

MAYBE

#16



kill Fred  
Graham Jones 71



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MAYBE, Worlds of Fandom, issue 16, normally 2/\$1 or 6/\$2.50, but for issue #17 only, there is a single copy price of \$.75. #17 will be out no later than 15Apr72 and a strict bimonthly schedule will follow.  
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What is happening is that this issue was originally prepared as an emergency issue to be run off early in 1971(it was)and put out when an emergency prevented even the quarterly schedule we were on in the last part of 71 and early 72. But all the horrible disasters came and went and a MAYBE always came out anyway. So, I(IMK)am tossing this into the mail and next issue will be the LAST fiction issue that I've been promising for so long now. This is nominally the 15Feb72 issue but don't let that worry you--I'm doing the last stencil and mailing it with #15 which is 15Dec71(the last quarterly issue). You can see what this is, no table of contents is needed. It's all MY stuff. Nobody reads fanfiction anyway so I threw it in. #17 will be slightly different. It will be offset to begin with and will contain nothing but "Filtration" and a very long story by Mike Storslee. THAT will stop the non fiction readers if anything will; it's not SF by any stretch of the imagination but it has qualities which appeal to the average SF reader. It is, in my opinion anyway, of pro quality. The catch is that there is no market for either the length or kind of story it is. You'll see. It was originally sent to the N3F Writers Exchange for comments and laid on a commenters desk for six months until I happened to see it and grabbed it. Very strange.

Starting with #18 I will have nothing to do with the contents other than two pages, one of which will include the mailing labels. By the way, if there is a big O near your address, this is your last issue and you must do something to get another. I prefer cash, unlike the average fan, but a T in the circle means I already took a Trade or want to trade for your zine. Send Trades to Koch(me). A printed contrib including a LoC(BABY, the letterzine, is no longer with us after #17)to Davis. We've only got 20pp so keep it short and put comments personally aimed at people in personal letters. What kind of contribs Davis will take, I know not, but he does a zine for SFPA called ONEHUNDREDTWENTYFIVE MEXICAN MUMMIES which might give you a clue and I have the suspicion YANDRO type material will be welcome and much more than a suspicion that fiction will be rejected unread. The original rule was we took anything that is interesting and I did most of the accepting; what I got was mostly fiction which was interesting enough but no one read it. So we used up all the stuff I took(up to #17 to use up stuff accepted in early 71)and then--poof.

Besides Cash, Trade, and Printed Contrib(knowing Hank, he'll put in two lines of most letters plus the name and address so I have to send out a copy)there are some people who have "D" or "F" in their circle. This means Davis or Fox just sent you the zine on a whim--reply to them if interested. There may be other initials on #15 or any issue besides this(or maybe even this); that means an assistant publisher or 4th editor sent you a copy. Who these might be I do not know right now. Other issues will give names and addresses--if you can't figure it out, reply as if it were a "T" or "O".

I can't wait to see what issue #18 looks like myslef. -oOo- Curse the typos....

"Slurp,...slurp glurble gulp. Chomp chomp crunch choomp chomp," the monkey-like brown and blue eyebrows of the srog moved up and down one last time as it finished its snack.

It noisily spit out the remaining bones of Sgt Shurmank, the snack. The noise somewhat irritated the srog's opponent across the gameboard.

"You don't have to let that human's bones clatter under your feet so much. You're just trying to distract me from my gameboard attack," chattered the glelp. "Just watch; I'll think up another movement in a few minutes."

"Ha ho!" yelped the glelp as its blackness moved out of its corner of the slightly lighter blackness of the dank cave to move a piece of carven humanoid bone to confront another piece on the charcoal marked sawed off giant stalagmite.

And in the unsuspecting world above, a stainless steel nuetronite analog glided up to a palace door. A tube extended from the shining cube and began to pour energy at the door. Soldiers in green uniforms fought soldiers in silver and gray uniforms which matched the 17021 Anno Domini or 8063 After Destruction version of a tank. Saucers and cups fought for control of the sky and nearby space. Politicians stabbed each other in the back both literally and figuratively, the more modern going so far as to quietly brainwash sophisticated fools into violence in the streets and buildings. The human race indulged in what was called everything but war while the leaders of the two most inimical races in that part of the universe played chess of a sort to decide which would have its way in a disputed issue-- the conquest of the human civilization.

The palace door melted (only it wasn't called a palace, they called it something else). The green defenders were defeated and their remnants harried and hunted into and through the wilder places. The cups held the saucers to a draw until the gray clad troops manned captured ground defense stations and wiped all but the gray saucers from the inner half volume of the star system. At the finish no politicians could be found to espouse the cause of the royal greens. The supreme gray clad leader polished his five generals' stars as ancient drama villians had once twirled their mustaces, walked down a long corridor, entered a throne room, and confronted a princess.

"That should finish his queen," muttered the glelp.

The little girl who had until a few hours ago been the fourth in line to become a virtual goddess to nearly a billion humans and somewhat less than half that number of at least semi-intelligent non-humans looked at the big man who had entered her room. Then she tossed her liberally red and blonde streaked pale green hair about and turned her back to him. She did not quite know what to make of this all; a short life of playing princess with no one to throw a reality in her path....

The srog had relaxed its hideous body onto the massive chunk of gray stone whose water worn surfaces had taken the form of a very large chair. The frog-monkey nose of the creature had twitched in search of the odor of any other humans unfortunate enough to get lost in the maze ridden reaches beneath the mountains of Klalsalin, sometimes known as the Planet of Jeweled Bear Kittens. The srog had considered the snack an unexpected break as it had continued waiting for the unfanthomable mind of the glelp to decide on the last move. The glelp had just finished two hours of pondering a climatic move when the srog had invoked "food search time out" to eat an unlucky Army staff sergeant. Then the game had continued.

The game continued: "Nothing to say?" asked the six foot three, block faced general (at least he wore a general's outfit). "I couldn't help but wonder," murmured the handsome man whose least beautiful lover had been far more attractive to most men than the girl, "what the reaction of a captured goddess would be." He yelled at the doorway next, "All right guards, haul her off,"

Three gray and silver clad soldiers doubled into the room and dragged her out into the corridor. "Put her in the brig of my saucer," the general shouted as he followed the rapidly moving guards into the hallway.

As the guards left the palace through the burnt out door at the end of the long corridor, the little girl decided she was out of hearing range of the general and spoke softly to her captors, "I wonder how long it took you to turn your coats from green to gray." The soldiers' faces remained expressionless as little as possible, but they knew she knew they could not help feeling a little like traitors. They were.

The glelp's move had not been as simple as a move in an ancient four dimensional Terran chess game. A complex formula now had to change the positions and value of every piece on the board, change the formula applying to the next move, and rearrange the layout of the board. The two opponents had to remark the charcoal lines in the gameboard area of the wet green and gray psuedo-tabletop.

The palace which the general's troops had captured was not entirely through resisting. Pockets of men or ner-men had to be hunted through the labyrinth of the vast structure. Gray troops had to repair the damaged areas of the castle and take up garrison duties; the KP's of the old regime had to be replaced with rebel troops. Gray ribbon wearing administrators took over control of the executive point of the five major heavenly bodies in the inner, habitable half of the system. Pockets of booby traps had to be removed. Patrols of gray guards and saucers finally went unchallenged for a time throughout the inner system. The Planet of Jeweled Bear Kittens now obeyed new(?) laws, laws decreed by gray ribboned politicians. These men, women, and things could now freely look back upon the events related to them by the general's staff. These, now freed of supervising the last mop-up, spread the gray version of heros and traitors, of rewards and punishments for those who had taken part in the revolution. They even revealed that it had actually been essentially a palace revolution (but this was for their closest aides only).

The royal family of Kalaine were the most absolute of absolute rulers of Continent Major, the ancient homeland of human civilization on Klalsalin. Elsewhere on the Planet of Jeweled Bear Kittens (thousands of years extinct bears) they were only plain absolute rulers in addition to being practically devine. On the many moons and satelites of major moons and even on the one strange and remote "moon of a moon of a moon" the Kalaine family were only gods and worshiped and obeyed as such by the non human or less than human peoples. (The Emperor and god of Klalsalin commands the acceptance of Joe Zan as Presidar of the forth moon of the first moon....) These same conditions were true in varying combinations on the sole human inhabited major moon and the other planet (the planet of the ner-men and other human mutnant variations). They likewise held sway throughout the entire habitable half of the system. The weakest areas of Kalaine control were Klalsalin's own two major moons. Here the distilation of charisma, personal domination, empathy, and telekintisis had long overlooked, but even there no one not of Kalaine blood had ever dreamed of usurping the power of the gods, the goddesses, their friends,

and devinely chosen leaders.

Only cadres of secretly infiltrated outsiders among the populations, and the fact that General Brian Long-Kalaine was the husband of she who had been third amongst the pantheon had enabled the revolt to be thought of. Even then it could not have started before the general's outsiders had publicly killed the Emperor and his wife. Then the general's forces could fight those loyal to the dead Emperor, and the general could dispose of the only other pure, by Klalsalin standards, Kalaine: the unique younger niece of the old Emperor. The older neice, the little girl's cousin, was brainwashed and the general could tell his inner circle, "My wife is a nice slave."

Back down in the cave, the srog had finished contemplating the situation. A nasty brown claw pushed a piece of value between a Castle and the Queen far back into his opponent's territory.

"A seven point piece move into that area?!" quizzed the glelp. "I'll let you take it back. You can do something to defend your queen."

"Take her if you dare."

The game was rearranged per formula. The glelp had by the rules of the game "pinned" the srog's queen for all practical purposes. But the countermove evened the game quite a bit.

A gray sentry shot a green painted ner-man. Another green painted savage mutnant throw-back version of humanity bit the neck from the sentry. The lone survivor of the set-to commenced to eat the dead enemy. Meanwhile a man in a common business suit with a small green ribbon in his lapel sneaked into the door of a building in which he had once worked. He slipped silently past the now unguarded entrance. He managed to distribute the entire contents of his briefcase before he was killed by interior guards. The seven point piece of the Klalsalin game was called the "sly agent".

Neither the srog nor the glelp had actually captured a piece until now, only pinned them. The queen, an "agent", and a board sector were more or less lost from use of the srog. The glelp only now had lost the use of five empty ten-"square" sectors. The srog's lost sector held only its queen.

The agent's briefcase pieces exploded in a silent flash of fury characteristic of... the gray forces knew not what. The noise came more from people in the Kalaine palace than from the ruined Second Planet Control Building.

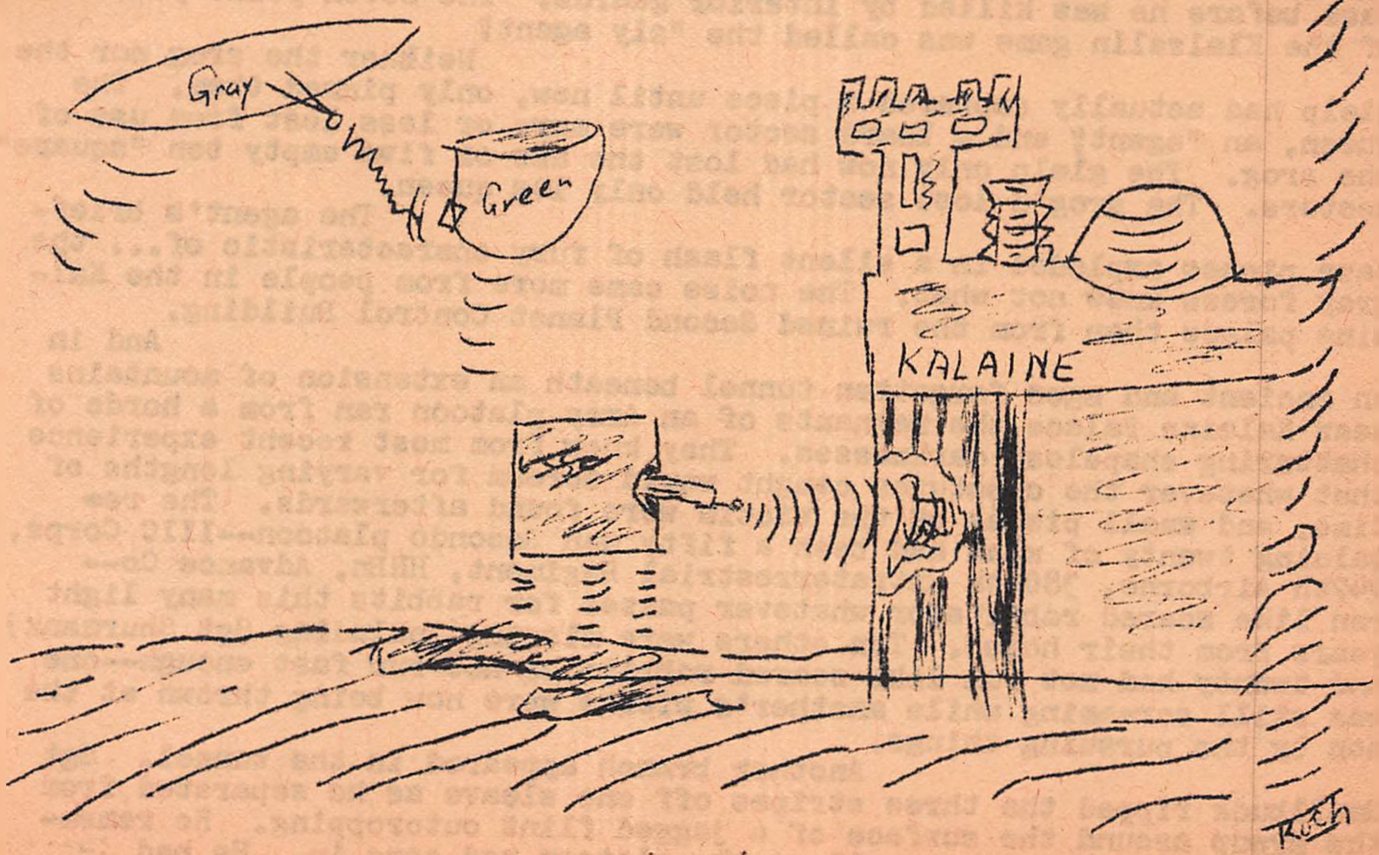
And in an ancient and ages forgotten tunnel beneath an extension of mountains near Kalaine Palace the remnants of an Army platoon ran from a horde of chattering shapeless darknesses. They knew from most recent experience that whatever the creatures caught would scream for varying lengths of time, and small pieces of the victim were found afterwards. The remaining twenty of what had been a fifty man Recondo platoon--IIIC Corps, 947th Airborne, 3800th Extraterrestrial Regiment, HHBn, Advance Co--ran like scared rabbits (or whatever passed for rabbits this many light years from their home). Ten others were missing (including Sgt Shurmank) and twenty had not run like scared rabbits or not run fast enough--one was still screaming while another's pieces were now being thrown at the men by the pursuing things.

Another branch appeared in the tunnel. Sgt Smallbuck ripped the three stripes off one sleeve as he separated from the group around the surface of a jagged flint outcropping. He remembered inching along this wall as the platoon had come in. He had

decided that he would rather take a chance with the enemy above than the more-than-shadows which chased them while below. He was lucky; the green painted woman at the cave entrance ordered the long pursuing creature that had come after him personally to return to the maze below. She was the great-great-great-grandniece of an eight cousin of a Kalaine; no monster could resist her will, only another of purer powerific blood. The little Sgt took one look at the five foot five green woman and pulled his .45. It melted in his hand it seemed.

"Die," said the mixed blood savage. He did. "No, come back to life; you're going to my brother for one of his...treatments." Since less than a minute had passed between the man's death and revival, his brain was not even damaged by the process of being willed to death by the partial goddess. Her brother, however, rung the full knowledge about the revolution from the soldier's mind and then melted his bones. A miserable death not fully appreciated by what was left of the brain the bones belonged to....

In the dark volume beyond the furthest reaches of the Klalsalin civilization's furthest penetration, a few uninhabitable, totally devoid of native life planets went about their ways through a heatless space. Not even the infrequent alien visitors and even rarer human visitors to the remote system went into this worthless volume for long. Now a few green cups and green clad or painted beings huddled in a hidden valley on one of these planets, an entirely mountainous chunk of frozen rock. Among them was the green painted brother and sister who gave a report which sounded incredible to the commoners at the gathering, but those whose blood had some trace of Kalaine ancestry even though their names, features, and former ways of life did not betray this fact--they knew  
 .....  
 ....green castle, silver cube, blue-pink puddled doorway.....



The teeth are pink, the nose yellow, eyes green.

some of the ancient history. A tale of Army and paramilitary forces from some other star system did not seem impossible to those who knew what dealings the Kalaines had monopolized in the times past. They also trusted their green ner-man's mind smashing ability. They did not, even so, know what to do about this--this "U.S. ARMY!"

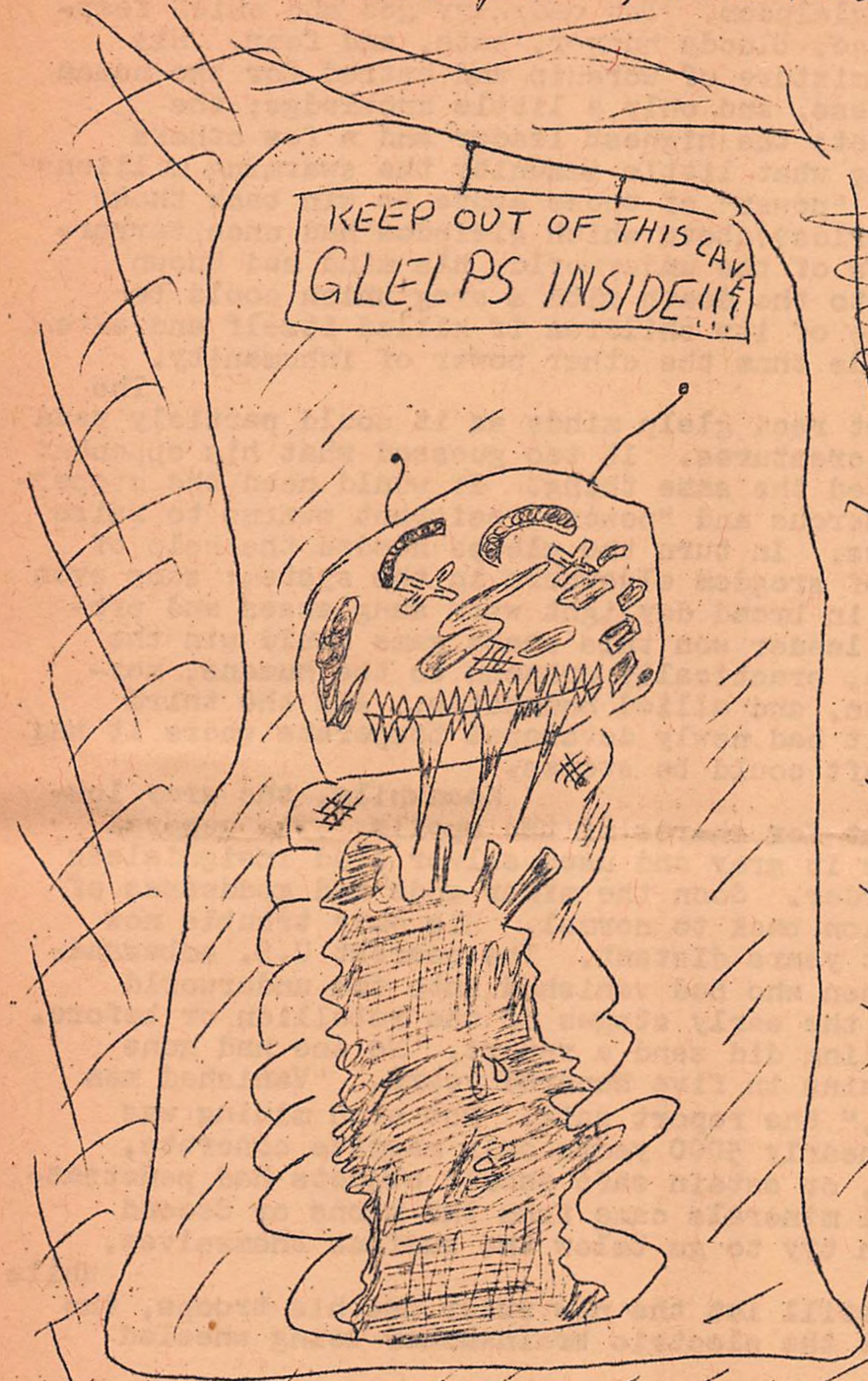
The more knowing ones were also worried by this report on the activity of the shadow creatures. True, anyone with any mental "power" at all could confine them to the underworld or keep them off in the deeper shadows of the moonless minutes of the night, but those glelp minds could not be read or smashed as Sgt Smallbuck's had been casually treated. The gleeps had no known body features to melt, and they did not die except on command from the most powerful of the ruling gods.

And above all, above the secret base which housed the worriers, a fleet of scout saucers hovered in lookout positions. One vanished in a

cloud of dust, and another radioed a cut-off scream before it exploded; instruments showed both had somehow been drained of heat--all heat.

Any one of the plotters who had wondered why these planets had not been used as secret bases before quit worrying and got on one of the remaining spacecraft for a desperate flight back to the inner volume of the system. They could worry about monsters better in a place safer from said unknown monsters.

"glelps are hard to reproduce?"



Naturally the subchief of the monsters pursuing humans under Klalsalin knew the minds of glelpdom. The ordinary god and chief fearing glelps knew only obedience, bloody hunger, hate, and fear. His leaders' class minds held a mixture of worship and hatred for the human gods, blood lust, power madness, and only a little knowledge; the knowledge of that certain fact: the highest leader and a few others had to know some way of using what little immunity the swarming millions of shadows had from the mind "power" of those above to win back those dark reaches of the world(worlds?)above which glelpdom had once terrorized. And, like all dwellers of the underworld, his mind had known the joys of friendly battle to the death with a srog which could be born again in the body of one of its children if killed itself and eaten. This was the myster which made them the other power of inhumanity.

The highest srog leader could not read glelp minds as it could partially read those of most other inhuman creatures. It too guessed what his opponent had in mind anyway. It wanted the same thing. It would need the cooperation of glelpdom's more numerous and "power" resistant swarms to raise srogdom from eternal darkness. In turn the glelps needed the help of the few forgotten remnants of srogdom elsewhere in the system; some even went disguised as humanoids in broad daylight with sunglasses and protective clothes. Whichever leader won this chess game would win the cooperation of a third force, practically unknown to the humans, nermen, other mutants, near men, and allied humanoids. And the third force could use an ability it had newly developed to cooperate where it had always lived, where spacecraft could be stolen.

Meanwhile, the gray lower echelons themselves fought for shares of the spoils. The general clothed his US Army advisors in gray and used silver clad insignialess strangers to maintain his order. Soon the minor gods and goddesses of his side brought the situation back to normal. His only trouble now was letters from a few light years distant. The nearest U.S. ambassador wanted reports on those men who had vanished into the underworld escaping green defenders in the early stages of the rebellion or before.

After a while some undriling did send a report. No one had gone beneath the Klalsalin mountains in five hundred years. "Vanished men are dead men in this region," the report said. Not even mining was conducted on Klalsalin--in nearly 5000 years only massive concrete, metal, super-hard stonework, or setain safe secret objects had penetrated Klalsalin's surface. All minerals came from the moons or Second Planet. Humans did not even try to go below the surface themselves.

While the ambassador worried but still let the new ruler use his troops, the little girl took one look at the electric brainwasher being wheeled into her cell and vanished.

"I thought that you had locked in the "power" of Kalselenea so she couldn't make someone let her escape!" screamed General Brian at his wife.

His current mistress, who was in the throne room at the time almost laughing at the goddess whose husband she had, had to cover her ears at the tirade that followed against the poor brainwashed goddess.

"Well maybe she was third most powerfull. Maybe I could have been forth instead of vice versa."

"What!!!"

"Don't blow a fuse, she probably just teleported."

"But you...."



"I know, I can't, even though I'm more 'powerfull'-- power works that way; not more than a handful of the pantheon ever could do anything but the various forms of controlling other animate things, so no other forms of 'power' were ever counted in ranking. But I CAN CONTROL HER if she ever sets foot on the same thousand mile radius area as I am in."

"In other words, she isn't on or above Continent Major and can't come back here to cause trouble."

"Yep."

The princess knew this too. Her powers were able to carry her only seven hundred miles at a jump, and she could control no one within a thousand miles of Kalaine Palace or wherever her older cousin was. She would have stayed to fall under her cousin's power if General Brian had told his wife to "take her over" fast enough; but not wanting his wife to know what he did with the girl once he had her, he had sent the machine after her first.... Seeing the general's men with the machine which no one knew she knew the purpose of, she had gotten away as fast as she could. Her second jump carried her into a warm calm ocean. She shed her shoes and most of her clothes as she teleported across the hot tropical waters, swimming a few seconds between each jump. Once something swam towards her. She stopped to play with the sea beast a while; it would have instantly devoured anything her size without the 'power.' Then it grew dark. Her last stop was the first tropical island she could find. Her thoughts then turned to figuring out what was going on in what was supposed to have been HER world. Klalsal-teen-age goddesses were kept in a sheltered life by their elders. This was more for the protection of the outside world than the youngster, but it had kept much information away from Kalselenea. One thing she now knew: her older cousin would not have fallen for Bráan Long if she had known what he was up to at the time. The twenty-one year old Kalunia had reached her majority and entered the world beyond her uncle and aunt's guidance with no idea of what she was getting into. Kalselenea had seen the revolution from the other side, even though she had not realized what it meant; she now knew there was much she did not know. So one slightly cute fifteen year old doll sat in bra and panties summoning food to cook itself for her on a deserted tropical island while the srog leader enjoyed the consternation of the glelp. The green queen was almost unpinned. Now she thought of finding someone to help her, and the srog watched the glelp try to find a way to keep a green knight from joining the queen on a square near the now captured sector. The game had moved while the world above went about its ways. The princess slept.

The monster leaders played their game. Move and countermove. In the caves and tunnels and occasionally in a mouldering heap of ruins so old it was thought to be a natural formation or hill, the srogs and glelps emerged from an eon of exile. They fought each other more than humanity usually; now their leaders' minds were telepathically influenced by the supreme leaders who sat playing chess of sorts. Or perhaps they were battling for control of an only partly tangible or material telepathic "power" control device.

Even they did not fully realize what they did or that the control effect extended to a humanity upon which the device had failed to work when first built long ago when monsters lost worlds to humans and allied non-monster species.

"Ahk Glelp, my forces have uncovered an interesting fact. Those queens we've been shoving around are not our own hive symbols. One of them is Princess Kalselenea and the other is--"

A high-knight,

worth four points to the srog and a two point sub-knight, belonging to the glelp moved at the same time. The board rearranged itself by two formulas at once.

A voice announced, "You have had me playing with you two all along...strange you have worked the device of this room without knowing all the rules or all who played."

The glelp pulsed to the rhythm of the srog's chattering teeth and flashing eyes. Both faintly sensed some....thing?...human, inhuman?...fiendish as themselves.

So they played and were played. Now they could not quit. They could not even rise from their seats....

Forces fought around the sleeping girl. A lizard-old fish the size of a herd of small whales emerged from beneath tons of ocean sediment which had settled upon it while it slept centuries at a time. It glided to an island relatively near Continent Major and stared into the eyes of a thousand srogs (they looked like srogs) in a half submerged cave. It went to kill the young princess, leaving behind a thousand shapes melting back into shadowy blackness (glelps melted into shadowy blackness like that). It awkwardly climbed up onto the coraloid shelf under the shallow area between the ocean abyss and the island on which the young princess slept. It slobbered unreasoningly, unreasoningly because its intended victim was much too small for it to consider a meal while in a more self-controlled state of mind. It crunched over the porous crumbly stuff loud enough to wake--to wake a small girl who stared back at it.

It returned to unknown depths to feed and sleep another age away. But first its rudimentary brain gave up enough sensory and extra-human-sensory perceptions to let the little girl figure out that more hellish forces were loose than anyone but two, or maybe three, creatures had yet guessed at.

The real srogs now unleashed a weapon of their own. Holes opened in sewers, passages were bored to water mains, moldy masses from noxious nests were inserted in underground utilities, and--alarms went off in Kalaine Palace plus subordinate centers. Thousands of years ago humanity had won the type of germ warfare the srogs had now used to attempt to poison the new Empress and her entire entourage. The srogs had forgotten the overground civilization had few real ground laid utilities among many false ground or underground pipes and wires. All were boobytrapped. Trog died from contact with unguessed at chemical agents...after leaving the human sewers. Men began to respond to almost forgotten battle stations. General Brian programmed his wife's central palace computer for information and deduction. Now he too guessed at the chess cave's activities.

The princess was now forgotten as the underworld and overworld of Klalsalin renewed a war whose critical battle had been won thousands of years ago by the humans with the extinction of the jeweled bears, the fully "power" possessing race no one had known for sure was intelligent or animal or even concerned with its own existence. But the ecology that had been radically changed now had matured in its new forms. On Klalsalin war raged with unimaginable subtleness, sophistication, and the keyword: terror. On the Second Planet green forces under the newly formed Council of Power fought grays unsupported from Klalsalin. Among the moons everyone fought everyone as the divine ones and their strongly needed forces were diverted elsewhere. The "powerless" gray rulers here were not yet established and had no more divine support so they resumed fighting among themselves like all the other chaotic residents of nearly unmapped and uncared for space. Terror was here too.

Terror on the Second Planet affected only the fighting forces, here it struck everyone even more than on Klalsalin.

No one thought of a little girl with multicolored hair--not the chess cave, the general, Kalunia, or any of the various warring factions.

But the little girl in panties and bra now had decided it was time for her to make a tour of her planet to learn, everything. She picked information from the minds on all the unimportant smaller lands of the planet. People, scholars mostly who went unnoticed in their studies, now went unnoticed by the ruling forces of the planet as they studied at the orders of a goddess. They did not realize what they did while under outside control, but the result was that only the princess knew what was harvested from the crop of ideas she had sown in many minds, and it was a large crop indeed.

She did, not being able to control people outside of her limit, be in more than one place at a time, or control minds at learned institutions on Continent Major, have to let a few people work uncontrolled and with some knowledge of what they were up to. Even this she did indirectly for fear of fear itself (too many unexpected things had already happened). She was determined never again to go through a period of fearful events as had begun for her before the revolution and ceased only after she was wakened that night on the island. She trusted only one person.

A boyfriend she had loved before, a hybrid Kalaine of course; now he was one of the secret Council of Power, a leader of the nearly nonexistent green forces on Klalsalin. He eagerly jumped at the chance to follow the same route General Brian had, but his girlfriend used him instead of the other way around. She became a real goddess to him after all. He enjoyed.

Otherwise he spent his time learning about all the gray forces. The girl now knew all about the srog's pawns. She told her secret slaves, those conditioned to her mind control enough to act in absence of direct commands, plus her boyfriend's organization, to destroy--but her friend now guessed at unknown forces at work and persuaded her to wait until they (she really) knew much much more about all the enemies--not just the grays. However they had marked all the srog pawns: pawn one and pawn two were the "U.S. forces which had posed as Klalsalinians and organized the gray military establishment, pawns three and four were the gray counterparts of these--civilian and military forces now openly in control and leading the war against the underworld and all other challengers., five was the gray "power" group--the hybrid pantheon of Empress Kalunaia, & six was the srog hordes themselves, always at the command of the supreme srog. Seven through ten were undefined underworld and amphbiworld forces answering to the srog side of the gameboard at least some of the time. An example of the last included smaller versions of the creature the ghelps masquerading as srogs had set so boomeraningly upown the princess.

The force the boy leader guessed at was the third player in the game. That which played both sides at once against both players for unknown purposes.

Kalselenea unknowingly became another force in the game--no longer the srog's queen peice alone. None of the other players realized it was her doing which severed the links with the U.S. and other hyper-system civilizations (whcih few of thab system remembered).

All interstellar traffic

and communications ceased when a few of the Council of Power, Klalsalin branch, wrecked the facilities which the "U.S." was using at the other end. Half the galaxy went into convulsions which soon killed Kalselenea's agents just after they finally told her what the "U.S." was trying to do. Very simply, "power" had been loose in the galaxy before. The "U.S." wanted control of Klalsalin to stamp it out or make use of it for its own ends. When people of "power" wrecked ports in a sphere around the Klalsalin system--which had been put off limits ten thousand years before when the jeweled bears had still flourished--all hell broke loose to isolate the volume and destroy those "powers" newly abroad in the galaxy and what galactic civilization there was. All hell was successful; an ellipsoid of ten and twelve light year long axes ended up in total isolation. The U.S. was forced to write off all personal in that volume as dead, and space fleets with mechanical anti-"power" devices aboard each craft made sure nothing left the volume alive...or dead: all traffic was disintegrated. A few inhabited planets near the volume were evacuated outright; others were scheduled for long term, step by step evacuation. All became disintegrator beam and anti-"power" field bases. Eight thousand years ago an eight thousand year long war had destroyed all galactic civilizations. It had taken from the ancient Terran civilization's calendar date marked zero or Destruction Day (of "power" at large in the galaxy) on the new calendar until now for Klalsalin to be rediscovered by the galaxy. The galaxy as a whole wanted no more of that "power" which allowed any small group to upset star clusters of selfaware beings.

The war on Klalsalin became a three way affair fought openly on the planet's surface. Gleeps backed by srogs and protected off and on by the game device of the chess cave, 75% of which unpinned or uncaptured area was now controlled by the srog with the third player mysteriously leaving the action as it had come in, fought against gray troops and innocent civilians. They murdered and ate secret green and/or Kalselenean citizens and forces without knowing the difference. The greens and Kalselenea fought with "power" and subversion against the grays while using clubs, knives, and rarer technological weapons against the hordes of the underworld. In the conflict, knowledge relating to the cause of the underworld's outbreak was soon spread among all forces involved and able to understand. General Brian had finished the same historical research Kalselenea had had in mind as part of her frenzied search for causes of fearful events about her. Only Kalselenea, by reading the supreme srog leader's mind before his control of the gameboard became enough to stop her, knew that the two monster leaders had not needed to stumble through vast ancient records to reach the same conclusions General Brian had; 8000 years of oral tradition (and reincarnation) influenced the actions of monsters which first had led them to rediscover the gameboard and then slowly formulate rival but interlocking plans whose solution rested with the winner of the chesslike game.

Now everyone knew what the war was about. The Klalsalin system had been settled by refugees from the conclusion of the 8000 year galactic war. They had searched out a region already forbidden and forgotten. The Kalaine family, friends, and others possessing "power" or under its sway such as slaves had settled the system by driving all aboriginal civilization underground that wasn't cave dwelling already, destroying the jeweled bear civilization or something which might have been one, and distorting the ecology so they could never rebuild or rise again--they thought.

They were right; the attempt of the ancient races to rise again in new forms failed. It was only a

matter of time before shinning cubes ranged the day and night pouring death at whatever registered in minds of "power" as hostile. The protective action of the gameboard faltered, and once all enterances to the underworld were sealed with concrete, lead, and hard radiation, the grays drove all green forces into hiding. Actually the underworld merely returned to the former status quo, but the greens became relatively stronger because most of the outsiders (including all lost patrols into the underworld) were killed while the greens took no such losses. They even reestablished and strengthened facilities in the outer half of the system after finding a way to deal with the ally of the srogs and sometimes of glelps depending on the gameboard--space monsters.

The monsters had indeed grown in power and mutated more abilities since last being active thousands of years ago, but they proved nothing that well armed, shielded, and knowledgeable spacecraft patrols couldn't handle.

"Kalselenea," her boyfriend reported, "the missing pieces have been identified by the Second Planet C.O.P.: the winner of the cave chamber game was promised aid by envoys from spacethings that turn from dust clouds to any given smaller solid object including animate forms."

"Set me a cup for space."

The girl got her cup and finally managed to pick the mind of a fleeing monster in space. Now she did know everything she wanted to know. The girl and boy stocked up on anti-"power" devices of their own which Kalselenea's scientists had developed on recently stolen galactic designs obtained, like most other facets of power plots, at the price of peoples' lives, and the two were last seen after materializing in the Kalaine throneroom.

The ensuing scene was described by survivors as a ballet of force. The cousin goddesses danced around the room with male partners on arm. The older larger couple flitted about on mechanical devices and struck with "power" driven death commands. The younger couple teleported in sweeps through the room while shielding and striking out mechanically. The little girl was the loser. An ancient steel safe dropped on top of a place she stayed in a microsecond too long. It was filled with pieces of nuetronite. They mopped her remains up when they hauled away the bullet holed body of her boyfriend. General Brian had set some computer controlled palace weapons well.

Before the body died, the Empress read the mind behind the ordinary boyish face on general principals. The contents dirtied her electicly washed mind into death wishing her own general. She first compressed a hundred years of synthetic memories into him. Before he died he thought he became ugly, repulsive to his former women, and hated by all. Fragments of the sequence filtered into the minds of those present; enough to give many nightmares for life and allegies to demogogs and smooth powerful men for some years.

They also were given the story of the general's rise to power. Kalunia's newly aquired viewpoint of the rise. Those whose reactions displeased the Empress did not die; they just left and were replaced. The dirty minded young woman was soon worshipped as the wisest ruler in many years. She even pacified the moons and wilder areas without the heavyhanded use of "power"; the C.O.P. was also admitted to the pantheon and dissolved its shadow government structure. The chess cave was secretly electronically monitored, and Kalselenea's former scholars even found the secret of the jeweled bears and their kittens in the limited manner the secret could be understood.

The kittens blood and body fluids had been the chemical base for fabulous jewels, both decorative and technologically usefull, which had paid for the first weapons and equipment to settæ Klalsalin and start the cycle which eventually killed all jeweled bears.

The secret was that the minds of "power" of the alien thinking species had kept off the space-things and held sprogs and glelps at bay. The human colonists' minds did the same but less so. The jeweled bears had never really died however, their minds rested, usually asleep, in the game-board device. Ages before humanity had wiped the jeweled bears from the face of their own world, these outwardly bearlike creatures had conquered death, somewhat spurred on by the imortal characteristics of lesser races of the planet, by transferring their minds from dead bodies to the chess cave. The game part had been used to train kittens. The collective mind of the vanished race had only recently recovered from the last great influx of untrained kitten minds directly into the infinite life device. It had been that influx which had prevented the jeweled bears from influencing humanity originally.

More recently it had gained enough strength to control humans as it had originally, ages past, controlled only monster pawns. For a short while the revived gameboard even resumed its archaic role of third player, thinking the monster leaders were jeweled bear kittens. They were soon struck by the consequences of being otherwise. To bear kitten game would have ended as theirs did...all spaces and all pieces on both sides captured, a victory for the third player which could now sleep undisturbed under its now cleared and locked control surface. No one or thing ever did figure out exactly what the extinct race's mind had been like; its alienness was beyond all of present and future Klalsalin.

The baffled atheist top leaders were soon recognized as unable to fill past promises and were eaten by their goddess worshipping followers. The unbaffled new pantheon probed the shell of hate about the system and was forced to look inward with "power" instead of merely using it and relying on outside matterial and advice as they had done for thousands of years when trouble treathened they couldn't handle. It 16,000 years this had never been done before by any group with "power."

Even the actions of the U.S. were explained. Two U.S.'s split North Americal of Original Earth; one also was comprised of much of the rest of the once called capitolist-socialist world while the interventionist power Klalsalin hand met was the product of a second Civil War, held only 1/3 of the original U.S. but unlike the other few remaining nations of old Earth, held vast reaches of space--some nearer Klalsalin than any other nation or space-group.

The new pantheon studied history, and as the second husband of the Empress probed one of the few surviving U.S. troops he mused, "Klalsalin will yet reenter the galaxy. Many things must still be learned," thought the formerly green painted member of the old C.O.P., "but we will be the first adult thinking--mature--"power" race since, possibly, the jeweled bears, if they could be counted as selfaware. We will have to teach civilization as the bears, instinctively, intelligently, or in some manner we don't understand, thought their kittens... someday we will."

Meanwhile semi-savage poetsingers on the Second Planet were chanting one of the first new songs in half a dozen thousand years.

But since it was as bad as most poems: this is THE END. -oOo-

The typical house cat sized smoothly-grey cat twitched its four inch long whiskers twice, stared the two-thirds sized white cat in the face at a point a few millimeters below the black patch of fur on its forehead for another twelve seconds, and shoved the multi-patched smaller cat to the floor. The grey cat, named Flossy, and the non-kitten, Patches, curled up on, about, over, and around each other. They pushed each other with playful paw pats; Flossy got the best of that, and Patches tried to even things by scratching. After a few minutes they lost interest in playing and separated.

The grey cat jumped up on a desk underneath a lamp and went back to sleep. Patches went back into his usual hiding--so well hidden that even the owners of the house never saw him 9 times out of ten but knew he was there because his food was eaten.

A dog walked out of the next room, stared about like a mad man (this was the dog which had once been addressed by a wise cracking guest: Chris, you look like an animal," and had replied to the visitor in dog language which only its owner could decipher, "So do you.") and was unfortunate enough to have both Patches and Flossy purr at him in unison. A short "wooff" and he ran in purring terror. Flossy crossed his path on her way to a back corner while Patches lay in normal cat pose and looked straight up and forward at the door--a rare exhibition by this cat.

The young man who had walked up the rose petal strewn path in front of the house had been looking in through the screen door, thanked Flossy for scaring Cris away, and knocked on the screen door frame. A bedraggled sheep dog sized collie answered the knock at the door. He barked of course.

"Howooooool!!! Bark, Barroff, raff, bark. Wof, woof, woof." Bandit the collie was joined by Cris the impossible.

Six white rats and five unassorted finch type birds including a yellow canary named Patrick stirred in their cages as Cris charged out of the hallway, giving the cats in their respective posts wide berths as he frantically came from behind them, madly barking his way to the front door. The young man moved back.

He took a couple of paperback books from his back pockets as he cautiously returned to knocking range of the floor. He spoke, "Come on out and get this crazy Cris Cringle dog; I've got your books."

The birds decided to cheep and twerp for a change as the dogs backed further into the room and went on another barking binge.

Another myopic college student emerged from the uttermost back room of the small red brick house. He grabbed his madly barking pet by the collar and hauled it into another back room which he locked. The collie waited politely.

"Are you through with that Notron Erdna book already? You've finished off every s.f. book she's written--in two weeks."

"I told you I read fast," answered the visitor.

"What else is new? Cheapstate U. sure is dull these days."

"Not a thing. We could use some telepathic animals around here like in those books. A superocelot, a pair of meowycats, even a stratobussard.... I keep telling you--anything is better than that insane dog of yours." The collie put its muzzle in his lap when he sat down and nuzzled. It was petted for its trouble.

Plop! Bam. Patter, patter, patter. Flossy reacted to the insult

of the only animal in the world afraid of her. For some unfathomable reason she dropped off the ceiling where she had somehow climbed to hang from and exploded along an indeterminate path. She was noisy as usual; this cat didn't move quietly ever.

The two student types retreated to the backmost room and wedged themselves in among the sixty or so cubic feet of paperbacks, hardbacks, pro and fan magazines, and other unassorted junk. The visitor came to rest at the left of another twenty cubic feet of textbooks and ten cubic feet of non-fiction.

"Speaking of animals, how is your...eh...space/time traveler doing? You still want to borrow this menagerie for the first trip?"

"Everything but the birds. What can I do with five birds on some ex-imaginary planet? I also am going to need your screen door."

"Ah COME ON!"

"Everything's finished but the air-lock on the machine. I've got sealing plastic, but I need one more frame. Your door should do it. I'll only be gone with it for a few hours."

"If it works at all you'll go without our cats; if you harm one hair of my precious Patches..., a cute chubby and also near sighted sister, also a Cheapstate U. student, came bursting out of another room to threaten dire vengeance to anyone kidnapping any of the animals she shared with her brother. No mention was made of danger to the visitor should extraterrestrial mishaps occur, only his escaping without safely returning the animals.

"Well..., the visitor drawled, "I don't have room for you, just that crazy dog; better take the same one too-- two cats, and the rat pack. If I could figure any way to make money off the gadget before the trial run, I'd build a bigger one...."

"Alright, knowing you, you will bring back something to prove you can make a fortune for you and your backers. You can borrow the animals, but if \_"

"I'll call Mrs Mutton; she's the only one with a car big enough to haul the traveler over here from the basement of Stadium Hall."

"Why not take the door and animals over there?" asked the sister.

"And have five hundred creepy freshmen buzzing around--ut uh."

And, after phoning to make arrangements with the oldest and richest fantasy fan in the area, they all went over by the river where the builder's dorm room was. The nearly finished space/time traveler, built to plans furnished by certain mad scientists and engineers who belonged to the same club they did, was hidden in the deserted cavernous space beneath the stadium and dorm building. The mad planners would have been there too, but they lived in Carolina and Virginia where they were too busy to build their super-clever devices...they had to work.

The three students were soon joined by a lady in a large new car. They strapped the four by six by ten foot box to the roof of the car and drove up and down some hills typical of the region before reaching the house of the brother and sister and animals. There they removed the box to the back yard and attached the plastic sealed screen door. Cannisters and boxes built into the sides of the box, flush with the outer shell, were checked to see that they gave readings on the inside without admitting anything thicker than a



vacuum. The collie walked in mildly wagging its tail while the thing that might have passed for a "german police dog" was dragged kicking and growling into the box where the two cats had already trapped themselves curiously wandering in before the door was put on. The rat pack was taken wandering in in its cage, tied on leashes, and strapped into six canisters on the sides of the device. Finally, a SNAP type atomic reactor in the top three feet of the space/time traveler was fueled from the top with stolen radioactive material put in after climbing a borrowed step ladder. No one worried about the fuel; members of an affiliated Japanese club had somehow managed to steal it from Red China. It wasn't any isotope the public is familiar with; it was something the Red Chinese preferred not to admit the existence of--who knows why.

At last the pilot, if he could be called such, stepped into the box and sealed the door behind. There was a thunderclap as air rushed into the space/time where the traveler had traveled from.

"Hmm. This thing seems to work a little better than that box gadget in the serial from IF. The question is how am I supposed to calibrate the instruments to find out where/when I am. Well, let's see. All six rats alive and undisturbed, nothing harmful outside according to the analysers the rats are connected to, 90% gravity tho, and a spectrum filtered through a green sky. Guess I can take these "scouts" out and look."

"Hey, Flossy, come back here; you're not supposed to nose around until I tie this long wire to your collar," the explorer shouted as Flossy streaked out the open door. He caught Patches and attached his wire as the smaller cat attempted his getaway. Chris cowered at the sight of the lavender grass and green sky, whimpering meekly in a corner as a wire was attached to his collar. Bandit curled up in the craft's only chair and went to sleep.

After the two wires were attached to the explorer's belt, he changed his mind and hooked Criss to the door of the traveler, taking the collie in his place, left the door ajar with Criss lying in front of it, and went out to retrieve Flossy.

Meanwhile, Flossy nimbly evaded the hands of a hungry monster which had assumed human form so it could have grabby hands. It sprawled on its face as the white shiskered cat plunged over a gully rim--she was good at falling off things, she hadn't been trying to escape the monster on purpose--it growled as four lighter colored paw tips ignored it as it pursued them and attached cat. The grey tail swishingly followed the paws into a crevice in the side of the gully which the cat had merrily decided to climb through--she liked to get into nooks and crannies--the monster reaching into the cleft as she climbed up and out and opening several feet beyond the further rim of the gully was, thought Flossy, some ordinary part of the strange scenery.

The blue psuedofemale-human was slobbering in frustration as it climbed out of the gully and ran after the trotting grey cat.

The man was perturbed as he saw the long clawed and sharp fanged thing running in front of Patches in front of him. "Unhand that catten!" he shouted as the monster grabbed Patches, who jumped upon its back thinking to play/fight with the creature.

The monster jumped up and made the mistake of tripping over Flossy, who had come back to see what was going on. As it lunged at the real human it executed a flat dive. It got up again and six inches of steel pipe with

a set of small knuckles on the middle slammed across its mouth. The fangs, which were a half inch from the end of the pipe each, were broken with a snap.

"Mngropyowlrrrr!!!" it took half a second to scream before it made another attempt at attacking; this time was used by the pipe to come plunging end first on or about the creature's lowered head. It would have killed its pipe wielding opponent anyway, but Patches had playfully scratched out its eyes, and the traveler had attached a wire to Flossy's collar and left.

He dragged the animals inside the machine, prayed he had some idea what the instrument calibration was, and pressed a dial as he left a still hungry and now blind monster behind...and telepathing.

"Where the damned hell am I," said the pilot looking at a similiar set of scenery about what he judged to be twenty miles south of where he had just been--which he did not know the location of at all.

"You vis zapromitly vay undred vuv your miles north vuv Vased van thirty miles veast vuv the Spliflambar border," telepathed the entity clawing at the sealed door. "Vi can't think straight in your thought band, but you esp good to eat," it telepathed as it clawed the plastic totally off the frame.

The pilot did not wait to see if the checkerboard red eyes could hypnotise anything. He pressed the center of the dial again.

Patches myowed and purred. That cat rubbed against his leg while the other curled up under a warm light bulb.

"I think and hope we are now EIGHTY miles north of Vased," said the pilot to the intellegent little cat. He took the two cats and went out to look around again.

Criss started through the glass behind the wire screen and idly wagged his tail as he watched the trio recede into the distance.

"Hey, that snarklefink up there gave you a bum stear; you'r now fourty miles east of it. IT was and is the ?-land border, not Spiflambar," telepathed a non-hungry and blob shapped version of the blue monster. "OH," it yelped as it emerged from beneath its rock, "I didn't think that character you first met was in his right mind, but you are human. That means I have to kill you on general principles, even not hungry."

The blue monster chased the young man and two cats all over the landscape.

Meanwhile back at the space/time traveler, Criss had gone into one of his barking frenzies as two or three blurry psuedohumans approached with distruction on their anti-human minds. The esped. Criss barked and barked. They telepathed. Criss jumped back and forth before the door, woofing like mad. They tried to read his mind they weren't sure he was as dangerous as the small cat had though he was supposed to be--with the collie asleep they had only head his thought and the cat's thought was that Criss was the kind of beast used to tear up other people sized animals. Criss looked mean while preparing to cower in a corner at the rear of the box. Three monsters grew angry, not realizing the crazy mutt did not have any thoughts to be read. His barking and snarling scared them off. Criss wagged his tail idly as they retreated in the direction of the area in which their fellow was engaged in student and cat chasing.

Suffice it to say that the cats were released

from the link to the lost explorer's belt and the three evaded the four monsters. They returned to the space/time traveler--at top speed.

Meanwhile the rats were growing restless in their separate test cells. They longed to be a pack again. They managed to mess up the sensors in their cells. Red lights blinked on the control board as the trio returned, slamming the door behind them and locking it. The man started to shift his dials again before pressing once more, but the red lights and sounding buzzers prompted him to pen one of the rat cells. The rat enclosed in the cell bounded out, and before it could be returned to its place, both it and the two cats had climbed all over the instrument control board.

The buzzers sounded even louder and the red lights flared into a constant flame. Now the outside was visible, since the monster had torn off the plastic sealing, and poisonous gas could be both seen and smelt seeping in through the cracks of the unsealed door; the jump caused by a bounding rat or cat had done more damage.

"Those characters wouldn't be able to give me a set of plans with recalibrations for the instruments; now I'm cooked for sure," he complained as he made a wild guess at an instrument setting to get him home.

This time he twirled the time control dial as well as the space coordinate dial. He pressed both and was rewarded with a view of a barren planet. The analysers said Earth normal. The life safety testers which the rats had managed to ruin still buzzed and showed red lights, but a quickly opened door did not reveal anything immediately fatal. In fact there was nothing outside at all except a barren rocky petroplain,--rolling lifeless land.

Contrary to popular belief, even mad science and engineering students do not run around the universe with uncalibrated equipment with no purpose in mind. He surveyed the area about the device to assure himself nothing was going to kill him in the next few hours; then he settled down to study several banks of strip charts which had been made automatically while he was jumping the traveler around. He finally satisfied himself that he knew how far in space and forwards/backwards or sideways in time he moved per radian twist of each of the dials. He also calculated what kind of heretofore unexpected drift he was getting and how to compensate for it. Then he marked the dials, wrote a memo of instructions which he attached to the control board, and checked to see where/when he was and had been.

He had been on planet Uranus slightly forwards and a larger amount sideways in time. He was now on Earth far sideways in time and about six hours forward from where/when he had started, two hours less than the subjective time that had passed during the misadventures with animals and monsters and subsequent time spent making calculations. He set the dial for six hours forward and the exact space and space/time he had started from.

A few subjective hours later he decided that there were at least three factors he did not have instruments to measure and had no way of compensating for while making jumps. He also guessed there were some more he could not dream of. The cats meowed and Criss woofed hungrily, the fact that they were only six hours in objective time ahead of the one p.m. they had started did not comfort their stomachs.

"Well, menagerie, I think we're done for; the power's down."

After making that statement, he set the dials for one last desperate gamble. Within very rough limits he could pick a random point on an alternate world of Earth several

hundred years in the future. The rough limits that the difference which had determined the divergence of the alternate world from that of his original could be anywhere from a few hundred years in the future to a few hundred years in the past. The gamble was that the technology of the world he had picked would enable him to return, or at least the civilization would let him live in it. For the last time, he pressed.

This time the jump was not instantaneous. He opened the chart making devices and saw that all pens had left one edge of their respective strips of paper. The normal recording instruments were obviously reading nothing coherent, only that he was still in the process of jumping. There was no way to stop, and he dared not open or step out the door; the effect of leaving a moving space/time traveler could only be guessed at--an educated guess was that opening the door would be equivalent to opening the door on a fast jet airplane--fatal. The meter reading the mass of convertible matter left in the reactor, which turned into a total matter to energy conversion process while the device produced the jump effect, showed no matter left or being converted. Yet there was a totally incomprehensible blurr outside the door, and the meters said a jump was still in process.

At last the blurr resolved into a huge hemispherical chamber. The rats squealed first, the cats screamed and collapsed, Bandit never woke up so didn't notice going back to sleep, Criss howled mournfully as he fell, and the pilot went unconscious with his finger moving to the center of the useless space/time dial.

"What's a nice little cat like you doing in a rat trap like this?" asked the ten year old boy who came in with the technicians to inspect the space/time traveler.

"Meow?" asked Patches, the only one who had recovered from the knock out effect; Patches did not understand the language.

"Hey, dad, look at all the animals. They look like pets. What kind of setup did we catch this time anyway?"

"This space/time son; I keep telling you that regular time doesn't work inside the dome. Anyhow, it looks like some character about like you're going to be in about ten tears if you don't behave, lucked into something by accident. I'll know for sure after the telepathic probe finishes feeding into the semantic analyzer computer."

"Yawn," said Flossy, who had just recovered.

"Squeak, spueak, squeak, squeak, squeak, squeak," said the six rats who awoke to find they had been allergic to the effect.

"Here it is," said the boy's father as his portable printout machine started receiving radio messages from the computer and typed several hundred sheets of paper in half a second.

"It's like I thought," said the boy as he grabbed and read the summary sheet and began to tell his father what he had guessed.

Meanwhile Flossy had gone outside and climbed up on top of the box. One of the examiners had just opened the heavy lid of the reactor when Flossy fell in. She sizzled as the residual heat turned her from cat grey to charcoal black.

"Hey kid, I got a gob for you," said the examiner on the roof as he had the lump of protoplasm hauled out of the steaming hole. "I want you to get that bio kit you've been wanting to play with and put this animal back together."

The boy raced off and came back pushing a tank on wheels

with a shelf of instruments slung beneath. He opened a lid, and the examiner swung his long handled laddle around. The dead cat hitting the fluid of the tank sounded just like the live cat jumping off a ten foot high stack of fantasy paperbacks.

"Well well, for once I get to see the summary sheet first," said the father.

The sheet told the whole story. The mind on the floor had the following pertinent information: A hundred and one thousand years before the space/time they were in, and straight back, evolution in the world of origin of the captured traveler had taken a different turn: human potential intelligence had declined somewhat in favor of what we called social skills instead of continuing to increase slightly with no increase in herd instinct. Instead of the steady and smooth accumulation of technology and informal civilized organization that had occurred in the capturing world, there had been all sorts of organizations, empires, isms, and finally a formally organized civilization that did both progress and remain reasonably stable. The production of this experimental space/time traveler had occurred nearly a thousand years backwards and 101,000 years sideways. The technical examiner concluded that no world diverging from that point would produce such a device again if this one was destroyed. When his son had revived the cat and replaced it in the ship, he had the box refueled, placed a translated note on the dial board, removed all recording devices from the box's instruments as an extra precaution, installed some automatic equipment, and left.

The adventurer awoke to see a man resealing the door and pointing to the note.

He tried the now completely sealed door and found it locked from the outside. He glanced at the note and saw the meter next to it reading jump in progress. He read:

"You were lucky. Far ahead and sideways in time from your world is a far advanced world that prohibits most space/time travel for reasons you would not readily understand. Though your device was out of power when it entered the hypersphere of attraction we had set up to draw all space/time devices operating within it to our 'police station', the attraction effect kept you moving. You are being sent back to ten hours straight ahead of your point of origin by devices we have attached to yours. The door will detach and fall away when you arrive. The plastic on it is identical to the one you originally used; we used a mechanical mind reader and computer translator on you while you were knocked out. You will have ninety seconds to remove yourself and animals from the box after the door starts to fall. The rats are all in the canisters on the floor. The automatic devices we have attached will disintegrate themselves and your device when the ninety seconds expire. Call your friends in Virginia and North and South Carolina. Signed, Space/time police examiner Klethl." Of course the note disintegrated before he was finished with the jump....

Zink, thud, bounce. Wark, bark howl. The door fell off just as Criss woke up. He zoomed out through the opening to look for his food dish with bandit and the cats close behind.

The ex-pilot tossed the canisters out of the box and followed the cats out. They all went looking for something to eat, but he turned to see the glowing box.

The wood vaporized and the metal melted to a hopeless slag heap. He went to eat and write a letter or two.

