of science. Send two dollars—just two dollars, folks!—to Truth, New York. No other address is needed. Truth, New York. Save America! Bring down the Sats!"

The words of the Truth Hymn swelled up loud. Bowman's rugged, compellingly honest face faded from the screen. An American flag fluttered before the camera until the station break.

A VERY YOUNG woman sitting on a stool beside Jeb pushed her glass back with a sigh. She smiled at Jeb. "Wasn't he wonderful tonight?" she whispered.

"A fool!" Jeb answered.

"So sincere," she said, "and genuine! You just know Cyril Bowman is speaking straight from his heart."

"Listen, lady, that man is after just one thing: two bucks a week from every sucker he can land."

She looked at Jeb pityingly. "You're very young, aren't you? And I suppose you majored in science in college. The propaganda of your professors naturally blinds you to Truth."

"If this tripe of Bowman's is—"

"Please, don't raise your voice." She ran her fingers gently over his hand. "I know how you feel; you still live with the old fear science has taught us. When we bring down the Sats—"

"Why the Sats? They're the only safeguard we have!"

"Science has led us up a blind alley for generations. Man was not meant to leave the earth."

He banged his empty glass on the bar furiously. "Meant! By whom? You're not making sense. How can we be meant—or not meant—to make a discovery? These things happen. They're the result of the application of knowledge; there's no purpose or lack of purpose—"

She gave him a sweet smile and

slipped down from her stool. "Man will always turn his inventions into weapons; we can't change human nature, can we? The solution, then, is to take away the inventions." She removed a flimsy brochure from her purse and pushed it into his hand. "Come to one of our meetings this week, please. It'll do so much to clear all this muggy science out of your thinking."

She left him and Jeb opened the pamphlet on the glossy surface of the bar. Beneath a brilliantly-colored American flag, he read a summary of the Truth Committee platform. Jeb spotted every technique of propaganda in the pattern of words; it was crudely used, blatant, obvious. A moron should have seen through the jerry-built contrivance. Yet both the girl and the park bum had been taken in. How many others?

A kindly old gentleman in a white dinner jacket leaned toward Jeb, tapping the brochure with a soft, pink finger. "Bowman's hit the nail on the head," he confided. "Knock out the Sats, and we'll cut our tax burden in half."

Jeb groaned. "Sir, the security of the League of Free Nations—"

"That's the nonsense the scientists have fed us so they can keep their hands in the pork barrel. Look what they got us into five years ago—three billion appropriated for a flight to Mars! When that failed, they still weren't satisfied; another two billion for an expedition to Venus. And that was lost, too. Five billion dollars in cold cash, thrown down the drain in the name of science!"

"True, we've never heard from the Venusian expedition. But there are a hundred things that could have gone wrong! We have to investigate, find out what happened, correct our mistakes—"

"Five billion dollars of the taxpayer's money for a crack-brained day-dream of science! Well, there won't be

any more. The people with common sense are through being fooled by clap-trap; the Sats must come down!"

Jeb said desperately, "For generations, sir, the Sats have kept the peace!"

"There won't be another war. I'm twice your age, young fellow; I know what I'm talking about. The Eurasian Confederacy is having trouble enough simply holding itself together. If they make one move, we can lick the hide off 'em inside a week."

"Without the Sats?"

"The Sats should never have been sent up in the first place; Man wasn't meant to leave the earth."

"The Sats exist; we have to take them into account. You're not being logical, sir."

"No?" The kind old man draped his arm cozily around Jeb's shoulder. "Then I'm proud of it, young fellow. Logic is another part of the bill of goods science has jammed down our throats."

## 2



EB MADE his escape from the bar. In the lobby he registered for a room and bought a handful of magazines. Alone in his thickly-carpeted bedroom, he thumbed through the publications,

reading the political news.

The two major political parties were both running highly-reputable candidates, statesmanlike in appearance and philosophy. On domestic issues they were apparently in complete agreement. Their only difference revolved around American participation in the League of Free Nations. The real news of the campaign was reported, with appropriate tongue-in-cheek humor, in the "Miscellany" column of *Time*,

*Last week energetic disciples of Cyril Bowman's Truth Committee girded up their burlap skirts and took a straw-vote in five major industrial cities. Result, according to the Bowmanites: thirty percent of the popular vote will go to honest-faced, golden-tongued Cyril Justinian Bowman.*

Jeb threw the magazine aside. How could they treat it so casually? Was he the only person who recognized the danger? Perhaps it impressed him only because he had been out of the States for a month. Five weeks ago the Truth Committee had been an amusing fringe of comic-relief; now Bowman claimed a third of the vote!

Suddenly Jeb made up his mind. He put through a long distance call to his agent in New York. "Sam? This is Jeb Williams. I'm in L. A."

Sam sounded sleepy and irritable. "Glad you're home, boy; but why call in the middle of the night? What's cooking?"

"This Hollywood deal, Sam; I want—"

"All set, Jeb. Check in at the studio Monday morning. Best deal I've ever pulled for you. Tech director on three space-operas."

"I want to postpone it, Sam."

Sam was abruptly wide-awake. "Postpone it? You can't! And you'll never get—"

"Or call it off."

"What's eating you? This means a thousand a week!"

"I won't have the time, Sam. You see, I'm going into politics." After a moment of shocked, unbelieving silence, Sam began to splutter indignant admonitions. "I'll see you tomorrow," Jeb intervened. He replaced the telephone in its cradle, gently.

Before he went to bed that night, Jeb wrote his first political article, a precisely-factual analysis of the propaganda in the pamphlet the girl had

given him. He took the morning plane for New York. At four in the afternoon he was in his agent's office.

Sam had cooled off a little in the interval; and when he read Jeb's article, his amicability was fully restored. "The *Post* is crying for something like this," he said.

"They understand how serious the situation is?"

"The editor is aware that Bowman's a shyster." Sam tapped the manuscript happily. "Maybe it was a good idea, giving up that Hollywood deal, Jeb; there's more dough in this sort of thing right now. Think you could turn out one a week until November?"

"Right now, the money doesn't matter. I'm going to work for one of the candidates, if I can."

"One of the candidates?" Sam repeated with heavy sarcasm. "It doesn't matter which, I suppose? You'll just toss a coin and—"

"No—so long as Bowman's defeated."

"That idiot hasn't a chance. But go ahead, Jeb: have your fling at politics. Get it out of your system while you're young. Shoot along all the commercial stuff you can; if it's as good as this, I'll sell it for you." Sam fished a card out of his wallet and tossed it to Jeb. "Tell you what I'll do. Keller and I were in school together. I'll call him up and pave the way for you."

**J**EB SAW Josiah Keller the following morning. He was a tall, white-haired, courtly gentleman, with a slight and unobtrusive Southern accent. As candidate for the opposition party, he was gracious and attentive.

"I'd be pleased—no, honored!—to have you working with us, Mr. Williams," Keller declared. "And we could use a writer of your ability. Yet, my friend, I—I don't quite see—" Keller hesitated, and favored Jeb with his most photogenic smile. "Now, mind, any friend of Sam's is a friend

of mine. But your specialty, Mr. Williams, is science."

"I'm a graduate physicist."

"That's it, precisely. You have a flair for popularizing—for explaining in layman's language—all the wonders of the world of science. I don't visualize how that type of writing would be helpful in a political campaign."

"Mr. Keller, the technique of science applied to the kind of trash the Truth Committee is reeling out—"

"But the best answer is silence. The real issue of this campaign, Mr. Williams, is the League of Free Nations. The Administration is moving in two directions at once: participating in a *de facto* world government, and still pretending to maintain the fiction of national sovereignty."

Keller cleared his throat and launched the booming tones of a standard oration. "I say, sir, that we must face the facts squarely. The League of Free Nations is a reality. We must willingly and openly sacrifice our sovereignty to the larger unit. In the foreseeable future, the League will come to terms with the Eurasian Confederacy and we will establish a united world for the first time in history."

"But none of that can happen, Mr. Keller, if our Sats are brought down."

"Of course not, Mr. Williams! The Sats give us security. The Eurasian Confederacy has sent up as many as we have. Naturally—and a good thing; it keeps both sides on even terms. They're afraid of us; we're afraid of them. It's a delicately-balanced situation, but it means that we've conquered war. In another generation we'll learn how to live in peace."

"If Bowman is elected—"

"That's absurd; we're an educated people." Keller glanced at his watch. "I've enjoyed our chat, Mr. Williams; it's not often that a politician has a chance to talk to a celebrity from the world of science. But I have an ap-

pointment with my publicity-chairman; I really should—"

"Naturally, Mr. Keller."

"And if you want to join our organization as a volunteer, we'll be glad to have you, sir."

Jeb walked out of the office, cheerless and disappointed. Keller seemed so right, so sure of himself; for a moment Bowman's golden voice was far away, like the muttering of a garish nightmare out of the past. "We're an educated people," Keller had said. Yet... was education, *per se*, an automatic immunity to propaganda?

Jeb visited the Administration headquarters later that afternoon, and made the same offer of his services—with the same results. Jeb spent fifteen minutes with the Party Chairman. He listened to Jeb with a courtesy and a courtliness that rivaled Keller's; but when Jeb was finished, the Chairman said, "Frankly, Mr. Williams, I just don't picture Bowman's propaganda as a campaign-issue. If we attempt to answer him, we only dignify the charges."

"Not an issue? Sir, the Truth Committee already claims thirty percent of the popular vote!"

"Every campaign, Mr. Williams, turns up a certain number of odd-balls. Don't forget, a third party has never won an American election." The Chairman stood up and extended his hand. "I've thoroughly enjoyed this talk, Mr. Williams; the President, I know, will be pleased that you've volunteered to work with us. If anything turns up that calls for your rather specialized talents, I'll get in touch with you. You can count on that."

**J**EB RETURNED to his hotel-room and sat at the open window, watching the autumnal dusk close over New York. He was twenty floors above the street, but he could still hear the distant mutter of traffic. Below him, on the step of a building, a giant mobile suddenly blazed with light, revealing

an enormous face which crumpled into a smile every forty-five seconds. Beneath the face, red letters demanded, *Bring down the Sats! Join a Truth Committee Today!*

Jeb wrung his hands helplessly. The threat blazed out from every corner of the sky, the smooth voice purred on every telescreen, but the politicians said, "Don't dignify the charges by answering them."

Only fact could counteract the propaganda, and already one-third of the nation had been victimized. Jeb knew he was not the only person who saw the danger; there must be others, millions of them. If he could only reach them, if he could only organize their opposition—

He remembered Sam's reaction to his political article, and he thought he had his answer. For the next week, Jeb holed himself up in his hotel room and churned out one article after another. He read every Truth Committee pamphlet he could lay his hands on; he saw every telecast Bowman made. And he replied to each generalization with specific facts. No paragraph had literary polish, yet each surged with a conviction as incisive as the proof of a geometric theorem. And Sam found publishers for the articles as fast as Jeb turned them out.

Three weeks before the election, Jeb's first political article was printed. That same day Bowman replied to it on his daily telecast. His panel guests were introduced as psychiatrists. In unctious voices, they explained that Jeb was suffering a derangement which they labeled as the "dementia scientifica." Using Jeb as a symbol, they pilloried all of science.

"Mr. Williams is simply misguided, spiritually blind," they intoned. "A delusion normally no more harmful than hypochondria, except for the gullible fools who may be convinced by this Mr. Williams that science stands for truth."

Jeb sat watching the telecast in sli-

lent rage. To make an effective stand against Bowman, he knew he had to be on the air simultaneously with the Truth Committee—or, failing that, immediately following Bowman's daily program. Jeb must counterpose fact against fiction as fast as the lie was told—before it became, by default, a part of the thought-reaction pattern of the listeners.

Jeb had saved enough money to pay for one nationwide telecast. But a one-shot program would be futile against Bowman's flood of words. Since the brunt of Bowman's attack had been made upon scientists as a class, Jeb thought it logical that he could call upon them for financial help. For the next two days Jeb made a whirlwind tour of the universities, project sites, and industrial laboratories located close to New York.

### 3



THE REACTION of the scientists was by no means unanimous.

Old Dr. Graymeyer said, "Science is objective, Mr. Williams; if we plunge into partisan debate, we lose our objectivity and we would lose, at the same time, the respect of the public. Science and politics don't mix."

Others talked vaguely of help, but offered Jeb no money. Mike Oakville, who had been a classmate of Jeb's, declared, "You've got to see this thing from the right prospective, Jeb. Bowman can't win the election. A war-monger, perhaps, dealing in the old prejudices, might overthrow the peace of the world—but not these naive neurotics in Bowman's Truth Committee. Not the good people, Jeb; we're in no danger from them!"

Jeb's first real encouragement came from Dr. Dodge, who had been the

chairman of Jeb's doctoral committee.

"So you think you can do something about Bowman," the old man mused.

"You'll grant he's a threat to our security?"

"Oh...no one questions that."

"Keller and the President are very unconcerned."

"They're both intelligent men; they're entirely conscious of the danger. Perhaps they've hit upon the best solution—simply to ignore the Truth Committee entirely."

"Then you think I shouldn't—"

"Bowman has to be stopped. It can't be done by law; he has every right to campaign for the presidency. Maybe you have the solution, Jeb; I don't know. Maybe you'll fail, too."

"Fail?" Jeb repeated in a dead voice. "Fail, when I'm holding facts up against falsehoods?"

"You're not just fighting Bowman, Jeb, but a deeply-ingrained fear in the human soul. Bowman's trading in fear. We've lived with it so long we don't always recognize the symptoms. Millions of us are so desperate to escape the fear that we leap at straws; Bowman seems to give us a way out."

"By pulling down the Sats?"

"The fear goes back a long way, Jeb—to a time before you and I were born. The world was split in half by political ideologies, the earliest forms of the Eurasian Confederacy and the League of Free Nations. On both sides, we convinced ourselves that we could not survive unless we destroyed the enemy. Science armed us with a fantastic array of nightmare-weapons, and the targets were always the enemy cities. Generations of city-dwellers have grown up with the fear hanging invisibly over their heads: at any time—tonight, tomorrow at dawn, sometime next year—sudden death may leap upon them without warning. The Satellites were a kind of ultimate weapon. We've almost a hundred up

there now, swinging in permanent orbits above the earth. Forty-five Sats are ours, with their automatic weapons trained on the enemy cities—and forty-five are Eurasian, blindly aiming their destruction at us. A flash of a radio beam; a slight mathematical miscalculation of an orbit; even a large meteor straying innocently into our skies—anything could set them off, Jeb, and in an hour every city would be laid waste. Only the country towns and villages could survive. Bowman has his hand on the most sensitive nerve-center of the human soul when he says we must bring down the Sats."

"There's no logic to it, Dr. Dodge!" Jeb cried. "He's blaming the machines—and the scientists who made the machines—for the things men might do with them."

"When you're afraid, it's hard to make such neat distinctions. Bowman has found a scapegoat, too. Science is guilty, rather than man himself; somehow that eases our consciences. Jeb, even when Bowman is defeated at the polls—and I rely enough on the majority judgment of Americans to know he will be—yet, even then, the damage will have been done. Bowman has turned our individual fears into a group neurosis. Millions of us now believe we can solve our problems by running headlong back into the past."

"You admit all that, and still think we should ignore him?"

"I don't know, Jeb; I honestly, don't know. You have an idea you can answer him on the air. It's worth a try."

"Unfortunately, that calls for a great deal of money."

"I have time to spare, and a certain prestige among my colleagues. I'll raise the money for you; I promise that. Go ahead and contract for your television time. It might help a lot; or it might—"

"Might what, Dr. Dodge?"

The old professor smiled. "Do what you must, Jeb; good luck."

**T**HIRTEEN days before the election Jeb made his first telecast. He went on the air immediately after Cyril Bowman's panel. Jeb had no preparation, except for notes he had made during Bowman's telecast. He spoke clearly and earnestly, building a careful structure of truth to shatter the web of propaganda, item by item.

In the midst of his talk, Jeb looked up and saw Cyril Bowman watching him from the control-booth. Bowman's round, handsomely honest face was bland and expressionless.

When Jeb had finished and left the studio, Bowman joined him in the foyer. "My car's outside, Mr. Williams; let me give you a lift back to your hotel."

"It hardly seems appropriate, Mr. Bowman—"

"Come, now! We're not children."

As the sleek car slid through the New York traffic, Cyril Bowman smiled warmly at Jeb and said, "You made a good talk today, I think."

"Tomorrow I'll do better."

"Of course, Mr. Williams, because I'm going to answer you in my broadcast. That should give you plenty of material. Between us, I think, we can put on quite a show."

"I'm not interested in the sort of show I'm doing, sir."

"Naturally not; you're defending yourself and—"

"I'm attempting to defend the freedom of science."

"Precisely. And we should have started this debate long ago. But, if I may, Mr. Williams, I'd like to give you just one pointer on technique."

"Yes?"

"You tried to squeeze too much into your talk. The listeners can't remember so many facts at one time. Keep it simple, Mr. Williams. Take one point and hammer it home. Repeat; repeat; repeat! You'll never get anywhere trying to make a logical answer to every misstatement I make."

The car came to a stop in front of Jeb's hotel and Bowman threw open the door. "Good day, Mr. Williams; I'll see you again tomorrow, I hope."

After that, Cyril Bowman always waited until Jeb had completed his telecast and drove him back to his hotel. In a sense, the two men became friends. Jeb couldn't quite understand how it had happened. For one thing, when Cyril Bowman was not in the studio, his personality was very different. He lost his tone of bombastic oratory; his toothy, salesman's smile relaxed. He was mild-mannered, easy-going, pleasant to talk to. Then, too, the advice he gave Jeb for improving his telecast technique seemed to be sound; in a week Jeb's listener-mail jumped from a dozen letters a day to four thousand.

"Why are you helping me?" Job once asked the politician.

"Maybe I'm just quixotic; I hate to fight an opponent who has a handicap."

"We're not playing polite parlor-games, Mr. Bowman. I'll destroy your Truth Committee if I can."

"I know that, Williams; but I want you to stay on the air, too."

"When I prove you a liar a dozen times a day?"

"With facts and uncomfortable truths, my friend. That never appeals to your average man, when someone else is giving him an emotional answer that's more satisfying. Before you went on the air, I was battling an abstraction, a shadow-man called the scientist. It was tough sledding sometimes, because I had no opposition. You're giving my symbol reality; you're my stereotype of the enemy."

"What happens if you win the election, Mr. Bowman? Do your Truth Committees just blast up to the Satellites in shuttle-rockets and start taking them apart?"

"Frankly, I haven't given it a thought."

"Perhaps you should. Do you know what follows when any craft ap-

proaches a Sat without first flashing the proper landing code?"

"Naturally. The automatic weapons take over, and the Sat fires its missiles at the enemy cities."

"The firing of one Satellite sets off all the others—both ours and the Eurasians'."

Bowman draped his arm over Jeb's shoulder. "If I win the election, I'll be the government. The Shuttle Rocket Corps will have to surrender the landing-codes to me."

"The Corpsmen are scientists, Mr. Bowman—the men you're trying to destroy. They might just happen to respond to this situation with your kind of emotional thinking."

The politician smiled. "That would be ironic, wouldn't it? But we'll cross that bridge in November, my friend, if I win the election." Bowman threw back his head and laughed uproariously. "If I win. You know, I do believe you think I will!"

UNTIL ELECTION day, Jeb made an all-network telecast every day. On three occasions he received guarded notes of praise from both the President and Josiah Keller. The major party candidates were pleased that Jeb was attempting to reply to Bowman's propaganda, although both publicly declined any direct responsibility.

On the night of the election, Jeb was invited to hear the returns at the Administration-headquarters in the Waldorf. By seven o'clock, the first scattered vote count was in from parts of New England. They indicated an Administration victory; the ritual of celebration began.

But within an hour the jubilation collapsed. Jeb watched in rising fear as new tallies were flashed on the telescreen. In rural areas, Keller and the President divided the vote; but the city ballots piled up ten to one for Cyril Bowman. By midnight the pattern was apparent; the cities had gone overwhelmingly for Bowman.

True, he had taken only a third of the popular vote, but with it he captured the electoral vote of the industrial states, because the rural vote was divided.

It was clear, shortly, that none of the three candidates had won enough of a majority for the presidency. As the politicians had confidently predicted, a third party could not win an American election; but it could split the vote so that no other candidate could win, either.

In the big cities, the robed Truth Committees swirled out into the streets, parading with flaming torches and screaming their Truth Hymn. The sedate corridors of the Waldorf were crowded with wild-eyed fanatics who cried, "Bring down the Sats! Bring down the Sats!"

The mob broke into the President's headquarters. "Concede the election!" they cried. "Concede!"

The President climbed on a table and tried to address them, "Go home, good people; this is no time for rioting. In due course, the election will be decided by your Representatives in Congress, in the American way—under the provisions of the Constitution. No sort of violence now can—"

Their angry voices rose to drown him out. "Decided, yes! By your party-representatives. Who'll vote for Bowman in Congress? We've won; we won't be cheated. Bring down the Sats!"

The big telescreen, which was still recording the election returns, went suddenly blank. The camera focused on the harrassed face of a studio announcer.

"As a public service, we bring you the following special telecast from the Truth Committee candidate, Cyril J. Bowman." The camera panned to a close-up of the politician. The mob in the Waldorf fell quiet as they looked at their leader. Taking advantage of the distraction, the President slipped unobtrusively out of the room.

"I speak tonight to members of my Truth Committee, everywhere in America," Bowman said. His persuasive smile was gone; his tone was hesitant, uncertain. To Jeb, it seemed to be edged with fear. "We have *not* won the election; we have nothing to celebrate. The Constitution provides that Congress will determine the victor when no candidate has a majority of the electoral vote. As loyal Americans, we must abide by this decision."

A roar of rage went up from the mob. "They've bought him over! He's betrayed us! He promised to bring down the Sats!"

Someone hurled a chair at the screen. The glass shattered and the picture faded. In fury the mob smashed the furniture in the Administration headquarters, pulling the curtains down from the windows and ripping them into shreds. Like a storm wind, they charged through the debris and flowed out into the street.

Jeb walked back to his hotel through a city thrown suddenly into chaos. Robed bands of Truth Committee members marched in the streets, singing their Hymm, drunk with fear and frustration. Here and there the police tried to control the mob; but more often they joined the rioters. And why not, Jeb wondered: the police were city-dwellers, too. They had been reared in the same fear.

## 4



YRIL J. BOWMAN, tense and frightened, was waiting for Jeb in the lobby of his hotel. "What'll I do, Williams?" he demanded breathlessly. "This is getting out of hand.

They're rioting in every city in the country!"

"Did you expect anything else?"

"People can't be such utter fools!"

"Not fools, Bowman; simply human.

You were the fool, because you knew better. Or perhaps we were—because we didn't take your nonsense seriously enough. But the people aren't fools. You deliberately short-circuited the processes of logic, and threw them back on primitive emotions for a solution to a social problem."

"All right, Williams; I was wrong."

"What were you after? What did you think would happen?"

"I—it doesn't matter any more. The important thing right now is to undo the damage."

"If you can. There's a small chance—"

"I'll try anything!"

"Buy up all the time on every television-network for the next twenty-four hours. You've cleaned enough on this swindle to pay for it. Then you and I'll go on the air together. And this time, Bowman, we'll both give the facts and the unpleasant realities."

As the two men entered the studio, they were handed a news-bulletin from Chicago. National Guard units, called out to police the city, had joined the rioting Truth Committees instead. A second bulletin followed in less than five minutes. An armed mob of five thousand was attacking the Shuttle Rocket Base in California; the Corps, fantastically outnumbered, was calling for reinforcements.

"It's too late for logic," Jeb said grimly. "Now we've got to save what we can. Three months ago I visited the California shuttle-base. I saw their defenses. From an air attack, the base is the safest in the world; but from the ground—"

"But the reinforcements—"

"It's time you faced the truth, too, Bowman. Your Committee will seize the Shuttle Rockets; nothing can stop them now. They'll try the policy you've taught them, to bring the Sats down by force. And you know what happens as soon as they make an un-

authorized landing on a Satellite."

Bowman ran his hand weakly across his mouth. "The world goes up in atomic dust."

"Not the world, Bowman; just the cities—the industries and the machines we've taken centuries to create. All the technology of modern civilization."

"And billions of people—"

"No, Bowman, not the people. We're going on the air, and we're going to tell the people to evacuate the cities. All the people, everywhere, Bowman. You'll beam your warning to the Eurasians. They know less about you; you have the technique to persuade them you're telling the truth. I'll take over the networks here."

The politician licked his lips. "How much time do we have?"

"The rocket-base can hold out for thirty minutes; certainly no longer. It'll take your people an hour—maybe a little less—to get a Shuttle Rocket into the air. After that, we have twenty-two minutes."

"All told, less than two hours!"

"With luck, we could have a few minutes more. You'll know our time's up when you see a flash in the sky. Don't worry about it, Bowman; they say it's painless—at least when you're sitting in the center of a target, the way you're going to be."

**J**EB KNEW the telecast was a desperate measure, a shock-treatment for the social mania Bowman had sown. With rioters already in the streets, the cure might push the surging violence into catastrophic panic. Jeb spoke emotionlessly and calmly; over and over he repeated one recurrent theme, "Leave the cities. Take none of your goods; save yourselves. The things men have built can be made again, if we save mankind itself."

After fifteen minutes, the news-bulletins began to pour into the studio. The cities were evacuated in surpris-

ingly good order. The Truth Committee rioters fled when they heard the news; among them, there was a certain incidence of violence, but the majority had exhausted their emotional energy in reacting to the election returns. They responded with plodding obedience to the directions of more responsible citizens.

The first national reaction to Jeb's telecast was angry disbelief, as millions of people were dragged out of their beds by their frightened neighbors. But then the President went on the air to confirm the news of the attack on the Shuttle Rocket Base in California; he added the further information that the air-force had attempted to bomb the base, but the automatic interceptor missiles had broken the back of the attack.

Slowly the great lines of automobiles moved out of the cities. Perhaps the most effective factor in preventing chaos was the lateness of the hour. Jeb's first telecast was made shortly before two in the morning. Most of the people had been in bed asleep; the warning came to them at different times, and the people left the cities in a trickle rather than a simultaneous flood.

After an hour, Cyril Bowman came to the studio where Jeb was talking. He gestured to the control-room engineer to interrupt Jeb's telecast. "We've done all we can, Williams," he said.

"Even if that happened to be true, it isn't enough; you left us only a choice of disasters."

"I'm sorry."

The strain had worn down Jeb's tight grip on his emotions. He responded angrily, "You blow the world apart, and then say you're sorry! What did you think you'd accomplish, anyway?"

"I—I'm not sure any more, Jeb."

"Was it the money?"

"No." Bowman ran his fingers over his lips. "Yes, Jeb. Let it go at that."

"Or did you want to see your name in lights? Your face grinning at us from those rooftop mobiles?"

CYRIL BOWMAN'S poise was gone. His golden voice was shattered into a thousand screeching fragments. "I don't know!" he wept. "It doesn't matter!" With an effort he drew a long breath and tried to speak more calmly. "It seemed easy, Jeb. People were afraid, and the satellites symbolized our fear. If we took them away—"

Jeb gasped, "You actually believed that, Bowman?"

"Science made the mistake, Jeb; I didn't! *Why* did they invent such monstrous weapons and then threaten us with them day after day and year upon year? You tell me I'm blowing up the world."

Bowman grasped Jeb's hand in trembling fingers. "Did I bulld the Sats? Did I put them up in the sky? Tell me, Jeb: has science ever given us anything but torment and terror? I wanted to lead the world to peace—back to the sanity and normalcy of our grandfathers' times. Peace, Jeb! We could have had it so easily; we could have been happy again. The rest of you were so utterly blind!"

Jeb turned away, sick with nausea. He had his answer, in the torrent of fervent words, in the fanatical blaze of conviction he saw deep in Bowman's eyes. An honest face, a compelling voice, an idealism which was obviously sincere: out of it madness had forged the pattern of destruction.

After a moment, Bowman said, "New York is empty. The studio-engineers are leaving now. Hadn't we better go with them?"

"They can leave the circuits open, Bowman. We're sticking it out to the end."

"We don't both have to—"

"Perhaps not; leave, if you like. I hadn't thought of running out on the job myself. There may still be people

somewhere who haven't heard my warning."

Jeb nodded to the technicians in the control-room to put him on the air again, and he turned back toward the camera. As he began to talk, his voice was hoarse, his throat sore from the strain. He reached for a glass of water, and he saw a gleam of metal in the air. He turned slightly toward Bowman as the blow struck his head...

Jeb recovered consciousness slowly. He found that he was lying against a tree-trunk at one side of a meadow which was crowded with a mass of people and automobiles. A pale dawn light washed over the sky. The studio-technician sat on the grass beside Jeb, while a nurse was taking Jeb's pulse. Jeb sat up, rubbing the painful swelling at the base of his brain.

"He'll be all right now," the nurse decided. She dumped six tablets into Jeb's hand. "Take one of these every two hours."

The nurse moved down into the throng of people and the studio technician smiled tightly at Jeb. "Bowman said to give you his apologies. It was the only way he could get you out of New York."

"He's still there?"

"He was, Mr. Williams. It's all over; not a city left standing anywhere on the earth." The technician shook his head. "A mighty brave man, wasn't he?"

"Cyril Bowman?"

"Sure. He stuck it out to the last, broadcasting his warning to the world."

"But Bowman's responsible for—"

Blithely the technician ignored the interruption. "And Bowman pulled it off, too. Do you realize Mr. Williams, we haven't had more than two thousand bomb-casualties in the entire country? A few minutes ago we made

radio contact with Eurasia; they've come out of it as well as we did!"

Again Jeb tried to protest. "But Cyril Bowman was only—"

"Old Bowman's done something else for us, too; he's brought the Eurasian Confederacy and the League of Free Nations together. Neither side has anything now except wreckage, and the Eurasians have proposed that we can co-operate to rebuild the world." The technician stood up and fished a cigarette from his pocket. "The Eurasians call Bowman the man who saved the world." He nodded toward the crowd cluttering the meadow. "Our people are saying that, too."

"Cyril Bowman?" Jeb nearly

choked on the words. "The man who saved the world?"

"And he's given us a better world! If we work with the Eurasians to rebuild, we'll never split into factions again."

"Bowman, the hero, the legend; we'll teach our children that he gave us a united planet." Jeb began to laugh, but it was very gentle laughter, because anything else would have shaken into stabbing fire the dull pain throbbing in his head. He whispered very softly, "Cyril Bowman: the man who saved the world!"

In time, Jeb supposed, he might even come to believe it himself.

★

## IXTL IGO, SON!

(continued from page 69)

she murmured. "A man of one's own, round and soft and *old* too, They all die so young on Ceres. All are the same... too hard, too thin, too young."

She had come up to Old Dugan who regarded her with sheepish, sagging eyes. His mouth worked helplessly. "Why, madam—" he said spluttering. "Why-why-why—"

Marie swept into his arms, forcing her smooth red lips to his. She reveled in rolling her cream-skinned cheeks on his pudgy face. "Baby," she cooed, "oh, my darling baby!"

Old Dugan turned to James. He tried to make a comeback. He tried to get back. "Eleven hundred dollars on the table, son—"

But he couldn't very well, with the girl hanging on his mighty frame. "Please," she cried. "You do not have a wife. No wife, please! This is all mine, like a tub, a glorious mushroom."

Old Dugan sank into a chair, his eyes suddenly wet. "As a matter of fact," he said, "I have never married. My weight has been a disadvantage. That, and an unfortunate escapade I once had." His lips trembled. "No one

has ever loved me, you might say," he said.

She fell into his lap.

"The police are here," said his secretary from the door.

"Tell them there's a madman running around here with a pair of snowshoes," said Old Dugan instantly; "I intend to prefer charges later. Now go away and leave me alone."

The secretary ogled and left.

"You too, Bosworth. You-ah-can forget about the expense-account."

James rose, relieved, but a thought leaped into his mind, paused and started to go, but he caught it.

"Oh—Chief, about that raise we spoke of." (They hadn't) "I'll just tell the paymaster you approve it."

"Yes, son, certainly; of course. Don't be a fool."

James went, saying to Marie. "Well, *ixtl* igo, kid."

Marie, her face a daze of happiness as she kissed her bald-headed mushroom and rubbed his necktie to her cheek, didn't even bother to turn around.

"*Ixtl* frpp," she purred.

★

## STAND WATCH IN THE SKY (continued from page 34)

THE DANAE were gone. Ladia and her pet turned to leave.

*I am not crying*, she realized, surprised.

"Ladia!"

The Earthman held her. "Ladia, I'm sorry."

She nodded wordlessly.

"I was a boy. A boy dreams. He dreams things that are—impossible for the man."

She smiled faintly. *A girl dreams, too.*

"Your people—they deserve better than they've had. I'll see to that."

She nodded again. "Thank you," she whispered.

She left the alien stars behind, holding the stegosaur's chubbiness in her arms. *What kind of superman commands supermen?* she thought. Could she possibly have understood even one tenth of what that solitary Earthman was? She looked down at the pet in her arms. *I created you. I am your life and your death. I am your comfort and protection. Do you understand me?*

And, as she returned to her familiar loneliness, she thought of how terribly lonely the Earthman must be.

★

## READIN' and WRITHIN' (continued from page 46)

SINCE I'VE objected to pretentiousness on the part of other reviewers at times, it doesn't hurt to take a look in the mirror now and then to see if there's a mote in my own eye. Part of what I've objected to has been weighty consideration of items which required little more than straightforward recommendation or rejection, allied with cursory treatment of items which should have been discussed at length.

When an anthologist has proven himself capable and effective, as Groff Conklin has, there's little point in raking over the minutiae of his latest selections, unless a reviewer feels that (a) the anthologist's reputation is unwarranted (b) the present offerings are not representative. Neither is the case with the two volumes listed below.

Crown Publishers have sent me Conklin's "Omnibus of Science Fiction", another in the series of over-all anthologies, which Conklin breaks up into his well-known categories; Wonders of Earth and of Man; Inventions, Dangerous and Otherwise; From Outer Space; Far Traveling; Adventures in Dimension; and Worlds of Tomorrow. Actually, there is more fluidity here than in the earliest volumes in this indefinite series; but the general approach is just about the same as before, and the range of quality varies (as usual) between excellence and competence. If there are less "great" stories than in earlier selections, what is offered is more representative of general worthwhile fiction, as you will find it over a course of months or years in any consistently-reliable magazine.

Vanguard Press has sent me "Adventures in Dimension", a specialized collection of tales dealing with time-travel and parallel worlds. If I had to choose between this and Conklin's other book, I'd take this sheerly on the ground that it offers a more unusual selection, and sharper ideation on the whole—although, be it noted, there has been no sacrifice in Conklin's standards of story value for the sake of idea. The price is \$2.95, and a just one for what is offered.

Pellegrini and Cudahy ask \$3.95 for August Derleth's collection, entitled "Worlds of Tomorrow", an anthology of definitely off-trail and unusual yarns, well worth a spot in your collection.

Greenberg, Publisher offers Kendall Foster Crossen's "Future Tense", a collection of old and new tales, at \$3.50. I haven't had a chance to read the new material, but the reprints are all good ones; on this basis alone, I'd say the book was recommendable.

Twayns Publishers has instituted a fascinating series of "triplets"—three short novels in a single volume, all built on a common ground. The first is "Witches Three" (\$3.95), dealing with the central subject of witchcraft, and offers "The Blue Star" by Fletcher Pratt, "Conjure Wife" by Fritz Leiber, and "There Shall be no Darkness" by James Blish. Since I've long considered the last as the finest werewolf tale I've seen, there's little point in withholding a recommendation of this volume until I got around to reading the other two. —RWL

A Department For Science-Fictionists



## Down To Earth

(continued from page 8)

RAYMOND E. BANKS first came up in the June 1953 issue of *Dynamic Science Fiction*, with "Never Trust An Intellectual"—which came in third.

IRVING COX, JR., is a semi-newcomer; he's been appearing within the last year.

### Letters

A READER asks me, "What can we do when we like several stories in an issue equally well? I suppose it would louse up your rating system to put two or more in tie-positions, but that's the way I've often felt."

The answer is simple: if you feel that two or more stories should be tied for first-place, or second place, etc., then list them that way. Such rating won't harm my calculating-system in the slightest; it'll help show results a little closer to the way you (and perhaps other readers, who felt the same way) really reacted to the stories.

Another reader asks, "Are votes counted that don't come in on the preference-coupon? I'd like to vote, but don't want to cut my coupon out, even

though there's only an ad on the other side."

Again, the answer is simple: I count *all* votes, no matter how received, so long as I can determine how the reader is voting. That coupon is merely for the purpose of encouraging readers who haven't the time to write a letter or postcard (or who don't feel like making extended comment) to let me know their reactions. It's a convenience for some—but if *you* don't find it convenient, then don't bother with it.

Still another asks, "Do you run letters just as you receive them, or do you cut them down?"

Well, that all depends. First of all, I want to hear what you think—not just what might look well in print. That means that, at times, (where I want to run a letter) I may have to delete some personal comment which wouldn't go well in print (but which I appreciate seeing, nonetheless); also, a number of readers have objected to running rating-lists in the letter department, since "The Reckoning" covers that item. Thus, if your rating-list (including the vote on letters) is in the body of your communication, I'll probably delete it, after taking note of how

you voted, unless there's a discussion of the stories, or argument on the issues brought up in another reader's letter. (On the matter of asides, I don't mind running slams and complaints, but I've often snipped out some of the more fulsome praise received. I loved it, you understand, but such affection is better in private.)

My thanks to all of you who've taken heed of my request for letters typed double-space, using only one side of the sheet. Handwritten communications are as welcome as ever; it was just the retyping-job on typed letters received, where the writer used both sides of the paper, that I objected to.

### ISAAC ASIMOV

Dear Robert:

Even from a distance, the first sight of the May issue of *Future Science Fiction* struck my soul with a nameless foreboding. It oppressed me with unspeakable depression. My arm moved toward it as though through molasses and a leaden tremor went through my body as my fingers made first contact.

I looked at it apprehensively. Looked all right. Cover nice! Cover story by Tenn and I love Tenn. Edges trimmed; appearance respectable. Great! Great!

From whence then this cold shudder that racked my being. Carefully, my back to the wall, I rifled the pages and there—there—THERE on page 52, in your review of "Star Science Fiction Stories", you mention among its contents a story by Isaac Asomiv.

Robert, you false friend, who is this usurper, this base minion, Asomiv. I defy him. Away with him.

Let it be announced to the world at large that there is one Asimov and Asimov is his name. No z's, no double s's, no e-n-i-o-n suffixes.

And tell me no tales of typographical errors. Typographical errors, forsooth You spelled Cornblut correctly, also Winhdam, Shekclly, Liebre, and Looster dul Roy. Why then the difficulty with Asomiv, I mean Asimov.

Confess it, fiend. It is a plot. An ignominious and vile plot. But grief overwhelms me. —I can no more—

Dear Ike—

But of course! And at the risk of a treason-trial, I shall tell some of the dark secrets of the mighty SFEAA (Society for the Eternal Aggravation

of Asimov), so you may have some idea of what the future holds for you.

This vile organization, composed of an untold number of editors, printers, proof-readers, reviewers, blurb-men, etc., can be considered in more or less permanent session, bursting into horrid activity whenever the occasion arises, or can be made to arise. Anyone who has ever had, or is likely to have, the opportunity of taking action in respect to its aims is a member; members who can find a novel way of misspelling Asimov, or presenting an ancient misspelling in a new light, are signally honored. I dare not mention how.

My contribution was, as you saw, a new, different, and unusual misspelling; and to this, I added the extra twist of the knife by making sure that your name appeared twice, spelled correctly the second time.

All of us love science-fiction, and revere a great author thereof—namely, and to wit, thee. But we fear that fame and easy living will corrupt your glory; therefore do we purge your ease by incessant small irritations; for without suffering, the noblest artist's hand begins to lose its power. RWL

### FREDERIK B. CHRISTOFF

Dear Bob:

If I knew how to compliment you with flowery phrases and compliments I would do so but all I can say is, "What happened down there at Columbia?" All these improvements, and you didn't even mention they were coming!

The cover layout is very attractive, and if it doesn't help sell the book nothing will. It stands up very well with the best in the pulp field. You have pleased a lot of people by this cover change; but, you weren't happy; you had to go and please everybody by trimming the pages. This improves the book a hundred percent; even the paper looks better, and I will say that there never was a neater printing job done on a Columbia publication. Why, I can not find one blurry word in the whole issue. You even went as far as to cut down on those little inside fillos; this also improves the layout, and if you did away with them all together it would help all the more. To say I am pleased is an understatement. Now all

you need is a better quality paper, but even as *Future* now stands, it is well worth the twenty five cents paid.

The best story, in my opinion, was "Ecological Onslaught". Can't make up my mind if "Liberation of Earth" was a serious story or a satire.

One Calvin Beck claims there are around twenty Stf. mags on the market. I would like to see him prove this by sending me a list of the twenty-four mags he talks about, if he can. This issue should tell him off and his complaints about *Future*.

—39 Cameron Street S.,  
Kitchener, Ontario, Canada

Listing the titles of magazines in our orbit poses the problem of whether you want to include every magazine entirely devoted to fantasy and science-fiction, or whether you only want to list those which, by policy, are restricted to science-fiction. I say "by policy", because any of them are likely to run an occasional story which you would consider fantasy, with or without editorial acknowledgement of the fact. But these are exceptions to the general rule. Then again, you have to remember that the field seems to be very fluid; today's count may not be correct tomorrow.

"Liberation of Earth" is most definitely satire, but I'd say it was a serious story in essence; that is, the author was telling a tale with a definite point above and beyond the action. It struck me as being rather Voltairean in tone.

## MARIL SHREWSBURY

Dear Bob:

I have nearly committed the unpardonable sin of condemning a magazine before I read it, and in this case it was *Future*. I bought the May issue of both your mags, *Science Fiction Quarterly*, and *Future*. I read the quarterly first, and was so disappointed with it that I very nearly didn't bother to read *Future*. But economics prevailed (who can afford to waste a quarter?) I went ahead and read it, and received what amounted to the surprise of my life. It was good—in fact, one of the best issues of any magazine that I have read in a long time. I usually shy away from the "pulp" but the story-quality of *Future* not only meets, but in some cases, even surpasses the stories in the so-called, high-class pocket-size magazines.

Being a full-fledged, green tinged fan, I

always read the letter-sections of the magazines I buy, but I was sorely tempted to pass yours up. It would be a lot more interesting if you would wield the blue pencil a little more heavily, and cut those novel type letters down to size. Speaking of which, I now leave you, with the echos of my fulsoms praise ringing in your shell-like ears (conch).

—Box 1296, Aransas Pass, Texas

General consensus of opinion is that the long discussions of dianetics, theosophy, nostradamianism, etc., have about worn out their interest-value; so they're being dropped, after this issue, except and unless someone has something different and new to say—at less than the lengths we've been seeing.

It's good to hear that you enjoyed the May *Future* so much—just as good as letters from those who enjoyed the May *Science Fiction Quarterly*. Natch, I'm as stricken at your disappointment with the May *Science Fiction Quarterly*, as I am with other readers' disappointment with the May *Future*. Ye ed is much too close to the forest to judge individual trees in such a case; *Future* looked much better to my bleary eyes, sheerly because of the trimmed edges, and the neat print-job throughout... beyond that, I pass.

## LEO LOUIS MARTELLO

Dear Mr. Lowndes:

This is in answer to your footnote to my letter in May *Future*! If a person in his everyday behaviour is a thief or an assassin he'll be no different under hypnosis. You can't make him do anything against his morals as he hasn't any. "*Superego*" is the Freudian word for conscience. Criminals, thieves, assassins have none. They are ruled solely by their *id*—by primitive, barbarian impulses checked by neither morals, convention nor religion. To tell a thief under hypnosis to steal, is the same as telling any normal young man to kiss the pretty girl next to him. It isn't something contrary to his everyday practice. He isn't doing something he wouldn't normally do. But it isn't the hypnosis that's doing it—it's his own conscious and unconscious pattern of behavior. If a girl will go to bed with you under hypnosis, then she'd also go with you while awake, too. To use hypnosis, you're only going about in a roundabout way to get what you could anyway.

A devout practicing Roman Catholic won't eat meat on Friday even if you tell him it's the Sabbath. But I repeat a *devout practicing Roman Catholic*. . . . And even if the hypnotist was able to cause an hallucination that it wasn't Friday and make her eat meat (which would be met with strong resistance from the subject) there's no sin committed, as she believed it was another day. But for the hypnotist to succeed in this suggestion there must be a latent desire to eat the meat! Perhaps "religious practice" would be better than religious "convictions."

The difference between Mesmerism and Hypnotism is this: the former is named after Dr. Franz Anton Mesmer who taught an "invisible fluid" theory along with animal magnetism. It was supposed that only persons possessing strong personal magnetism could hypnotize. . . . that they sent out this magnetic fluid, which enabled them to control all those who came to them. Then too, Mesmerism consisted of numerous useless waving of the hands, passes, a powerful stare, special powers etc. etc.

Hypnotism was coined by Dr. James Braid who threw out the "magnetic fluids" and Mesmeric passes, and showed it could be induced by concentration upon a certain object. He's the father of modern scientific hypnotism, which proves passes, evil eyes, magnetic fluids etc. are not necessary for hypnosis; that it's mostly suggestion associated with past conditionings (You're so tired, you'd just love to lie down!) and unconscious motivations. Mesmerism led to Hypnotism. The former was an art and theory taught by one particular man. The latter is a science taught and used by many, both lay and professional. One led to the other. And in this Dr. Mesmer must be given credit.

Judging by the numerous letters I've received I'd say there definitely is a boom in hypnotic interest. A few of the N.Y. *Future* readers even came down to my school whose doors are always open. . . . I still like *Future*, having been with it from the first and 20c or 25c I'll keep buying it as think it worth it. Thanks for hearing me out.

AMERICAN HYPNOTISM ACADEMY  
49 West 85th St; New York 24, N.Y.

Anyone want to argue the point? Meanwhile, without accepting your theories, I just want to point out that you have admitted what you formerly denied: namely, that it is entirely possible for a person to commit a crime under hypnosis.

NOAH W. McLEOD

Dear Sir:

I can't praise you too highly for your

courage in publishing Lester del Rey's article, "Get Thee Behind Me, Clio!" in the *May Future*. A radio-commentator who dared express similar ideas would be forced off the air. The very idea that Americans achieved democracy, not because of moral or racial superiority, but because they possessed the long rifle is a heresy to most people. The idea that they are in the process of losing their freedom, not solely because of some devilish Communist plot, but because the decisive weapons have become too expensive for the common man, and too complicated for him to operate, would seem to the man in the street to be Moscow-inspired propaganda.

But it is a fact that the amount of freedom, and the share of this world's goods to which the common man attains, are determined not by considerations of abstract justice—but by the balance of power in the community. And the most influential factor in determining the balance of power is the armament in use at a given time, as McKinley pointed out. I have not yet read McKinley's book, but I have read the rather similar book, "Armament And World History" by Major General Fuller—the British tank expert and military historian. And I can heartily recommend Fuller's book. Mr. del Rey should be writing books and articles giving the actual facts of political life to the public, or the more intelligent members thereof; the man is too valuable to waste on science-fiction.

I liked William Tenn's "Liberation Of Earth". It was a very, very choice satire on what happens to a small power which is fought over by two larger powers in a modern total war. Give us more Tenn.

Jack Vance's yarn "Ecological Onslaught" was well-plotted and well-written. But there is one detail that ruins the credibility of the tale for me:—why drag all those concubines or play-girls along with the expedition? No doubt they were nice to have along, but they used up scarce rocket space, food, and air. It seems to me that the logical thing to do would either be psychologically to condition the expedition members against sex, or give them some pill that would dull their desire for women. But give us more Vance; he writes interesting, if at times not very credible, tales.

And you, Mr. Lowndes, keep up the good work.

—Christine, North Dakota

There's quite a bit of evidence to support theories that the sex-drive cannot be removed, either by drugs or "psychological conditioning"—and that when it is repressed over a long period of time (as an interplanetary voyage would be) the drive expresses itself in various undesirable to deadly forms.

[Turn To Page 90]

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**FUTURE Science Fiction**

The most overt of these seem to be extreme power-lust and sadism, but there are many other, less immediately-detectable forms.

Whether Vance was using these theories in "Ecological Onslaught", or whether he merely had the play-girls for story-value, it seems to me that his story justified the element. You must admit that the record (history) pretty well shows that asceticism and inhumanity in human relations have a high coincidence—although the latter obviously does not appear only with the former. Still, some of the most terrible (over-all) regimes have been those where the leader was a "pure and incorruptible" person, like Robespierre, rather than a dissolute tyrant like Nero.

For comment on the del Rey article, see the letter below.

**MURRAY KING**

Dear Mr. Lowndes:

The del Rey article was quite fascinating and I'll have to look up this McKinley bird, but I wonder how far you can carry analogy when it comes to historical prediction.

If I follow del Rey right, then it sounds as if the mere fact of atomic weapons (which are way beyond the abilities of the man in the street to build, own, or operate) spells out the end of democracy throughout the world. Rightly then, if this is so, one would have expected some sort of military dictatorship in the USA and England by this time—or at least clear trends toward one.

Consider: the US Army certainly doesn't want to see America blasted or invaded by any other power, and the incidence of atomic weapons makes such an event likely—or at least possible. The US Army has the know-how on atomic weapons, while the government, as such, hasn't.

Surely there must be some group within the Army which feels that civilian government hasn't handled the matters of national defense, and practical foreign policy (aimed at discouraging warlike acts against us) with anything like the skill and effectiveness that the Army itself could do, were "realistic" military men in power.

Why hasn't the army taken over? Why hasn't there been at least some moves in that direction? After all, what could the government do, if a group of rebels, armed with tomics, said firmly, "Move out and let us handle this, or else!"

## DOWN TO EARTH

Could it be that "republican" traditions (stronger than "democratic" traditions, in the long run) are more powerful than the temptations and opportunities of the times?

After all, republican traditions kept Rome pretty well in civilian hands (despite the interregna of Marius, Sulla, and Pompey) for quite a period after the arms-situation was such that the legions could have put up an emperor (or prince, as the early emperors called themselves) and made the change stick. It was only after civilian government had shown itself completely incompetent to handle an empire (Caesar rightly complained that a good part of his career had been spent reconquering what corrupt and stupid senators had thrown away) that the move toward monarchy was made. And republican strength was too divided to profit by the conspiracy of Cassius and Brutus. (Actually, the conspirators considered themselves temporary dictators, anyway.)

At present, America does not have an empire to defend in anything like the sense of the Roman or other empires; and despite corruption, republican traditions are still strong. (After all, the Democrats accepted the Republican victory at the polls last year.)

The fact of the matter is that the arms-situation has been outside of the "common man's" control for at least a quarter of a century; yet, republican traditions (so far as civilian control goes) seem to have gained, rather than lost strength. Bureaucracy has grown but it has not been based on military might, either here or in the British Empire.

"Democracy" has fallen easily, when the arms-situation was such that the "common man" couldn't defend his "rights", where no democratic tradition of much strength existed (Russia: the democratic Provisional Government of Kerensky falls before a relatively small Bolshevik rebellion), or where extreme corruption is mated with hard times (France: defeated in the Napoleonic Wars, the economy unstable, corruption rife, the Republic is an easy victim of Louis Napoleon's coup d'etat; Germany: a weak republic, following disastrous defeat and generations of authoritarian rule cannot resist the Nazi seizure of power under thin "legal" guises).

I could go on and on, but I think I've made the point clear enough. What say the right honorable Messers del Rey and McKinley?

—Greenwich, Conn.

Hmm, I don't know *what* they'll say, but I'll bet we hear from them!

## ROBERT COULSON

Dear Mr. Lowndes:  
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MASTER 88 Welker St., Dept. 121-PH, New York 13

## FUTURE Science Fiction

Ray's article, "Get Thee Behind me, Clio." It was both informative and entertaining. Best story was "Liberation of Earth". Other stories; "Tenth-Level Enigma" was good, "Ecological Onslaught" good, "Judas of the Spaceways" and "The World is Yours", fair.

I would like to see you as editor of a sfzine which could pay top rates. Your feature stories are always good and sometimes outstanding. You are, therefore, a good judge of science-fiction. (Meaning you like the same stories that I do.) However, you do print quite a lot of sub-par fiction, due, I suppose, to your inability to pay for the best.

The trimmed edges and "Framed" cover picture are a big help to *Future's* appearance. As to the statement by Beck that *Future* is not worth 25c: "Testament of Andros" alone is worth the price of all the 25c issues you have published. I agree that *Future* has poor paper, poor layout, and poor illustrations (including covers, although they have improved recently). However, your stories, or at least some of them, are far superior to those published in most other mags, including at least four 35c zines. Maybe Beck buys zines to look at the layouts; I don't.

Incidentally, one of my reasons for buying *Future* is that I never know what to expect. Most zines print stories that are all on about the same level of quality. Yours, however, range from outstanding to lousy.

—Silver Lake, Indiana

Yes, that's my aim—to avoid standardization. I take it for granted that, in any issue, any given reader is going to find a good range of material from oboyl to blah! And since there's such wide disagreement as to which stories get which reaction, I just have to concentrate on variety, and pick items I like in every possible classification for science-fiction.

There are times, as I am sure my worthy colleagues will agree, that an editor can't seem to find what he really wants at any price.

## ALLEN GLASSER

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## FUTURE Science Fiction

BILL SHIREY

Dear Bob:

Instead of sending in the coupon, I decided to write in and congratulate you on the trimmed edges. Trimmed edges really gives your magazine a shot in the arm. Starting with this issue (May, 1953) your magazine will be one of the privileged ones in my science-fiction collection. I used to give your magazine away, but now a pack of wild bems couldn't make me give the magazine up. Your magazine is getting up there with *Startling Stories*, which I consider the best in the pulp field.

The stories I rate as follows: "Ecological Onslaught" and "Liberation of Earth", I place in first place. "Tenth-Level Enigma" and "Judas of the Spaceways" are 2d place. And third is "The World is Yours". I think I'm just easy to please, because I was going to place them all in first place.

I enjoyed the article. I hope you have more good stories like that.

It looks like you have better printing in this issue. Anyway, my eyes weren't ruined after finishing the magazine.

I would like to correspond with anyone, anywhere.

—4726 Clay Street, Fresno, California

If this be spring, can winter be far behind? Consider the cold snap below.

CAROL MCKINNEY

Dear Bob:

The May ish of *Future* was barely saved from anonymity by Vance—who slipped in almost quietly with "Ecological Onslaught". The rest of the stories just didn't make it. But you want us to rate them, so—

(Could give "Ecological Onslaught" a vote and relegate the rest to an untidy lump under the surface, but—let's be different this time)

"Ecological Onslaught"—B Plus (Couldn't quite come up to an A—but far above average anyway).

"Tenth-Level Enigma"—C (Not bad—just plain, ordinary average).

"Liberation Of Earth"—C (Amusing but average nonetheless).

"Judas Of The Spaceways"—C (Uninteresting theme—glad it wasn't longer).

"The World Is Yours"—D (This one almost flunked. This type of TT story always does).

The article by del Rey was fairly interesting. Glad you gave up the practice of rating these articles with the stories—but this time it would have come in second!

Letters: 1. Frances Faine; 2. W. D. Veney; 3. Paul Mittlebuscher. (Must we have such lon-n-n-g letters by "The editors of *Theosophical notes*" and Martello? Can't you limit them to shorter ones?)

[Turn To Page 96]

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Thank you for telling us about your cover policy! Sounds nice. Most everyone likes the cover to illustrate a scene in the story, and this one really did—though it seemed a trifle blurred and indistinct—as if Ross was in a hurry, or something.

Why didn't you use "Ecological Onslaught" for the lead story??? The cover illustrated it, and it was the best novelet in the ish. Or do you like Tenn's "superb saga" better?

Anybody need back issues, 1940 to date? Have around 800 I've got to dispose of—before they crowd me out of house and home. (I'll sell most of the recent pulp sized ones for 15c; digest sized for 25c.) Write for a list. (Plug: Have almost all ish of *Future*—including the first 3.)

—385 No. 8th East St., Provo, Utah.

The Vance story came in a little too late for cover-credit, due to a misunderstanding as to when we needed it. I suppose I could have saved it for the next cover, but would you have rather seen another story which I thought was good, but not as good, in its place? I put in the best I have, at the time, rather than hold off extra-good ones (like "Ecological Onslaught") for extra advertising-exploitation.

Personally, I thought "Liberation of Earth" an outstanding tale—but you cash customers are the final judges. Should I send a quarter apiece to the (relatively, Lord be praised) few readers who didn't like it?

Don't answer that—my name isn't Lownde\$!



You've heard of "Oscars" and "Edgars" — but have you heard of "Hugos"? No? Well, the "Hugo" is an award which the 11th World Science Fiction Convention will hand out to outstanding personages in the field. For details on this, and other vital Convention matters, send your dollar for membership to Milton A. Rothman, Box 2019, Philadelphia 3, Penna.

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# THE RECKONING

A Report on Your  
Votes and Comments

The fact that no voter indicated dislike of the Vance story seems to have been the determining factor in "Ecological Onslaught's" capture of first place, for the contest between it and the Tenn satire was a fierce one. Actually, Tenn received more first-place votes, but the "x" marks cancelled out the extra ones.

A dozen point-scores are all that separate the other three stories, and two of them, as you'll see, came out in exact ties; it seems to argue that the May issue was rather well-liked.

The way they actually placed, then, was thus:

1. Ecological Onslaught (Vance)	2.22
2. Liberation of Earth (Tenn)	2.50
3. The World is Yours (Warner, Jr.)	3.06
4. Tenth-Level Enigma (Machado, Jr.)	<i>tied with</i>
Judas of the Spaceways (Kubilius)	3.18

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Number these in order of your preference, to the left of numeral; if you thought any of them bad, mark an "X" beside your dislikes.



- 1. DUST THOU ART... (Neville) .....
- 2. FREEDOM OF THE PRESS (Warner, Jr.)..
- 3. STAND WATCH IN THE SKY (Budrys) ...
- 4. DOUBLE-TALK (Dye) .....
- 5. PLEASE TO REMEMBER (Reynolds) ....
- 6. ANYONE HERE SEEN HERBIE GREEN?  
(Ottum) .....
- 7. IXTL IGO, SONI (Banks) .....
- 8. TO SAVE A WORLD (Cox, Jr.) .....

Did you like the article? Yes ..... No .....

Whose were the three best letters this time? 1 .....

2 ..... 3 .....

General comment .....

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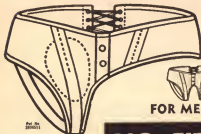
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