

SINISTERRA

WINTER 1956



SINISTERRA

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- this was a Fenden publication -

editorial ☆

SINISTERRA IN PAST TENSE ◊

Although many of you might have thought this was the first issue of a new fanzine, this is actually the eighth consecutive (we haven't missed a single one) issue. You were probably too young to pay attention to such things when the other issues were sold to a select few. We now have a sad duty to perform. We must tell you that this is probably the last issue you will ever see of SINISTERRA. We are sad because this means we must refund the unused portions of all the advance subscriptions we have received during the seven years SINISTERRA has been published, and you're crazy if you don't think we could use that fifty cents.

SINISTERRA has been a publication of the Nameless Ones, which has been Seattle's idea of a science fiction club. SINISTERRA had been planned as a quarterly fanzine representing the highest quality writing, illustrating, and publishing of which the club was capable. In addition to SINISTERRA, the club also published a more frequent organ -- a ratty thing called Cry of the Nameless, which published club announcements and sheer trash.

The first four issues of SINISTERRA, sparked by G. M. Carr, were close to being on schedule and realized the high, fannish ideals upon which the publication was based. The next three issues, no longer sparked by G. M. Carr, were widely spaced as club enthusiasm waned. The few who were interested in publishing SINISTERRA were too busy with other projects or were handicapped by lack of assistance or authority to carry on the Ghodd Whork.

Meanwhile the mangy old Cry of the Nameless continued to be published with increasing regularity and volume, becoming so unwieldy that it went subscription to finance it, and was published by a different editor each month to spread out the work.

At long last we have wised up. That crumby old Cry of the Nameless is more regular, more popular, more necessary, and just plain more fun than SINISTERRA would ever be likely to be. With most of our effort going into the production of a monthly Cry, we have very little time and energy for the higher things in life, like SINISTERRA, for instance.

Mind you, we are not going to be so incautious as to say another issue of SINISTERRA will never happen; we only say the event is so improbable that we are returning unused subscriptions with this issue. We are making a provision for you addicts of SINISTERRA who can't live without it. If you want to be notified in case another issue does come about, let us know somehow so that we can let you know somehow.

After that, don't skren us; we'll skren you.

Wally Weber

featuring:

BEHIND

the

Glass

Veil



L. Garne

BEHIND the GLASS VEIL

By Burnett R. Toskey

The nocturnal slumber of Clara Donovan was rudely interrupted on that memorable night, for it was on that night that the pirates came for her. Startled, she sat upright in bed, but rough hands were upon her and she was forced back onto the bed. She did not scream, for she did not frighten easily.

"Who are you?" she asked. "What do you want?"

For answer a greasy rag was stuffed into her mouth. She lashed out with her arms into the darkness, but slimy hands pinioned them. The bedcovers were ripped off. Luckily she had on a nightgown, although it was pitch dark in the room. She kicked, and felt her toe sink into a hard furry stomach, and heard an accompanying groan. Thick ropes were placed about her ankles and her wrists were bound together behind her back. She was picked up, kicking and struggling. Her captors made no sounds during the entire operation except for an occasional grunt from exertion, for the girl was hard to control. She could tell that some of the villains were Martians and some were Venusians by the hairy paws holding her feet and the slimy hands holding her wrists.

A small air flyer waited outside the window, its motor running quietly, its pilot anxious. The pilot's anxiety lessened when his comrades appeared with their capture and they were on their way to safety. Clara was deposited unceremoniously on the floor. The interior lighting now revealed her for the first time. Fire blazed from her blue eyes and she shook her head meaningfully.

A huge warty Venusian bent over and removed the gag from her mouth

"Who are you?" she asked again. "Where are you taking me?"

The Venusian's bulbous eyes glanced toward his burly Martian comrades. "Dorkan sent for you," he said at last.

Clara shivered. Dorkan, the space pirate, was known to every humanoid in the Solar System. She shook a golden ringlet from one eye. "What does he want with me?" she asked.

At that moment the pilot turned in his seat and saw the girl. His eyes bugged from their sockets. "Jeez, what a body!" he gasped as his hairy unkempt form left the seat and lurched toward the girl. At that moment the flyer took a sudden nosedive.

The Venusian grabbed the controls and two Martians grabbed the Earthman. "Get back to your job," one snarled. "Some of you Earthmen just can't keep your emotions under control. What do you think Dorkan's paying you for?"

Grumbling, the Earthman took his job over from the Venusian.

"My father won't let you get away with this," the girl snapped. "My father's the richest man on Earth — he'll have the whole Space Navy after you tomorrow morning."

A Martian turned its heavily furred body and said, "A fat ransom you'll bring, then."

The girl lay quiet. So that was why she had been kidnapped. She should have guessed it. The pirates were not paying any attention to her at the moment, but she was bound too securely to take advantage of this. Soon she would meet Dorkan, the pirate. No one had ever seen Dorkan and lived, except his trusted cohorts. Many claimed that Dorkan was a Martian, for Martians are known for cruelty and sharp wit. Others believed Dorkan to be Venusian, since Venusians are known for their fanatic single-minded desire for personal gain. At least, she thought, she would perhaps be able to find the answer to this problem, even though she might pay dearly.

The flyer now approached a small encampment enclosed by mountains which were barely visible in the starlight. A spaceship was revealed by starlight reflected from its glistening surface.

The flyer landed. Rough hands again lifted Clara, and two Martians held the pilot securely. They entered the spaceship.

Before Clara had time to adjust her eyes to the brilliantly lighted interior of the ship she heard the familiar hiss of a plutonium gun. She cringed involuntarily and opened her eyes in time to see the Earthman sink to the floor in a mass of writhing flame. Wide-eyed she looked up at the source of the murderous fusillade. And looked into a pair of cold gray eyes poised above a cruelly leering mouth. The whole ensemble was implanted in a face that could never be forgotten once it had been gazed upon.

"Dorkan!" she gasped, for it could be none other. At that moment Clara knew true horror, for she saw Dorkan for what he really was. Dorkan now stood revealed as a member of a race known to be craftier and more

sadistic than any Martian, and more rapacious than any Venusian. Dorkan, the Space Pirate, was an Earthman.

A crafty smile appeared momentarily on one end of Dorkan's leering mouth, and he turned and left the room. Two of the barrel-chested hairy Martians lifted her and she was carried down the companionway a short distance and finally deposited in a small room. The door was locked. She was a prisoner!

She glanced around. A soft mat lay along one wall. She made her way to it and lay down to finish her night's sleep which had been so rudely interrupted.

Jim Thompson, All-Solar fullback for 2219, Mr. Solar System for 2221 - 2224, declared to be the most eligible bachelor in the Solar System, recipient of a rumored average of five thousand marriage proposals every day, stood before Hiram Donovan, the uranium, plutonium, and radium magnate, richest man in the Solar System, and the father of Clara Donovan.

"Don't worry about Clara, Jim," said the girl's father. "She can take care of herself pretty well."

Jim groaned, muttering, "How well I know," as he rubbed his sore shin involuntarily. "But Dorkan has her, and I think something should be done!"

The older man looked approvingly at the young athlete. "You like Clara pretty well, don't you? What would you suggest?"

Jim considered the question. "I'm not too sure. Uh — have you tried sending the ransom money?"

At that moment a communicator buzzed. Mr. Donovan flicked a switch and a distraught face appeared on the screen. "What is it, Jones?" he barked.

"Sir, our ship has just been attacked. Pirates have just taken the ransom money and —"

"That's all right, Jones, return to Earth!" He broke the connection. He shrugged. "You have the answer. It was worth a try, of course. But every ransom shipment is bound to be attacked, most likely by Dorkan himself. He can just keep demanding it."

Jim straightened to his full six foot three and said, "Then I'm going after her!"

to one side. Her capture had certainly been carried off with success.

She looked around the room, seeking to find something with which she could cut or loosen the ropes that bound her wrists, but without success.

She stopped her useless efforts as she heard the lock of her door being manipulated. Unconsciously she flung her head back to get the golden ringlets of hair out of her eyes. The door opened to reveal a young Earthman of about eighteen years. His eyes widened as he saw her, and the plutonium gun in his hand wavered slightly.

Clara relaxed when she saw him. "Who are you?" she asked, eyeing a tray of food that he was escorting.

"Billy Dean," he said, the gun quivering in his hand, as he rolled the food cart toward her. Cautiously he pulled a chair over to the cart and said, "You can sit here."

Clara seated herself on the chair pretending to have a great amount of difficulty in doing so. She eyed the food hungrily. "You'll have to untie my hands so I can eat, Billy," she coaxed, giving him a sweet smile.

He weakened and said, "Well, turn around and hold your hands out behind you. But no tricks, now!"

She complied, and as he untied her wrists with one hand, she asked, "How come a nice boy like you is all mixed up with a villain like Dorkan?"

Billy straightened up and said proudly, "Dorkan says that when I get older I will get a ship of my own, and then I can be a real pirate, just like him."

"Oh," she swallowed. "Well, won't that be nice," she finished lamely.

Her hands free, she lost no time in attacking the food. Billy waited patiently while she ate, his gun hand now relaxed, his young eyes feasting themselves on the lovely form of the girl, still clad only in a nightgown.

The girl looked at him as she finished eating. He was a well-built kid, but in a scrap she could probably handle him, she thought.

She smiled winningly at him. "Why don't you untie my feet, Billy? These awful ropes hurt me so much."

His gun hand once more tensed as he drew the cart away from the girl. "Nothing doing," he said. "Boss said not to."

"You're not afraid of little me, are you Billy?" she teased, assuming a helplessly fragile pose. Her lips were pursed slightly as she smiled at him, and her eyes beckoned to him.

His breath was coming in gasps now. "Of course I'm not afraid of you," he stammered. "I've got to tie you back up again now."

Clara smiled, turned her back to him, and stretched her arms out behind her. Seeing that the girl was willing to cooperate, he set the gun down within easy reach and cautiously placed a short length of rope over her wrists. At that moment the girl leaned back a little too far and almost lost her balance in the chair. Instinctively he caught her around the waist, and a sweet perfume from the golden hair assailed his nostrils as she fell against him. He started to push her away but she made no hostile moves, so he continued to hold her. She turned her head and his lips hungrily sought hers.

She pressed herself tightly against him. His heart was pounding like a pile driver as he pressed her down to the floor. "My feet, Billy," she gasped.

Trembling, he released his grasp and fumbled at the knots that held her ankles tightly together. She lay flat on the floor, her half-revealed breasts rising and falling as Billy, caution thrown to the winds, completed the operation of untying her legs.

He looked up then, and the girl raised one shapely knee slightly and smiled. He lurched forward, but at that moment Clara brought her knee up sharply, right into his face. Before he could recover his amazement, both of her fists pounded into his eyes and she leaped out from under him with a nimbleness that would have surprised him, had he not been momentarily blinded by the drubbing. He experienced a sharp pain in his head just before he lost consciousness. The girl was now standing, a look of slight regret on her pretty face. She was holding the plutonium gun by its barrel.

She decided that he wouldn't be bothering anybody for a while. She went out to the corridor, and since no one was in sight, stepped out and locked the door behind her. She advanced in the direction she had been carried the night before. She tried several of the doors along the way, but all of them seemed to be locked. Rounding a slight bend she suddenly came upon the end of the corridor. A large door faced her, and this one opened at her touch. She found herself in the main drive room.

"All right Dorkan," she screamed, "your game is up. Everybody stand up and don't make a move!"

Dorkan and his Venusian and Martian co-pilots were startled from their deep concentration at the control panels and lost no time in complying with her orders. Dorkan smiled cruelly at the girl, and his eyes seemed to look straight through her. In spite of herself she was shaken by that piercing stare.

Suddenly Dorkan raised his eyes and looked over her shoulder, and with a knowing smirk said, "All right, boys, get her!"

She whirled, her golden ringlets flying in all directions, to forestall Dorkan's minions which had come up behind her. But no one was there. She had been tricked. Before she could recover from her error, the gun was snatched out of hand, and a pair of slimy Venusian hands held her securely.

One of the big Martians hurried down the corridor to release Billy Dean. The Venusian holding the struggling girl bore her down the corridor a short distance and forced her into another room. The girl whirled, only to come face to face with Dorkan, who had been right behind.

Clara backed away from the villain as he shut the door behind him. Here was a man she would be unable to subdue in a fight. Dorkan stood six foot three and was thickly muscled. If he could ever wear a pleasant expression on his face, he would be attractive.

She was now backed against the wall, her arms outspread. She looked at him with a half-fear in her eyes, her lips parted slightly. One shapely knee was slightly raised and her half-revealed breasts were rising and falling. The pirate advanced swiftly upon her and put his arms about her body. One arm encircled her waist and his hand found the small of her waist. The other hand moved up her back until it grasped a handful of soft fragrant golden hair. The sweet perfume assailed his nostrils.

She waited, knowing that it would be useless to struggle. Dorkan swiftly pressed himself against her tightly and his hungry mouth sought her fresh young red lips. Clara hung onto him for support, for she found that her feet were no longer touching the floor. Her breath was now coming in short heavy gasps, and as her breasts were pressed tightly against his strong chest her mouth was forced against his.

Slowly the villain released her, and for an instant she had difficulty regaining her balance. She looked up into his eyes, not smiling, but now no longer afraid, even of the desire for her that she read in his eyes.

Dorkan turned and went to the door, turning for a last look as he reached it.

SINISTERRA

Clara now looked at him and said, "You're a strange man, Dorkan. You're the strangest man I ever met. I don't even know your first name. You're going out there where only Venusians and Martians are waiting when--when--" She looked down and at that moment the nightgown fell from her shoulders and ended in a heap at her feet.

"Yeah," he snarled. "But you're a heroine type. I mustn't touch," and he started out the door.

"But you're a villain type!" she reminded him, stepping off of the nightgown.

"You're right," he smiled as he shut the door and started toward her.

Jim Thompson nosed his little spaceship through the void between Earth and Mars. He pressed the button on his transmitter and shouted, "Dorkan, you villain, surrender immediately or pay the consequences. I, Jim Thompson, All-Solar fullback of 2219, am coming after you. Beware, Dorkan, you villainous pirate, you!"

He turned on the receiver, wondering what reply he would get. The radio was silent. "You coward!" he called into his transmitter. That should get results, he reasoned. Still the receiver was silent.

At that moment the ship lurched to one side and the sound of metal scraping on metal reached his ears. He picked up his plutonium gun as it dawned on him that the pirates had crept up unseen and were now about to board his spaceship.

Three huge Martians appeared in his airlock and came menacingly toward him. Jim calmly pointed the plutonium gun at them and pulled the trigger. Nothing happened. In dismay he looked down to discover that he had forgotten to load the weapon. He threw the useless gun away. He hadn't been All-Solar fullback in 2219 for nothing, he rationalized, as he leaped for the first Martian. But the Martian was as solid as a goalpost. Not long afterward our intrepid hero was locked in a cell and bound hand and foot.

He looked around. A soft mat lay along one wall. He made his way to it and lied down for some much needed sleep.

He was awakened by noises outside his door. The lock was being manipulated. He sat up just as a young Earthman entered, followed by a cart containing a tray of food. He had two blackened eyes. Jim looked at the food

thoughtfully and said, "Who are you?"

The food was silent but the youth said, "Billy Dean." He kept the plutonium gun leveled on Jim as he wheeled the food cart into the room. Suddenly the youth's face brightened. "Say, mister, aren't you Jim Thompson, All-Solar fullback in 2219?"

"Yep, that's right," said Jim confidently, thinking that maybe here was a friend. "How about untying my hands so I can eat?"

"Gosh," stammered Billy. "I can't untie your feet, though. Boss's orders, you know; but hold your hands out behind you."

He removed the ropes from Jim's wrists.

"Have you seen Clara Donovan?" he asked.

"Yeah," Billy answered. "The Boss has her in his cabin. She was in here for a while, but she tricked me and escaped."

Jim looked at the boy's eyes and agreed, "She's a tricky one." He began eating the food, for even heroes need food. "Where is my ship?"

"It's trailing out behind us."

Jim concentrated while he ate. "Say, Billy," he said. "How about you and me and Clara gettin' away from here? You ought to be able to find some spacesuits we can use --"

"Nothin' doing! Dorkan's going to make me a full time pirate when I get old enough."

"You mean with a ship of your own?"

"Yeah. Ain't that somethin', huh?"

"It sure is, Billy," agreed Jim, his mind racing. "But you're old enough to be a pirate right now. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give you my ship and you'll even have me and Clara for your crew and we can be pirates. How does that sound?"

The boy's eyes lit up like neon signs. "Gee, Mr. Thompson, do you really mean that?"

"I certainly do," he said reassuringly.

"Gosh. I'd be a pirate captain with Jim Thompson in my crew!"

"Well, untie my feet and we can get Clara and some spacesuits. Why," he paused, "the name of Billy Dean will be even better known than that of Dorkan himself!"

Hastily, Billy untied Jim's legs, and together they went out into the corridor which, luckily, was deserted.

"There are some spacesuits in here," said Billy, opening a door. Three spac suits with attached plutonium guns were removed from the small closet.

"Now where's Clara," Jim asked.

"Over here." Billy led the way to Dorkan's private quarters and opened the door.

Clara was once more in her nightgown, there being no other women's clothing aboard. She smiled as she saw Jim. "Why Jim, how did you get here?"

"I don't have time to answer that now," Jim answered. "Hurry and get into this spacesuit. We're escaping from this ship." He threw her a spacesuit and began climbing into his.

"Follow me," he directed through the spacesuit intercom as he made for the nearby airlock. He was already in the airlock when he realized they weren't following him. Before he could collect his wits the outer door was open and he was flung out into space.

He looked around. Sure enough there was his spaceship in tow behind the pirate vessel. As he started toward it he suddenly found breathing difficult. In dismay he checked his oxygen tanks, but saw that they were both full.

Behind in the pirate vessel, Billy was half way into his suit, but Clara had ignored hers as she went straight to the main drive room and opened the door. Dorkan rose and came toward her with a smile. "Well, what is it, Clara dear?"

"It's Jim Thompson."

"What of him?"

"He's trying to escape. Don't you think you should get him back again, Ivan dear?"

Billy, hearing this conversation, hastily removed the spacesuit and stowed the two of them back in the closet.

Ivan Dorkan went to a port hole and glanced out toward the rear. "He just seems to be hanging out there. We'd better see what the matter is." He turned to Billy. "Get into a spacesuit and go get him, Billy," he ordered.

Billy dug out a spacesuit and with practiced facility got into it. In a few minutes he was through the airlock and was making his way to the motionless spacesuited form of Jim Thompson. In a few more minutes they were back in the airlock.

Billy slipped back his faceplate. "What's wrong with Mr. Thompson? He doesn't seem to be breathing."

Dorkan looked down at Jim's lifeless form. "Well, Billy, he won't be needing that spaceship out there any more. How would you like to have it?"

"Oh boy, would I!" exclaimed Billy, and this was answer enough. He snapped his spacesuit shut and disappeared into the airlock once more. His plutonium gun sizzled as he made his way with doubled speed toward his new acquisition.

Dorkan removed Jim's dead body from the airless interior of the spacesuit.

"What a pity," said Dorkan. "He was a well-meaning hero type. But he forgot to turn on his oxygen valve. It is always the first concern of anyone behind the glass veil of a spacesuit to turn on the oxygen supply. The third commandment of space!"

"But I thought he was All-Solar fullback of 2219," said Clara sadly.

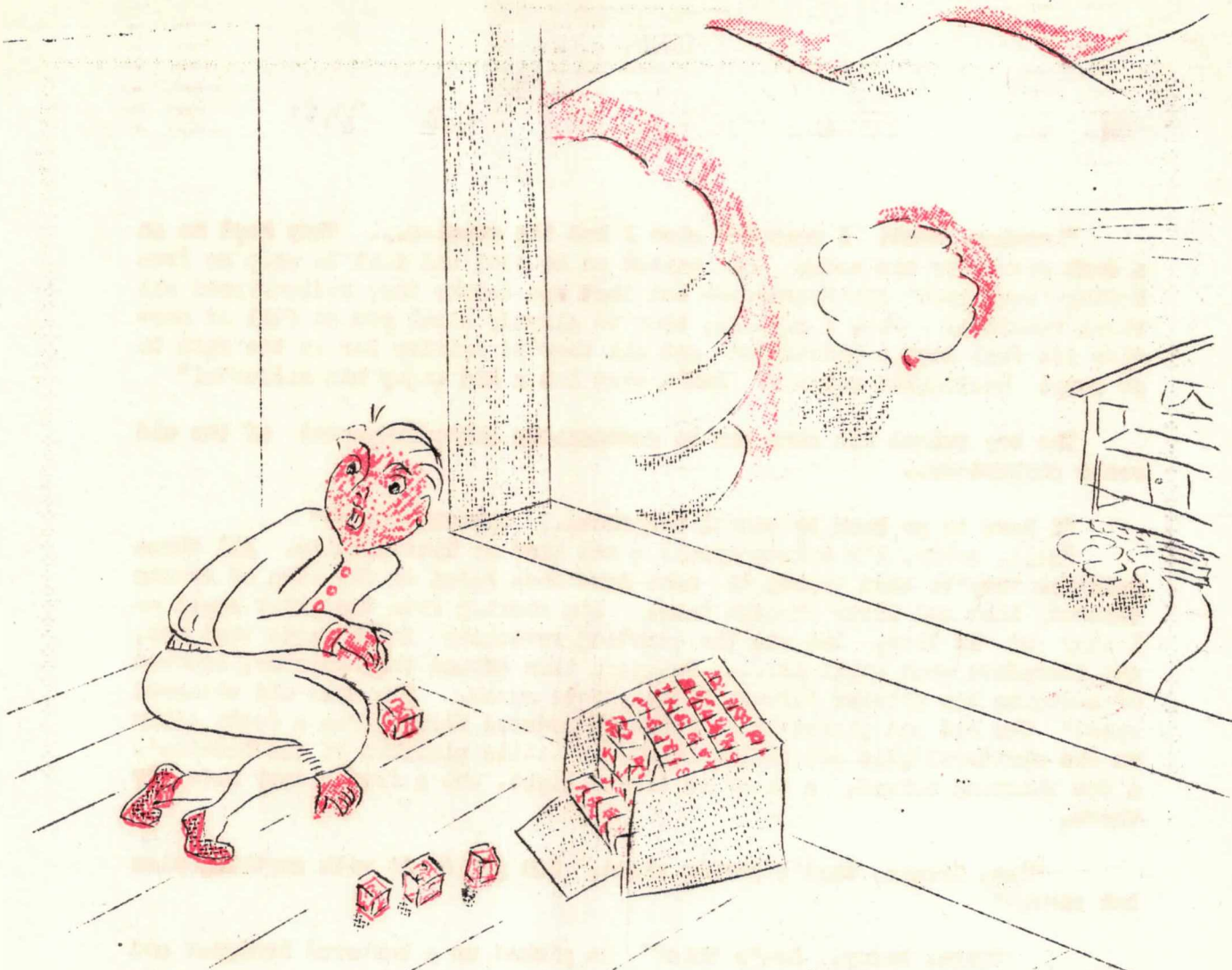
Dorkan turned to Clara with a smile. "But what you don't know is that I was a fixer in 2219 --- I fixed every game he played in."

And Billy Dean, fledgling pirate, nosed his new ship toward the distant stars to make a name for himself in the depths of space.

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FREEDOM FOR THE MCARDLES





BY
G. M. CARR

"Whatchadoing, Gre'Grandad?" asked the little boy. His Great-Grandfather turned around in surprise.

"Now, how in the name of a thousand pink devils did you get here? I thought you were in school?"

"I was, but the Hygiene Director said I've got the measles so I had to come home."

"Measles, hunh! I remember when I had the measles... they kept me in a dark room for six weeks and waited on me hand and foot to keep me from having 'weak eyes' afterwards --- but that was before they rediscovered all these vaccines. Now, I suppose, they've already stuck you so full of needles you feel like a pincushion and all they're waiting for is the rash to go away! Newfangled notions! Don't even let a kid enjoy his ailments!"

The boy rubbed his sore arm in unconscious acknowledgement of the old man's correctness.

"I have to go back to school tomorrow... whatcha doing?"

"Well, sonny, I'm making myself a new kind of Time Machine. All those machines they've been trying to make have been based on the idea of moving somebody back and forth through time. I'm working from the other angle -- I stay put in time, but use the existing revenants to recreate what was, and therefore what still is.... Swinging time around this pointer, instead of swinging the pointer through time, so to speak. See this old withered rose?" The old man picked up a dried and pressed flower from a dusty album on the cluttered table and placed it on the little platform of his 'machine'. A few whirring buzzes, a flash of bluish light, and a fresh, dewy rose lay there.

"Gee, Gramps, that's pretty slick. Can you do it with anything else but roses?"

"Sure, sonny. How's this?" He picked up a battered headgear and brushed off the cobwebs.

"I've been meaning to get me a new hat one of these days, just never got around to it. Always liked this one, even if it is 'obsolete' --- confound those 'Obsolescence Regulations'! Just when you get used to a new style they have to go and declare it 'obsolete' so they can junk the machinery and make something new. Progressive Economy -- bah!"

He put the shining new helmet rakishly on the back of his head and grinned.

"I'd like to see the expression on our Coordinator's face when he tries to figure how I got a new plastallic helmet six years after Obsolescence! He'll bust a blood vessel snoopin' around all the Supply Terminals ... don't you tell, now!"

The small face broke into a pink-speckled parody of the wrinkled old mask of devilish glee the old man wore.

"Heck, no, I won't! Can you make me a helmet, too?"

"Well, now, lessee..." the two started rooting around in the dimness of the barn loft, lifting aside the discarded debris of several generations. Although the Reconversion Collectors called periodically at the McArdle dwellquarters, the McArdle gens had never been too cooperative, yielding up just barely enough discard to fill their quota. It was well known that they hoarded their discards, but the Bureau for Sentimental Preservation of Ancient Cultures had made so much agitation regarding the compulsory turn-in of non-valued artifacts, when the donors protested a sentimental regard, that the Reconversion Collectors hesitated to press a gens so vociferous as the McArdles, and the McArdles took full advantage of their hesitation.

"Gramps, what's this?" the older man lifted his head to see what the youngster had found.

"Well, as I live and breathe, if it isn't that old Matter-Transporter I tried to build when I was a young sprout. I forgot all about that..... goes to show how a man can forget the fires of his youth! I remember I spent a whole year working at that thing in my spare time. Got it going pretty good, too, but then my mating period came up and your great-grandma didn't think much of me spending my nights out in the barn..."

Together they removed the accumulated antiques and re-assembled the machine.

"Aside from a few old tubes, I'd say this thing ought to work pretty good and I can put them on this 'Time Machine' here and get them back, good as they ever were."

Suiting his actions to his words, the old man puttered around setting the contraption in order.

"Now, let's see if it'll work. What'll I transport first?"

"What do you mean, 'transport,' Grampa? Do you mean send it off to the Colonies at the Landing Planet like Uncle Jake?"

"You hush your mouth about Uncle Jake, boy! If word gets around outside our gens that we figured out a way to get him smuggled through the Transportation Authorities, somebody's gonna suffer for it, McArdles or no McArdles. You just hold your tongue between your teeth and keep it there!"

"Yessir, But what do you mean about it?"

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"Well, lemme see now. As I recollect, I used to put something on this platform -- set this dial here -- and it would disappear from this platform and show up somewhere else, wherever I had the dials set for. Here, gimme that tool chest --- I always planned to take it to the sleeproom when I got around to it and fix my pneumatic cabinet. Dang thing's got such a squeak in it I'd almost rather do my own breathing nights than listen to it. Plague take this climate, anyway... now, let's see if I can figure how far to send it.... hmm... there... well, there she went. Beats carrying the blasted thing, don't it?"

"Gee, Gramps, can you send me over, too?"

"No, sonny, I guess we better stick to sending tool chests. I never could get it to transporting anything alive. That is, it would transport it, all right, but it wouldn't be alive when it got there. I always figured your great-grandma got in the way of a valuable invention when she took my mind off of finishing this."

He shook his head reminiscently.

"Yessir, she sure took my mind off of inventions for a while!"

"Gramps."

"Eeeyah..."

"Whatch going to do now that you've got your mind back on inventions?" The innocent eyes looked candidly into the suddenly sharp scrutiny of their older counterparts. "What are we going to do with these machines now that you've got them running?"

"Well, there ought to be something we can do with them, that's for certain. Here, I remember this old dress. Your great-grandma always liked this one, seems she never could get any more of that shade of blue, and that was just about the last dress she got before they put silk on the Obsolescent list. I tell you what, let's put it on this Time Machine, make it all new and pretty, and then send it over to your great-grandma's sleep-room closet! I'll bet that'll put her to wondering!"

The two of them chuckled as they resurrected the delicate garment.

"Wish I had some way of seeing where this landed. Be a shame if I made a mistake and it landed in your Aunt Sarah's room instead! She never would stop clacking. Even if she is my granddaughter, I never saw such a

woman for talk!"

"Do you want me to run in and see, Gramps?"

"That's a good idea, sonny. You tell me where they're landing. I'll try for the middle of each room, and you can tell me how close I hit it. Here, let's see if we can fix up this old relic left over from the Forgotten Days -- I heard they used to call them 'walkie-talkie sets' -- daggone, I never figured this museum piece could ever be useful again. This Time Machine would be a wonderful invention anyplace else than under a Government where everybody's so dad-blamed anxious to throw everything out as soon as it get to be useful! Planned Expansion! Bah!"

The short legs of the youngster took him the 500 feet to the house in short order. Soon his panting breaths were audible in the antique they'd resurrected.

"Gee, Gramps, you put it right in the middle of the room like you said. It's all crumpled up on the floor."

"Well, sonny, pick it up and put it in her clothespress -- kind of to the back. That way she'll find it next time she starts 'housecleaning' and will get to wondering so hard how she overlooked it that maybe she'll forget about making me shove the furniture around... now, how about going in my room and looking for the toolchest."

"That's over by the window, Gramps. You had some bottles there. They got busted."

"Gallopig Grasshoppers! I plumb forgot about that brew I was ripening!"

The old man's disgust crackled through the air.

"Well, mop it up as best you can, then get on back here. I guess the machine's accurate enough if it can spot the one place on the whole floor I already had something. Blasted luck!"

While waiting for little Hughie's return, Gramps busied himself sorting through the dustcovered debris. Old clothes, baby shoes, bundles of useless papers, letters, boxes of tri-dimensional snapcubes neatly stored by years --- useless junk --- worthless except as catchpoints to hold memories, but dear to the past-loving McCardles for that very reason. Of all the dwellplaces in the Village District, the McCardles alone had anything that might be called an attic. Even the memory of such was gone from the

rest; even the oldsters made shift to change their memories with the changing fashions, letting bygone loves and hates and frustrations become obsolete with the clothes they wore and the tools they used. Only the very old sometimes forgot, and looked around in vain for the comfortable chair they remembered from earlier days, or the convenient tool their hands remembered with tenacious skill.

"Danged if this isn't an interesting thought, now," chuckled Gramps as he unbound an old Bill of Lading and Transportation Order saved from the debris of fifty years, "I'll bet that young squirt at the Transportation Office wouldn't know what to make of an order requesting that all Class 'D' livestock be quarantined 20 days and inoculated against Hoof and Mouth Disease! There hasn't been any livestock on record for thirty years ---- long before his time! ---- and the only 'Class D' the T.O. has anything to do with now is special travelling accommodations for Central Council Representatives..... They've got Hoof and Mouth Disease, all right! Always 'hoofing' around the Villages and shooting their mouths off!" The old man cackled over the atrocious pun as he carefully smoothed the paper in question and placed it on the machine. "It's got the same official seal on it, and all signed by the C. T. O. Think I'll make it all new and shiny and send it off to see what happens.... Too bad I can't be there when they open the incoming dispatches!"

He was still chuckling over his joke when little Hughie dashed up the ladder, clutching the old (now new) Walkie-Talkie. Together they turned to examine an old container full of outgrown toys.

"Let's see what we've got here, sonny. Ah, pshaw, what do you want with this junk. Guns that could never shoot, knives that never could cut, imitation playboxes with no tubes in them. What kind of junk is this to give kids to grow up on! Why, I mind when I was your age I had my own gun and could fling a knife from ten paces and hit the bull's eye every time. Of course, we had to be able to fight in those days... That was before all these blasted Village Districts and Ordinance Comptrollers were set up and a man still could move around if he wanted, just so he showed up for his labor and marriage duties. Oh, well, nobody can have everything," he sighed heavily, "to be sure, this safety and security are fine things..... and it doesn't make any difference to an old man like me. I'm too old to go roaming, even if the Authorities would let me.... Takes a young man for that."

"What does it mean, 'roaming', Grampa? Like Uncle J...."

"Ah! Ah! What'd I tell you about keeping your tongue between your teeth?" Gramps frowned ferociously. "Yes, like Uncle Jake! A man wants

to move around and see the world, travel from planet to planet and star to star without being cooped up in one little valley by a bunch of nincompoops that think the world is bounded by the edge of the Village District! In my time I've seen the drylands of Mars, and the wetlands of Venus..... I've smelled Mercury and sloughed along barely able to lift my feet on Pluto. I wouldn't want to go back there, even if I was young again, but I'd give a plenty to be free to go! I reckon the only place in this whole galaxy that's got any freedom in it is the Landing Planet where your Uncle Jake has gone. That's where the Space Liners base, all ships take off and land there going to the other galaxies, and no solar system has the jurisdiction, so no Central Council has been set up. They still have the old, old form of government that tradition tells us was used when the space ships first lifted from the third planet of Sol. There a man is free to come and go, choose his own mate from any that are available. They do say that the available females have their own choice, too, and make a pretty tough competition of it when the females are fewer than the males! Might even be the other way around, too, if the males are scarcer than the females!" The old man's chuckles were more for his memories than for the boy's edification, but Hughie dutifully chuckled and helped his great-grandfather sort papers.

"Gramps, what's this school paper doing here? It looks like the ones on our Literacy Instructor's desk." Gramps gravely inspected a time-yellowed official notice of reassignment of work-hours. His eyes twinkled as he wondered what the ultra-efficient Instruction Corps would make of the wildly out-of-date orders.

"Sonny, this was a school paper that rested on a Literacy Instructor's desk some 80 years ago. What do you say we freshen it up a bit and see what sense it makes now? It says here that the Literacy Instructors shall spend two hours every day chopping wood and instructing the pupils in the art of kindling fires. That was when the power plant went out, I remember. Every one in the valley had to learn to keep fires going during the cold spell until the Engineers could figure out how to get the plant started again. That was pioneer days, son. I wonder what these flabby sissies at Instructionquarters would make of it."

Hughie's eyes gleamed with sudden glee at the thought of his Instructionmaster trying to chop wood, a pursuit he much admired in the only person still capable of that forgotten art -- Gramps.

"Let's do it, Gramps, can you do it?"

"Why shore... nothing to it," said the old man, laying the yellowed paper on the Time Machine for a moment, to pick it up again, crisp and

gleaming with official seals and signatures still wet. He scrutinized it carefully, chuckled again at its impossible demands, and placed it on the Matter Transmitter.

The foul deed done, the two culprits sat and laughed until tears rolled down their cheeks. Finally even the ultimate of juvenile jokes exhausted its compulsion, and they wiped their eyes and looked around for more mischief. The box of old stereosnaps took Hughie's eye, and he became engrossed in these fascinating glimpses of the past. Here was the old dwell place when newly built, the barn with hay bulging from its loft and cattle standing in the barnyard; portraits of hauntingly familiar places in unfamiliar dress; utter strangers caught forever in the clear plastic - smiling still in vigorous life though their bones were dust these many years...

"Look Gramps, a soldier...He's got a funny looking gun! Who is it, Gramps, who is it?"

"Why that's me sonny when I was a light-footed rover...That was when they caught me and saddled me down with my marriage duty...Yessirree...Them was the days.....And this is how females dressed in them days. I don't recall this one." He laid down a cube and picked up another, "But here is your great grandma when she was a lightsome female just off the mating list! She was a right smart gal in those days, still is, for that matter, but I recall how I dreaded the mating date. I fought like a wild steer against my duty, but the minute I saw her I gentled like a pet lamb! Yes, sir, like a pet lamb!"

"What's a pet lamb, Gramps?"

"That's right, sonny, you never saw one. It's hard for me to remember that they've been gone these many years now --- ever since meat became 'obsolete' and they started handing out these blasted synthetics! Here," the old man shuffled among the piles of frayed papers and brought a farm catalogue issued more than a century before, while the countryside was still agricultural and dependent on each unit for self-subsistence, "Here, I guess this is as close as you'll come to a lamb..."

The child scrutinized the ancient photograph of a prize Southdown carefully, but it was too far from his experience to visualize. He continued to look at it, however, trying to recover from its two-dimensional flatness some idea of the strange beast depicted. Unobserved, as the old man turned away and started examining another pile of old papers and catalogs, he pondered a while, then with a furtive glance at the old man's back, carefully placed the picture on the platform of the time machine and pressed the stud.

"Baaah! Baaaaah!"

Gramps whirled in astonishment as the long-vanished sounds filled the dusty loft.

"Great Jehovah's Black Britches! Where'd that critter come from? Here, sheep! Here, sheep!" he coaxed the ewe to a corner and tied her to a post.

"Son, how'd you make that animal?"

Hughie pulled himself out of the opposite corner where he crouched bug-eyed with terror. Wordlessly he pointed to the time machine and the torn catalog. The old man's eyes narrowed. He tore out a picture of a plow and placed it on the machine. With a thud the heavy plow fell off the insecure little platform. This time he tried a pictured shovel. Same result. With trembling hand he picked at random a stereocube from the box at his side and placed it on the rack.

"Eeeeeek!" the young lady's frightened screech shook the cobwebs on the rafters as she tumbled ungracefully to the floor.

"It's Great-Grandma!" shouted Hughie, "she's all young again!"

"Nope, it's another one, Hughie," the old man whispered and added under his breath... "but it would'a been OK with me if she was..."

They stared at the red-headed stranger, and in spite of her terror-filled eyes the girl picked up spirit. "You bet I'm not your Great-Grandma -- I'm not anybody's great-grandma! How did you bring me here? What's the big idea, anyway. Who are you and what do you think you're doing?"

"Beg your pardon, Miss, but I reckon it's my fault. I made a mistake on my calculations.... that is, I didn't calculate what I was doing, which was my mistake! What would you say your name is?"

"I'm Samantha Bairnes, if it's any of your business, and I'll thank you to turn your old machine back on again and send me back home! The idea, snatching people out of their garden like that! You ought to be ashamed of yourself! You send me right back home, do you hear?"

"Samanthy Bairnes..." he paused and looked back into his youth, "would you be any kin to old Proctor Bairnes that was head of the Bairnes gens before it was broken up for insubordination when the Council took over?"

"Proctor Baimnes is my father but I don't know what you're talking about with your 'gens' and 'Council'..... just wait until I tell him what you're doing here with your nasty old machine that snatches a respectable girl right out of her own back yard and drops her down 'Plunk' in a dirty barn loft! He'll have something to say about that, or I don't know my father!"

"I'm sorry, Miss Samantha, I am indeed. I didn't realize when I started fooling around... I mean, well..."

"I don't care what you mean! I'm going right home and tell my father on you. This newfangled machinery has gone just too far when it interferes with private citizens. I'm going to ask my father to call a meeting of the village elders to have it outlawed!" She flounced around and looked for the exit.

"No, wait... don't go yet!" the old man held up an imploring hand, "I just want a chance to explain... there's no place to go, for you, I mean."

She turned and flashed a fiery blue eye at him. "Are you crazy as well as impertinent, old man? I don't know who you are, but I can see the McArdle Farmhouse through the window and if that isn't little Hughie McArdle I don't know who it is! I'm not staying around here, not when there's a feud on between the Baimses and McArdles! I don't know what you are up to, but I suspect it's for no good! I'm going right home and tell my father about these goings on, and the McArdles better have a good explanation. We Baimses aren't taking any impertinence from any McArdles!"

She located the loft entrance and started down the ladder, noticing the ewe as she went...

"Nobody in the Valley has Southdowns but us Baimses... what's this ewe doing in your loft? So that's what you're up to, cattle stealing..... and got me by accident. Oh, ho! No wonder you are so anxious to keep me here... so the McArdles hired somebody to come in and steal sheep for them just because they couldn't get them from us any other way! Just you wait 'till my father hears that!"

"No, wait, Miss Samantha, let me explain..." the old man hobbled in agitation toward her and lifted a restraining hand. The girl glared back defiantly and dashed down the ladder before he could think of words to make her understand what had happened.

"Catch her, Hughie, don't let her get away. Keep her away from people 'till I can figure out what to do!" Great-Grandfather gasped, and Hughie

darted obediently after her.

"Wait, Miss Samantha, wait.. don't go.." but she merely hurried the faster down the little used side lane, skirting the edge of the woodland plot that had once been grazing pasture, taking her bearings by the familiar outline of the hills and heading for home.

Back in the barn loft, the old man wiped his forehead with an old-fashioned handkerchief as he tried to figure out some way out of this mess. Stiffle he lowered himself down the ladder, all the gleeful mischief leaking away in the realization of the danger he had brought upon the gens.

"I guess I'd better call Hugh III," he thought as he crossed the barnyard. "He can take her into custody and nobody will question it, him being head of the Patrol.... and my boy Johnny, being head of the Population Department can probably make up some papers on her....." He brightened and quickened his pace toward the house. "Yep, that'll do it. Hugh can take her into 'protective custody' and his uncle can make some papers for her, and by that time we'll have had a chance to explain what happened. Them Bairnses always was mighty smart people, so she'll probably quiet down and cause no trouble once she understands..." He hurried to the telescreen and called his grandson on the private frequency.

Hugh Beltin, Patrol Chief, and Head of the Village District Patrol, was a determined looking man in his early thirties. He snapped to an instant alert as his Grandfather stumbled out the predicament his childish mischief had brought upon them. He wasted no time in scolding, though his firm lips tightened in impatience as he realized what the old man had done.

"Which way was she headed?" he asked.

"She was crossing the creek last I saw her, headed toward the north end of the valley. I sent little Hughie after her to keep her out of sight if he could, so maybe if you hurry....." the old man stopped as the screen emptied. Hugh Three could take care of it. She wouldn't argue with him, once he squared his epauletted shoulders at her and bore down on her with those steely grey eyes, and she'd wilt in the backbone like everybody else, red hair or no red hair! A sly twinkle shone under the bushy eyebrows. It'd be a good thing if Hugh Three met a woman with some spunk to her. Ever since his young bride died with their first young-un, Hugh'd never even looked at a woman, and his uncle had pitied the boy and kept his name off the mating list instead of following regulations to the letter. That Bairnes female was a likely looking gal, and it wouldn't do the gens any harm to get some new blood with a little life to it. Yes, sir, it'd be downright funny if....

"Hugh McArdle! What are you up to now! I see that smirk, you've been getting into mischief again. I hope it isn't another of those pranks that will take the whole gens to cover up. They're still shaking in their boots over the way you smuggled Jake out." Great Grandma McArdle bustled into the room, duster in hand, her spare figure almost drenched in the shapeless 'housecleaning' apron she wore. She looked at him keenly as he answered.

"Oh, it's nothing... Mother, how'd you like to see Hugh III take a mate?"

"Don't tell me you've started match-making now! You leave Hugh III alone. When he's ready he'll let his name be put on the mating list, and there's no sense stirring up trouble for him. You just mind your own business, and that'll be the best for all of us."

"Now, Mother, don't start snapping my head off! After all, we've been mighty happy together all these years and I'd kind of like to see my Grandson get a pretty gal with some spunk to her, too!"

"Hunh!" she snorted, but a slight smile twitched the corners of her mouth. "Hugh III can find his own girls without any help from you. Who was it you had in mind?"

"Lucy, do you remember that story they used to tell us when we were kids about that Bairnes female that disappeared into thin air one day?"

"You mean that old story they made up about that girl that eloped? What's that got to do with Hugh?"

"She didn't elope, Lucy, that was the real goods, she really did disappear. I just found her... out in the barn."

Great Grandmother McArdle looked up in quick alarm and placed her soft old hand gently on his forehead.

"Are you feeling all right, Hugh? You sound excited. Maybe you'd better lie down and let me get you a glass of buttermilk. You're too active for your years, Hugh. You must remember you can't go climbing around like little Hughie, here."

As she spoke, little Hughie burst into the room, breathless. He glanced uneasily at his Great-Grandmother, whose sharp eyes speared his agitation in a single glance.

"Land's sakes, child! What's got into you? You two are up to some-

thing again, and it's backfired! Now, what is it?" she swung accusingly toward her husband. "Hugh McArdle, what have you done this time?"

Old Hugh, alarm in his face, ignored his wife and turned to the boy.

"What happened, Sonny, did she get away?"

"Did who get away, answer me, Hugh McArdle!"

"Be quiet, woman! Hughie, tell me what happened."

The youngster burst into tears. "I couldn't help it, Gre'Grandad. She wouldn't listen and walked right into a Troop of Patrollers! She went up to them and started complaining about your Time Machine only she didn't call it that, and they took her away to Headquarters."

The old man let out his breath in a sigh of relief.

"That's all right, then, Hugh III will take care of her. Don't fret yourself, Sonny, it'll be all right."

"No it won't, Gre'Grampa, it wasn't Cousin Hugh's men... it was an Inspection Patrol from the Central Council!"

"Great Balls of Fire! Central Council! What're they doing here? Lemme get to that 'screen." Hastily he re-activated the receiver, and they watched, unobserved, as it picked up the sights and sounds in Patrol Headquarters. Without a word, Great-Grandma McArdle quietly pressed the secret button that sounded a private alarm throughout the gens, calling all members of the clan to the old homeplace. It was seldom needed, nowadays, but kept in good repair always for just such an occasion as this. With horrified fascination they watched the screen.

Hugh Beltin's chair was occupied by a short, dumpy, bald-headed man in the Insignia of the Central Inspection Patrol. The good-natured lines of his chubby face were set in an unaccustomed grimness as he scanned the records on Hugh's desk. They could see Hugh standing stiffly as attention to one side, and Great-Grandma gasped slightly at the old-fashioned dress of the red-headed woman in front of the desk. They could see Hugh glance toward the screen, and realized that he heard her behind its unlit surface. Obviously, however, the Central Inspector was unaware of the private 'caster, because he continued his scrutiny of the papers, then addressed the woman.

"You say your father's name is Proctor Bairnes, you live on a 'Farm'

in a valley similar to this, where your livelihood comes from animals and plants which your family husband; and that you were gathering some of these plants for a midday meal when you found yourself transported to a barn loft not far from the place where you were found; and that the persons apparently responsible for this were an old man and a young boy?"

"Yes, that's right!" Samantha's voice was considerably subdued, but had not yet lost all of its defiance, "and what's more, I don't see what right you've got to detain me in this way. I demand to see my father!"

"I'm sorry, Miss Baimnes, but this office has no present record of any Proctor Baimnes, nor of any Baimnes at all in this Village District for the last fifty years..... Could you give me an approximate location of this valley you say you come from? I'd be glad to try and locate your father for you. In fact, there are several questions I'd like to ask him, myself. As to this old man and boy, had you ever seen either of them before?"

"No, not the old man... The boy looked like one of the McArdules kids, but they live down the valley from us a piece, and I can't say for certain that I've ever seen that one before. I can't give you any 'approximate location'. I tell you it is this valley! I guess I've seen these hills every day of my life and you can't fool me on them! I want to go home! The Baimnes Farm is just two miles south of the new reservoir, there's no mystery about that. You are just trying to keep me here."

The Central Inspector turned to Hugh III.

"Inspector Beltin, can you identify the dwellplace the Interrogante has specified? Is there such a place?"

"Sir, there once was a reservoir in this valley, but it was torn down about twenty years ago as obsolete. The territory just south of the place it stood is now occupied by the Spaceport landings and offices. All dwell-quarters are now in the southern end of the valley."

The Central Inspector nodded, and looked speculatively at Samantha. Then he beckoned an attendant.

"Take the Interrogante outside and hold her for further questioning." He watched the defiant toss of Samantha's chin as she was none too gently shoved through the door, and remarked,

"She's obviously covering up, but her whole attitude is different from any that I've even seen. Completely anti-social. No record of her on any mating index, she's wearing contraband obscenite, and her psycho-somatic

reactions indicate faulty conditioning. Undoubtedly it was a genuine accident that her presence was discovered, but where could she have come from? It is a serious matter," he looked at Hugh III gravely, "that there could exist an unauthorized colony without being detected sooner. It means that we have not succeeded in eradicating pockets of discontent, and until we have, the Central Council is always in danger. The devastating slaughters that preceded our present control system had their origins in just such pockets as these -- malcontents that loosed their ideas and stirred up dissatisfaction. We don't waste time on them any more. Anyone that won't conform --- - dies." He picked at the papers on the desk. "Well, let's see what we can find on that name she mentioned... Mc... McWordle?"

"McArdle, Sir." They could see Hugh's reluctance as he took the dossier from the cabinet and handed it to his superior. "Poor Kid," his Great-Grandfather thought as they crouched in silence. 'I wonder how he's going to cover up this time. Dad rat it, why didn't I listen when the kids told me to throw out all that junk before I got somebody into trouble with it!"

They watched breathlessly as the Central Inspector leafed through the thick pages, then turned a cold face toward Hugh.

"How long has it been since McArdle Chief Progenitor has contributed his civic duty to the Village?"

"He was relieved of civic responsibility about 20 years ago, sir. Prior to that he took the evening watch at the Power Station Gate, to record any entrances or exits. However, when the Electronic Observer was installed, there was no further need for his services, and there was nothing else he could do. He was quite aged at that time, already."

"In other words, an obsolete citizen has been permitted to exist on the Village Rolls without being reported to the Obsolescent Citizens Bureau?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Why didn't the Chief of the Population Department report him?"

"Probably because he is the oldest son in the family, Sir. McArdle Firstline Male Sib 1."

"Chief of the Terminal Stores?"

"A son-in-law, Sir. Mated to McArdle Firstline Female Sib 2."

"Hygienics Department Head?"

"Grandson, Sir. That officer happens to be McArdle Secondline Male Sib 5."

"And why didn't you report him, then?"

"I'm his grandson, too, Sir. My mother is McArdle Secondline Female Sib 5."

The Chief glanced quickly at the younger man, and read in the set face all too clearly the knowledge of what the revelation meant. The existence of the network of McArdle connections was known, of course, in the village, and not without good-natured grumblings, but the seriousness of such a closeknit group in defiance of all that the Central Council stood for, was known only to a few.

"This cannot go on, you know."

"Yes, Sir. I know, Sir."

"This deliberate defiance of the Central Council can result only in extermination of your entire gens. I'm afraid I'll have to report this by special channel at once, and I have little doubt what the Committee's reaction will be. They act swiftly. I'm sorry, my boy. I've liked working with you. I do not doubt that all your gens have been conscientious, worthwhile citizens ---- aside from this." His manner became distant. "You are dismissed from duty."

"Yes, Sir." They watched as McArdle's grandson steadily removed the brassard and badges of authority from his uniform and laid them on the desk, saluted, about-faced, and marched out of the room. As the door opened before him, they could see him glance at Samantha still waiting in the ante-chamber outside the door, and before it closed behind him they saw him walk over and address the female attendant. They watched and listened as the Central Inspector set up his special communication with Central Headquarters, and heard with horror,

"CIP Dawson, reporting from Village District #4, Ganymede. Joe, I'm afraid I'll have to stay here longer than anticipated. Looks as though I've stumbled on a serious conspiracy. I'm afraid you'd better start extermination papers on a gens called.... let's see..." he consulted the papers, "McArdles..... Better make it out for the entire gens, four generations. It seems they're all in it, and it looks like a well laid, deeply

rooted conspiracy. There is evidence of an unregistered fertile area that has been used as an independent agricultural community, intensely individualistic, and antagonistic to Central Council ideas. You'd better issue orders to comb the surface of Ganymede for any newly habitable spots, likewise the nearby planets. This may be a bigger thing than we think. There was an effort made to prevent our patrol from landing, and an attempt to incapacitate us from duty.... Yeah... Forged orders. Clever, too, looked like the real thing. Had a tough time talking my way out of it. Since we arrived there's also been an epidemic of fires breaking out. First time for nearly twenty years, almost completely disorganized the local security groups. Looks as though somebody's trying to keep us too busy tracing sabotage to trace where that girl came from... Yeh...Um hmmm... All right. Oh, they can't go anywhere. I've alerted all Spaceports, and all known fertile areas. The only vessel leaving the planet is the Colonies IV which leaves at sundown. I know it's half empty and out of our jurisdiction, but it's on the other side of the planet and they couldn't get there without being intercepted... Yeah, I know... but if they do we'll follow and find it that much sooner. Even if they were warned in advance they couldn't make the ship... Those Immigration Ships are useless, anyway. The Central Council can move the citizens around more efficiently a few at a time than by permitting them to volunteer..... but that's aside from the point. How soon can I have the Extermination Orders... Tonight? All right. I'll order the Chambers readied, they may have to send for gas.... OK Joe. Yeah. Good by."

Great-Grandmother's usually pink face was waxen-white as she reached up and shut off the telescreen. Little Hughie looked from one to the other in uncomprehending perplexity. Old Hugh McArdle sat motionless. A flurry of motors overhead announced the gathering of the gens, and Great-Grandmother stiffened her back and lifted her head as she went to greet her children.

"Whatcha gonna do now, Gre'Grampa? Are you going to pick us up and move us around like you did Samantha?"

Hugh McArdle lifted his head and looked piercingly at Hughie.

"Maybe you've got something there, son. It's worth trying. Anything's better than sitting here waiting for the Patrol to herd us to the Extermination Chambers. Let's see..... what'll I need....." He straightened his shoulders and forced his mind into a fierce concentration. "Hughie, you figure out some excuse to take stereocubes of everybody. Make sure you get everyone. They won't pay any attention to what you're doing. As soon as you get everybody, bring 'em to me out in the barn. OK, get going." He gave the boy a gentle slap on the shoulder as they both hurried out of the

room. Hughie dived for the snapcube outfit in the closet and his Great Grandfather hurried to the loft.

He could hear the agitation and bustle as the arrivals inquired the meaning of the general alarm. 'Lucy can handle it,' he thought, 'she'll tell 'em and calm them down at the same time. Besides, I couldn't face the children now, not after what I've done to them. Death to the whole family ... complete extermination!'

Shaking off the numbness of shock, Great-Grandfather McArdle looked at his rickety machines. '....'taint much to trust so many lives to,' he told himself, 'but it's the only hope now. Let's see..... might be I could rig up this transporter to send everything we'd need, but where'll I send it? There ain't a single arable spot those Patrollers won't find once they start looking, so just picking us up and moving us around won't solve anything unless we can get out of the system altogether..... and this little rig isn't powerful enough to take us off the planet.' The old man fussed with the transporter, adjusting it for maximum capacity, 'about halfway round the globe is as far as it'll go...' Suddenly he spoke aloud.

"That Immigration ship! The Colonies IV -- it's still on Ganymede and the CIP said it was half empty. I don't know where they are colonizing for, but anyplace is better than the Extermination Chambers. Let's see now --- I'd better send all the household gear I can lay hands on." Quickly he set the direction beam for the Spaceport Airdock where he knew the ship must lie. He muttered a brief prayer to a God long considered 'obsolete' by the rest of the world, then started piling on gear. 'Well, here she goes. It ought to land somewheres inside the ship ---- all I can do is hope it's one of the empty holds instead of the jets!' Old farm catalogs, stereocubes of the house and barns and cattle, every piece of junk that ever had any useful purpose he placed on the platform of the transporter and watched vanish. The shadows started to gather in the corners of the loft before he was finished, and he looked out to see that the day was ending.

"Ain't much time left... Ship's due to leave in about a half hour, and them blasted Patrollers will probably get here before that! Where's Hughie with them cubes, I wonder? Better go in and see....." Stiffly he creaked down the ladder, his joints protesting the undue activity of the day. In spite of determination, his footsteps staggered as he crossed the yard to the house. He let himself in quietly.

"...there's no use wasting good food," he heard Lucy say. "Go ahead and eat it up. I've been saving this wild Martianberry jam for a special occasion, and I can't think of any occasion more special than this!" Her dry voice held humor and irony as well as courage.

".....But I still don't see why we can't do something!" he heard his oldest granddaughter nagging an out-talked subject. "We can't just sit here like ducks waiting for hunting season to open! Can't we go somewhere?"

"Edith, where would we go? You know as well as any of us that there's nothing on the other side of those hills but radiation burnt desert. You couldn't live a day there, to say nothing of the children. And every habitable spot is covered by the Council." Her husband's voice was mild but firm. "Maybe I could smuggle one or two of us out on my Recreation Permit, but even so there's no place to go. Anybody that tried to give us shelter would just go to the Chambers with us once they find us, and we can't do that to our friends. Might as well face it, Edith, and let's forget about it for as long as we can. Let's be brave and try to make the most of these last few hours until the patrol comes for us." The rest of the family pretended not to hear.

Old Hugh peeped in and tried to catch little Hughie's eye, but the boy was staring at Samantha who sat beside Hugh III. 'Now, how'd she get here?' wondered Old Hugh, 'He must've sneaked her away when he left Patrol-quarters, before anybody noticed he'd been relieved of duty. Good boy! Not that she could've done us any more harm than she already did!' He continued his efforts to attract Hughie's attention without being seen by the others.

Finally he noticed the stereosnapper lying beside the door and picked it up, took a quick aim at the family group around the table and pressed the button. They all jumped with startled cries at the snap of the steamer, and he backed hastily away.

"Hugh McArdle, what in time are you doing now? Haven't you done enough damage without sneaking around scaring the wits out of us?" Lucy's irate voice caught him from behind as he backed into her.

"Lucy," he gasped, "I thought you were at the table with the others.." he brightened, "but that's all right. In fact, it's all the better." He chuckled and snatched a brief kiss as he hurried toward the door. "Not that I don't like you the way you are, but I've liked watching you get prettier and prettier every day and wouldn't mind doing it all over again!" He ducked out the door, leaving Lucy open-mouthed and shaking her head.

Back in the barn he examined the stereosnaps in the 'snapper' to see if all the gens were there. Hughie had evidently tried, but been unable to get them all. 'That's why he didn't come,' Hugh decided. Those he did get showed all too clearly the fierce arguments that must have preceded their calm acceptance of the inevitable. The one just taken was the most suitable

of all, containing, as it did, all of the gens but himself and Lucy. He laid that one aside, and rooted among the portraits scattered on the loft floor where he had dropped them in his search for 'cubes of property and chattels to be transported and later renewed on the Time Machine... Finally he found the one he was looking for, the portrait of himself and Lucy. He looked at them doubtfully.

"Well, I don't rightly know that I want to be that young again... so dad blamed much to learn... but," his face lighted, "it would be fun to be young and strong and colonizing a new land! Think I'll try it!" His face fell. "...but I wonder if I'll know what to do with this junk, how to renew it. Shucks, tho, Hughie'll remember even if I don't." He was about to place the cube on the transporter when a sudden realization struck him.

"Good God! I plumb forgot! If I send these stereocubes over first they'll just be cubes and nobody to put them on the Time Machine, and if I put them on the Time Machine first, there'll be no way to send them!" A sudden sound distracted his attention. The darkening sky was darkened further with Patrol Gyros descending in the yard between the barn and house.

The old man turned toward his problem with a sense of frustration. His mind seemed empty. So close to escape, and now this. He was too old to figure this out. He kicked the discarded 'cubes on the floor until they bounced off the walls. Well, that's not helping any... gotta figure some way to move the Time Machine and revivify a 'cube at the same time, it's the only way out!

He took a deep breath and looked at the machines, forcing his weary old brain into one last spurt of activity. He copied the setting of the Transporter onto a piece of paper, then swung it to the opposite extreme as he prepared to test his idea for the final phase. Too risky without testing. Carefully he cut the power and placed the Time Machine on the platform of the Transporter. He looked around for a 'cube to use as a test. He impatiently scattered the portraits --- one Samantha was trouble enough. The poor ewe still bleated in its corner, unappeased by the bucket of water and small pile of hastily gathered grass. No more animals until he had a place for them. Finally he located a 'cube showing a vase of flowers and placed that on the platform. Through the window he could see the family coming out and walking toward the Patrolcars, herded by the Officers. Not much time. With trembling hand he checked the connections to the power line, shoved the switch home. The familiar buzz, and the Time Machine stood alone in the middle of the loft, the 'cube still resting on the platform, unchanged.

Shock jarred him. Somehow, he hadn't expected to fail. Outside in

the yard the Uniformed Patrols were lining the family up and checking them off a list. They'd soon notice his absence.

Stubbornly he picked up the Time Machine and placed it back on the Transporter, 'cube still in place. This time, he figured, I'll make a staggered relay on the juice so the Time Machine cuts in first. He hurried through the familiar motions. One final check, then he shoved the switch home again. With a splash the vase shattered water and roses all over the transporter, but the Time Machine stood dry in the middle of the floor. 'Too big a lag. Gotta be simultaneous..... Say -- I get it! The juice to the Time Machine gets cut off when the Transporter moves it..."

He glanced out the window. The Patrollers were consulting among themselves, and the Sergeant was waving his arm toward the barn. The slanting rays of evening sunlight picked out the timepiece on the Patrolcar, and even from this distance he could read it... In six minutes the Colonies IV would lift from the Central Terminal.

Gritting his teeth, he placed the Time Machine on the Transporter again and looked around. The old Walkie-Talkie set lying in the box of junk caught his eye. He tore it apart and took out the little batteries, hooking them to the Time Machine. Downstairs, he could hear the Patroller as he flashed his beam into each empty stall, looking for him. He heard him find the stairs, start up. No time for further experimenting. It had to work this time. Hugh set the dial of the transporter for its utmost limit, directioned again to the Colonies IV. Staggering with fatigue, he placed on the jury-rigged, battery-powered Time Machine platform those two precious stereocubes. He ignored the advancing Patrol Officer as he double-checked the hookup.

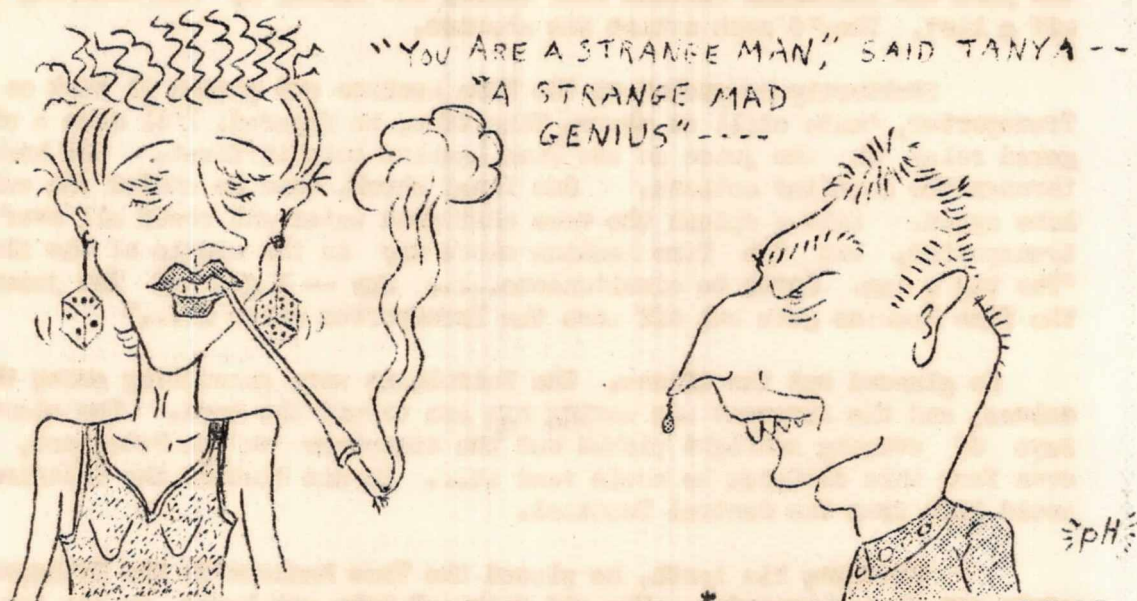
"Come along, Sir, there's no use playing around any longer," the Patroller was firmly polite. "You've been hiding out long enough." He grabbed Hugh's arm. With a convulsive jerk, Old Hugh tore loose and slammed the switch shut. The machine hummed. The startled Patroller grabbed at the bluish flash where the old man had stood, and from the outside came a sound of confused shouting as the lined-up prisoners vanished.

On the other side of Ganymede, the Colonies IV lifted gracefully on its scheduled Immigration flight, and Young Hugh McArdle held his bride Lucy close as they turned in astonishment to greet an equally astonished family of McArdles. Only little Hughie knew what had happened, but he was still too shy of this suddenly young Gre'Grampa to tell, yet. But the McArdles had found freedom, at last.

THE END

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT OF SPACE

AND WHO THREW IT-- BY RENFREW PEMBERTON



An era has ended. For thirteen years "The *Sherriff of Thorium Gulch" by Miles J. Breuer, *Amazing Stories*, August 1942, stood alone and unchallenged as the Worst Science-Fiction Story I Have Ever Read. It is true that *Spaceways* and *Vortex* gave "Sherriff" some bad moments before decently expiring, but not until November 1955 *Amazing Stories* was "Sherriff" dethroned. Farewell, "Sherriff", you held out for thirteen years and it took real effort to beat you out for the title. *Note to typists: 'ha's SHERIFF!

- R.P.

"Beyond the Steel Wall", by James Ira Kendahl, needs reviewing in some detail to make clear to the reader just how bad a story can get. To begin, the hero, Jason Welch, enters a low Martian dive and: "The girl sat at a rear table and he saw her instantly. Any man would have seen her, because a girl of her caliber in a place like this was beyond belief." The logic of this eludes me, but to continue: "Even though she was flanked by two evil-faced Mercurian swamp men it was still inconceivable. The things that could happen to a girl of her type in a neighborhood like this were better not considered." Fine; I won't consider it if you won't. Apparently the hero feels similarly, and here is where I begin to wonder about our boy: "But it was no business of his and he walked over and leaned against the bar and began looking for what he had come here to find. Men."

As it turns out, this isn't really a taboo-breaking story at all; Jason is merely looking for a crew for his spaceship. Amid the constant threat of blood and slaughter in this foul hellhole, infested with planetary riff-raff from all over and largely poison-fanged at that, Jason finally gets

❖ SINISTERRA ❖

with the babe: "She was from Terra -- one of his own race -- and her beauty was that of an aristocrat, the patrician, the habitue of the smart Minneapolis cafes and the Arizona resort spots." Minneapolis yet.

Jason and Tanya creak through several pages of clumsily cryptive dialogue which is probably supposed to hint at major points of the plot which may have been edited out of this thing before publication. Reading this story is a bit like an archeological dig; a few crumbled stones or a pottery shard can indicate where a city once stood. Just so, a few references to a background which is never filled in enough to become even faintly coherent indicates a plot ravaged either by the bluepencil or by the author's realization that it wasn't worth finishing. This conversation, unimaginatively cribbed from the duller side of the hardboiled school of mystery writing, eventually reaches a crisis; the author has to stop it or divulge what it's all about. So he saves himself by having the Mercurians kill a Plutonian, with their lethal poisoned tails. I'm not kidding; it's really in the story. Poisoned tails.

Jason then takes Tanya home. With him, that is. She wants to go to Planet Zero with him. Somebody built a steel box there and locked himself in it with "treasures". Jason has made six tries at breaking it open but for no particular reason that I could see, he and Tanya figure that his seventh try will be successful. The villain thinks so too, but before we get to him, here is a love scene that any Hollywood producer would envy. Quoting dialogue only:

Tanya: "Jason Welch, you are a strange man. A strange mad genius. You have overcome many obstacles. The power of your obsession has carried you far. But even iron-willed geniuses can finally go no further against impossible odds.

Jason: What are you getting at?

Tanya: Accept my offer. For once do it the easy way. My terms are not harsh. I only wish to accompany you. Accept my offer. Accept me also, if it will help to sway your decision."

There is a little by-play in with the dialogue but I don't want to shake you all up, or get into double quotes if I can help it. But I wonder: so far there hasn't been any hint that Tanya has anything to offer, EXCEPT her fair white body. Unless she figures to crack the big safe with a hairpin. But Jason gets my doubts up again, about here:

"He fought to keep her from knowing how much he suddenly wanted to reach for her --- to take her in his arms. In order to keep from doing so,

he pushed her roughly away." Go on, Jase --- do a good job. Break her arm or something, why don't you? That'll fool her. But he merely says "You called me a strange man. I say you are an even stranger woman." This keys off another page of verbal udcray, wherefrom the author extricates himself by introducing the Venusian villain, Karkis, no less. Karkis, described thus:

"His physical structure was little different from that of Jason, except that his mouth was a slash of pure cruelty and his eyes deep pools of venom. This was quite natural, because Venusians and Terrans were much alike." Well, now, I don't know ---. Kendahl certainly couldn't have been watching what he wrote. Maybe he was reading something else as he typed. "The Sheriff of Thorium Gulch", maybe.

Karkis has his own bullyboys along to tangle with Tanya's Mercurians. His are "astrodites" from the asteroids, "the strongest creatures in existence", with fangs "that spewed forth a poison even deadlier than that of the Mercurians." The author can't let these deadly creatures fight in a small hotel room without killing off the whole cast, so after three pages of sneers, Karkis & Co. retire leaving Jason and Tanya to another moronic exchange of cliches, running well into page 22. Jason then hires the usual cutthroat crew for his spaceship although you can't hardly get that kind no more. He and Tanya yak monotonously at each other again --- it's beyond me how a man with a reasonable vocabulary and ability to construct complete sentences can produce such meaningless, disconnected, and absurd conversation.

Jason takes Tanya to his laboratory. Entering suitably enough through a sewer grate, they meet ambush, a subhuman creature with both hair and scales, tusks, claws, four arms, and a distinct lack of personal daintiness. Turns out to be another astrodite, but Jason nips its jugular in the dark with his fingernails and doesn't get chewed, clawed, crushed, or anything much. Karkis, however, has made off with Jason's nice gadget, so off go Jason, Tanya, and the scummy crummy crew (including the future traitor who is thoroughly fingered to Jason and the reader, but to no avail), into space on the trail of Karkis the Venusian. Boarding by means of some hanky-panky with a Time Warp (which, if applied elsewhere in the story could bypass most of it to good effect), Jason takes Karkis' ship. However, Karkis rather sneakily takes Jason's ship at the same time, grabbing Tanya in the process and escaping in a scout ship sealed to one of Jason's escape hatches. Jason is standing at the time in the chamber which is opened to space by Karkis' departure. The next paragraph is an all-time classic:

"Jason's next act was also instinctive. He slammed shut the port of the Star Rover to hold back the vacuum of open space because protection of

a ship was always the first concern of the men who followed the star routes. The first commandment of space."

Hoo boy! The First Commandment of Space*---Hold back that ol' vacuum, boy! The more I read that paragraph, the funnier it gets.

Jason has inadvertantly recovered his gadget in the squabble and the author has also inadvertantly changed a Martian character to a Venusian for the last few pages. The guy can't do much about it, though; he's dead. He was the first mate, so: "Jason assigned a new mate, a Terran with a face slightly less evil-looking than the rest." About this time he gets a real brainstorm, calling all the crew into action with these words, "No one sleeps and no one eats until we've overtaken that scout." Does the crew row this ship between planets, or what? There are some rare new aspects to space flight in here, for sure. Jason was heading for Planet Zero, but he has the course changed, to head off Karkis before he reaches - Planet Zero! It's a tough assignment, because:

"The area surrounding Planet Zero was as vast as that around any planet and the Star Rover was but a mite in this huge sea of void." That's a lot of void. all right.

Jason overhauls Karkis; they argue awhile, and that's quite a bit of void also. Karkis returns Tanya to Jason on Jason's promise not to bother him any more. Well, that's about as convincing as the rest of it, I suppose. Such as the natives of Planet Zero: "Robbed of their scientific magic, all of which he had taken into the Steel Box with him" for example. Is this as idiotic to you as it reads to me?

The Steel Box turns out to be "a cube, its dimension about twenty feet in all directions", which is pretty sloppy geometry. As Jason attacks it with his sonic drill, Karkis attacks him with a mobile tank. "Obviously the Venusian had set up a strong base on the opposite side of the Steel Box". Jason had landed half a mile from the thing obviously coming in from underground, or how did he miss seeing this strong base, or the tank for that matter? Or maybe, under the circumstances, the question is: how did he find the planet?

Jason wins, Tanya wins, altruism wins, the natives win ---- only the good name of science-fiction loses. And Karkis. And Amazing Stories, one reader.

*Do not flush the commode while the ship is standing in the spaceport, because the men who ply the spaceways have their eyes on the stars. The SECOND Commandment of Space! So there.

The MIGHTY MOUNTAIN

The Mighty Mountain! Rainier is its name.
Named for a man of dignity and fame
Who never saw it! He never came
To look upon its majesty and splendor.
Its Indian name Takhoma, the "Mountain that was God;"
They stood in awe beneath its shoulders broad,
Though on its mighty flanks they never trod,
Did homage render.

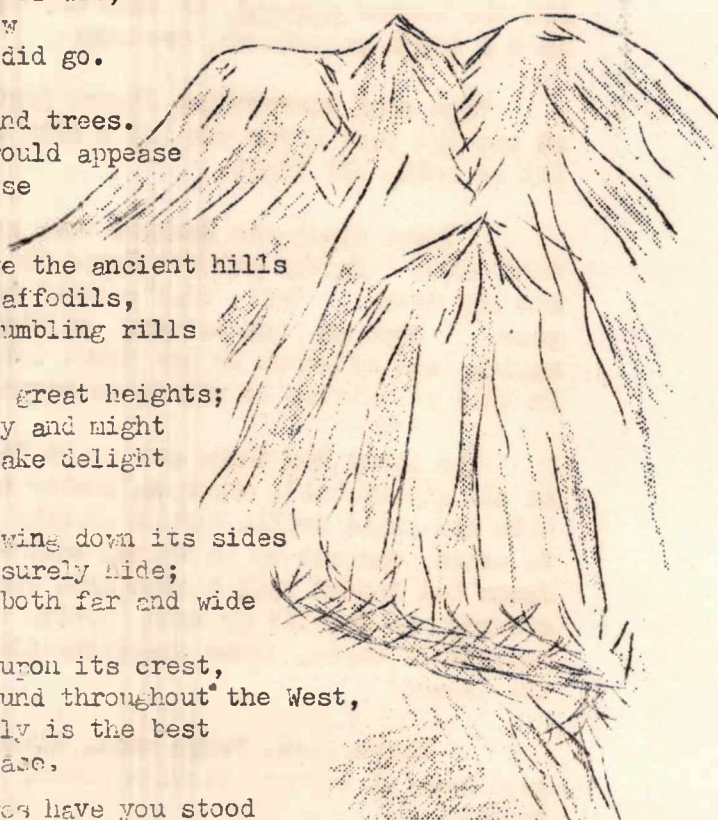
The Indians loved it, feared it, and adored
The piled up rock that to the heavens soared
And reared its snowy crest where wild winds roared
And screamed 'mid icy caves,
But never Indians would the venture make
To climb the slopes and cliffs; nor would he take
The dangerous chances that the white men take
To tell a tale of their adventure brave.

Perhaps then elders told a tale of woe,
Of fires rising and the overflow
Of lava which adown its slopes did go.
Rivers of red hot lava, homing:
Destroying all their villages and trees.
And tho the Mountain god they would appease
Tales of desolation such as these
Keep them from returning.

The Mountain rises high above the ancient hills
To gaze upon the fields of daffodils,
The rivers, waterfalls and tumbling rills
That flow so far below;
Tremendous forests rising to great heights;
Great trees bespeak antiquity and might
In which our modern people take delight
Stand there row on row.

The creeping glaciers flowing down its sides
The ruin of its eruption surely hide;
For beauty stretches now both far and wide
Of serenity and peace.
Across the miles we gaze upon its crest,
The loveliest mountain found throughout the West,
And feel our country surely is the best
Where troubles find surcease.

Oh mighty Mountain, ages have you stood
Smiling down on lake and stream and wood.
You must have measure taken and found it good,
For this the message that you send abroad;
When we are gone, still steadfast you will stand
And send these words afar across the land,
The words you send to cheer our loyal band
Are these: "Be still, and know that I am God!"



By

JULIA

WOODARD

and cat fur, there inches back into mind the recollections of some well-turned figure of speech from the magazine. Maybe it's something like, "a gibbous moon," or perhaps "his lust-sodden lips," or it may be "it made a deafening hiss."

Things like that are memorable; there is just no getting around it. Fascinating and culture-developing. And a certain cure for insomnia.

But recently I came upon a story so spellbindingly unique in its efforts to provide a veritable thesaurus of figures of speech about the workings of one human mind, or at least the reactions of one mind, that darned if I could fall asleep before the end. It is a nine or ten thousand word piece called STAKES FOR THE RESTLESS, by D.L. James, in the May, 1937, issue of THRILLING MYSTERY, a horror pulp which adapted itself to changing trends, and like DIME MYSTERY, survived the boom-lowering on horror pulps in 1940 and 1941 that spelt death for others.

Riffling through STAKES FOR THE RESTLESS again, I find on page 92, "My thoughts were a morbid jumble, the blood beating furiously at my temples." Innocuous enough, is it not? ----- unless, like me, you can perceive that here, at least, is a story that is going to make you THINK, or think about thinking at any rate.

Blam! Further on page 92, "anger...swirled within my hot skull," splats you like a wet towel in a barber shop.

By now your eyes are fully half-mast, and race on to page 94 where they skitter to a halt with, "...voicing thoughts that were but the turgid seepage of a raw and festering brain." My goodness, all this in one story?

With one eye now proudly supporting an arched eyebrow, we hurry to page 95 where again we find "doubt festering in my brain..."

A touch of disinfectant, more words, and page 96 reveals that "Chaos ruled my brain..." As a consequence, a bit further "(Memories) burned in my brain...." Still further, "Again the blood was throbbing in my temples, my scalp a tightening, burning band of steel."

A quick massage with chipped ice, and we proceed to page 97. "Thoughts of Drusilla seethed like boiling lye within my skull." Cold lime juice for this one, and next we're confronted with "Words (that) beat wildly through my brain like bursting bubbles on some brimstone lake of hell fire." Naturally we ignore the fevered sweat that breaks out, burning our eyes, for as we continue we find that "Suddenly my brain seethed and I uttered a strang-led cry."

Ughhhhhh!

Dare we continue? We peek into page 98 and learn that "In a hot, mad stream the blood boiled through my arteries."

Thus reassured that this is not a strictly localized condition, we learn on page 99 that our dauntless protagonist is the master of his fate. "Hot throbbing in the band of my tightening scalp warned me to think no longer."

And, like him, we think no longer and read on. "My hot eyes burned down on that mound of raw clay."

But that method of heat transfer results in but temporary alleviation, for suddenly on page 100, ".....madness.....clamped down on my brain like a gigantic squeezing hand."

While we stagger under this sudden onslaught, we forget about his other hand ----- the soft left: "Poisonously, his full meaning filtered slowly through my brain." Drip, drip. And --- watch out, there's that right hand again! "....I was reeling madly through the darkness, trying to outrun the ghastly horrors that crept like maggots over the inflamed cortex of my feverish brain."

Yes, all this on page 100. And whilst pondering the enigma of "reeling madly" proving slower than "crept," the page slips over to 102, and find the maggot repellent: "I looked at the green flame from the tiny gems, and as I looked that green flame burned into my brain." And to rid the green flame, "With that hot flame of hellfire biting deep into my brain....." is again at hand.

A man can stand only so much of this sort of pushing around. After a while he's bound to get mad about the whole business. Page 104 bears this out with, "Cold anger began to still the morbid chaos of my thoughts."

So with cool breezes whistling cheerfully through the seared holes in the hero's cranium, and doubly reassured on page 106 with his own diagnosis, ".....my brain simmering," we leave this long-suffering but triumphant head for newer, bloodier heads --- and happier naps.

Good night, all.

(THE END)

THE Crown

By:
John A. Bristol

Shuksan became aware that Melakwa was standing before him. "Hi," he said. "Anything left to do?"

"Not a thing till graduation," she answered, and they started across the campus. "Anxious to get out into the world?"

Together they jumped the hedge, forgetting that it had been cut down in the spring. "If I were really getting out," Shuksan said; "but I'm not looking forward to a job in Dad's shop."

"It doesn't sound so bad to me."

"Oh, you're a girl, Melakwa, and girls want to settle down." They turned to the right when they encountered the slope of the curbing. "I guess I'd like to settle down some day, but first I want to get out and feel the world. Climb the Himalayas, crouch under Victoria Falls, even sail to America in a boat. I'd like to touch the great sequoias, and hear the roar of rivers that no man ever found before, and trap animals that never evolved in Australia. I want to feel the winds of the Gobi on my skin, and smell the jungles of the Congo."

"I'll bet the Congo smells just like Java, and I'll bet you couldn't tell the difference between the Gobi and the Great Sandy."

"Just the same, there'd be the sense of accomplishment. --But a girl wouldn't understand."

"Yeah," she said. "It makes me shiver to think of walking in a strange place, even here in Australia, with no one to guide you, and no warning of what you might run into."

Shuksan was leading their aimless wandering toward the airport. When the concrete under their feet turned to hardpan, they veered to anchor safely behind the wire screen, where they could feel the blast of an airship's propellers as it warmed up.

"What do you think of jet propulsion, Melakwa?"

"I don't know; what should I think?"

He gripped the screen. "It excites me," he said. "Now we can go as high as we want to. There's no ceiling, like on dirigibles."

"Whatever do you want to go high for? There's nothing to feel up there, except the chill, and you can get that in a storage locker."

An airship drifted overhead, sounding for its altitude, and they ducked instinctively.

"I think you'd feel like you weighed less. You know Elwha's formulation, bodies attract each other with a force inversely proportional to their distance squared. Well, the farther you got from the ground, the less you'd weigh."

"Oh, silly, that doesn't apply to the world! His formulation was based

on experiments with magnets and with little pith balls."

"The world's a big ball, isn't it? I'll bet if you got far enough away from it, you could tell the difference."

"I wouldn't want to."

They continued for some time in these discordant remarks, till Melakwa became worried and steered him bodily away, in the hope that the conversation would follow suit.

Shuksan said, "I know a place I'd like to go, right here in town. Let's visit Kaniksu's greenhouse. I like the atmosphere there, and old Kaniksu always has something interesting to bring up."

Kaniksu was in his tropical room, making notes in a plasticene tablet. He greeted the young people warmly, and had them smell and touch the latest addition to this collection, some orchids from a newly discovered island group in the middle of the Pacific.

As they were talking about the newscasts on this discovery, Shuksan's hands chanced on the plasticene tablet, and at the first break in the conversation he asked about it.

"You're right, that's nothing to do with my hobby. I've been making some calculations based on these photographs." He hauled some plates out of a cabinet. "My real work, you know, is the electromagnetic spectrum, specializing in the portion of it that affects sensitized plates."

Shuksan ran his fingers over a plate. "This doesn't feel like a compression of anything I'm familiar with," he said. "More like a bad job of wall plastering."

Kaniksu laughed. "You couldn't be further off," he said. "Sit down."

"Did it ever occur to you that we're pretty limited in our means of investigating nature? Anything we can't reach and touch, we don't know much about. Oh, we'd know if there were a roof over our heads, because we'd hear the echo --"

"We'd know, it too when we tried to send up an airship," Shuksan remarked.

"Yes, but I'm thinking now about the way men started out. If they couldn't climb a mountain, they had no idea what was on top. Out on the open sea, they never knew what they'd find when they ventured into uncharted

areas. No people there to tell them. Take the islands these orchids came from. Before the days of airships and sonar, they'd never have been discovered unless some ship actually grounded there, and chances are, no one would've lived to tell the tale. Now we've covered the world with a pretty fine network of exploration, but who knows what else there might be around the world, up where the weather comes from?

"Let's imagine we're other creatures ----- birds, say, or dogs. Maybe they have other senses than ours. You know how dogs seem to know what's going on at a distance. And it's definitely established that one bird, the homing pigeon, can feel electromagnetic vibrations of a quite high frequency. Those might enable an animal to 'hear' the shape of objects, 'feel' them at a distance you might say, like sonar feels the contours of the ground. Parts of nature unknown to us might be part of the everyday environment of such an animal."

"Where would such parts of nature be?" asked Shuksan.

"Oh, alongside our world in space, or perhaps occupying the same space, and not perceptible to our senses."

Melakwa scoffed, "You're letting your imagination run wild."

"There's the sun," Kaniksu replied. "We feel its emanation, we've photographed it, we've even analyzed its chemical makeup. But we don't know what it is, how big or how far away, or what keeps it running. We probably couldn't touch it and live. Perhaps if we had other avenues of sensory perception --

"It's even possible that some man might be born with sense organs that men never had before, which could detect the shorter electromagnetic vibrations. The mad son of the last king, if you've read about him, claimed to have a strange new sense in his optic glands, which might have been like that. You may think that flesh and blood couldn't take the place of a radio's tubes and grids, but remember how the homing pigeon reacts to broadcasting stations."

"Now I know what made the prince crazy," Shuksan cracked. "He heard static all the time!"

Melakwa asked, "But what does all this have to do with your photographs?"

"Um. I guess I've wandered from the subject." Kaniksu picked up a set of plates and fingered the little rough places on the top one. "I only intended to prepare you for the idea that there may be important things in

nature that have escaped notice up to now.

"These photographs were made with the aid of a set of lenses pointed at the weather-world at night, set for getting a compression of anything an unlimited distance from them. I was cooperating with Willapa, in the North American colonies, in photographing that new body, the sunlet, that you may have heard about. It continually goes around the world, as the sun apparently does, but not so fast, so that half of the time it's in Australia's half of the weather-world at night. It's nearer to us than the sun, also."

"I didn't know that," said Shuksan.

"Oh, yes. The shutting off of the sun's emanations, that first brought it to our attention, was caused by the sunlet passing between us and the sun. What Willapa and I hoped to do was measure the angle between a line to the sunlet and a horizontal line, from two points on opposite sides of the world, and thus get data for constructing a triangle which would give us the ratio between the sunlet's distance and the world's diameter. We believe we succeeded; at least we estimated its distance to be around a quarter million miles by this method. We've never been able to form an estimate of the sun's distance by that means, so we infer it's much farther away. As a check on that estimate of the sunlet's distance, I've found that the sunlet's motion around the world, subtracted from the sun's motion, gives approximately the speed a body that far away would have to maintain, to stay perpetually falling around the world, as indicated by Elwha's formulation."

He paused to see if Shuksan would demand clarification. While Melakwa was yawning, the boy's breathing indicated he was all attention, but he did not interrupt.

"However, you're getting me off the track again. These plates. One time, in running my photoelectric cell over the ground glass that I use in setting the lenses, I located the edges of the sunlet's disk easily, indicating that the lenses were properly set; but I also noticed the cell giving out several whines as I passed it over portions of the glass that shouldn't have been touched by the sunlet's emanations. I found that the cause of these whines was localizing on the glass, as if other, smaller sources of vibrations were affecting it at these spots. The disturbances were very slight, and had no effect on the plates I exposed to photograph the sunlet; but I guessed that a longer exposure of the plate might catch an impression of them, just as a longer exposure was necessary to photograph the sunlet than to photograph the sun. Since these point-sources moved through the weather-world about the same way the sun and sunlet do, we made a machine to keep the lenses pointed at them for hours as they moved.

"Those plates you have are the result. As soon as I discovered that there were point-sources of vibration like this all over the weather-world, not merely the zone around the sunlet, I set my staff to work on photographing the whole weather-world, and got some help from Tasmania as well as North America."

He brought two hollow hemispheres out of the closet and handed them to Shuksan and Melakwa. "To summarize our findings, we discovered that the world is completely surrounded by dozens of these spots in the weather-world, and they're farther away than we can measure. We've coined the word 'sunlings' for them. It's easiest to think of the sunlings as points on an immense shell surrounding the world and the weather-world, and rotating slowly around it. Their location on that shell with reference to each other is definite and fixed. It's represented by the bolts stuck in those models you have in your hands. As you can tell, they form no recognizable pattern.

"We assume that the sun as well as the sunlet is inside this shell, though we don't know. But the sun changes its position against this shell from day to day --- which is fortunate, since its emanations excite the air too much for us to photograph sunlings in the daytime. In the course of a year the sun gets back exactly to its starting place on the shell, and meanwhile we've photographed the whole shell.

"These discoveries have explained a number of phenomena on the world that we formerly thought couldn't be reduced to less arbitrary terms. In particular, there are the ocean tides, which go through a cycle of neap and spring tides every fourteen days or so. We've found that the waters are attracted to the sunlet and sun, fitting Elwha's formulation. When the two bodies are in line with us, spring tides occur; when they pull on the world at right angles to each other, there are neap tides."

He paused. "I said that the sunlings are definitely located on the hollow shell with reference to each other. They don't change their relative positions. But three of them do. They move in curved paths, taking the field defined by the others as constant, and eventually will return to their starting points and repeat the process. There are reasons for believing these wandering sunlings are detectable only because they bounce back emanations from the sun, while the other sunlings are hot little suns themselves. It follows that they may well be an entirely different type of body. Here's a mathematical statement of the courses they pursue." He handed Shuksan a permanent metal bar with equations embossed on it,

Shuksan ran his fingers over it a while, then gave it to Melakwa, who handed it back to Kaniksu. "I'm not familiar with some of these expressions," the youth said. "In words, what do the equations mean?"

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Kaniksu said reluctantly, "The only way to tell you in words is to state our conclusions. Their paths in the weather-world are as if they pursued circles around the sun, while the sun revolves around the world, the sunlet circles the world slower than the sun, and the hollow shell revolves a little faster.

"Bear in mind that the sun may be a very long distance off. Now, the path of one of the wandering sunlings would seem to take it between the sun and the world, and the other two circles both the sun and the world, with the sun as the center of their circles. I have just finished comparing the relative distance of each of these sunlings from the sun, with the time it will take each to circle the sun completely. It appears that in each case, the time is the same function of the distance. It fits in very nicely with Elwha's formulation, indicating that these little bodies are continually falling around the big sun, whose attraction holds them in circular paths around itself. Do you see the catch?"

The sudden question surprised Shuksan. "I don't know what you mean, except that the sun must be a very massive body to affect objects as far away from it as these sunlings must be."

"Good, as far as it goes. But why doesn't the world exert more influence than the sun on these wandering sunlings, especially the two which sometimes pass on the opposite side of us from the sun, and at that time must be closer to us than to the sun?"

"You've got me. What's the answer?"

Kaniksu handed back the bar. "Notice the final statement again. That's the simplest way of expressing the movement of all bodies concerned. It introduces a new variable, w , representing the position of the world. As the simplest expression of the motions, this is the one we should adopt, following the rule of minimum arbitrary constants."

"What does it mean?" asked Helakpa, trying to seem interested.

Shuksan answered slowly, "It seems to say that the sun and the hollow shell stand still but the world spins at the rate of once a day and the sunlet revolves around the world, while the world and these wandering sunlings all move in concentric circles around the sun. It infers from this that the sunlet is a fraction as large as the world, but the sun is many times larger than the world."

"Well done, Shuksan," said Kaniksu. "That's right. There are other

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ways of systematizing the motions but they involve more complexity of movements, and more arbitrary constants."

"Now you're talking like a tone-deaf mathematician," Melakwa exploded. "The m. a. a. rule is just a guide to finding the simplest explanation for things. But you come up with a theory that has the whole world moving around the sun, because you find some bumps on your photographic plates, and you say we have to adopt that -- that construct!"

Kaniksu stroked her arm for silence. "I don't say that's the only correct way of looking at it. You may have heard of the principle of relativity, which physics borrowed from economics. It would be equally valid, on the basis of this data, to say that the world stands still and the sunlet, sun, and sunlings all revolve around it -- creating arbitraries to explain the motion of these wandering sunlings. In a sense, size itself may be relative, and such a description might be merely like another position of the same structure.

"But what you really object to is the idea that the world under our feet is smaller than a body in the weather-world, and I must tell you that things act as if that is the case. The sun is certainly larger than the sunlet is, and the sunlet's effect on the tides shows that it alone is so massive that the world and it must move around a common center of mass which is a long way from the exact center of the world. Once grant that the world moves, and why shouldn't you adopt this simple, sun-in-the-center formulation?"

Shuksan spoke up. "Sir, this structure seems to imply that these wandering sunlings are bodies of the same size as the world."

"The same order of magnitude anyway."

"Then they're other worlds?"

"That would seem to be the case."

"Isn't the night air nice?" said Melakwa as they left the greenhouse. She tipped her face to catch the breeze.

"Yes," said Shuksan agreeably, but he was thinking: "I hope Melakwa doesn't take it too hard when I go away to jet school. I can't have any woman around my neck, if I'm going to be the first man to set foot on another world!"

THE END

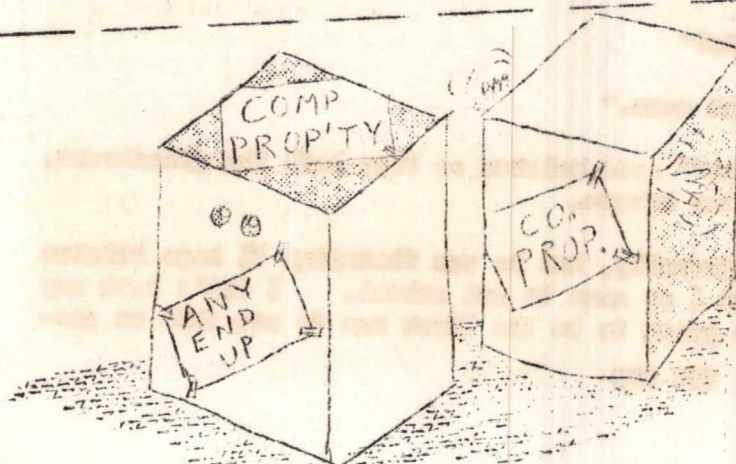
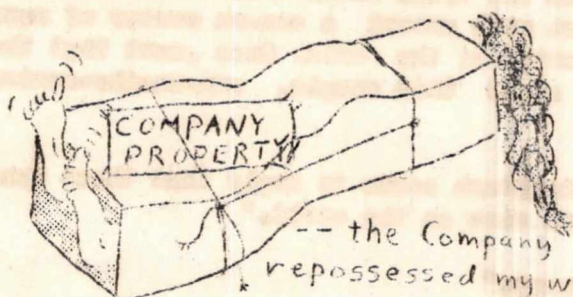
SINISTERRA'S

HALL OF SHAME PRESENTS:

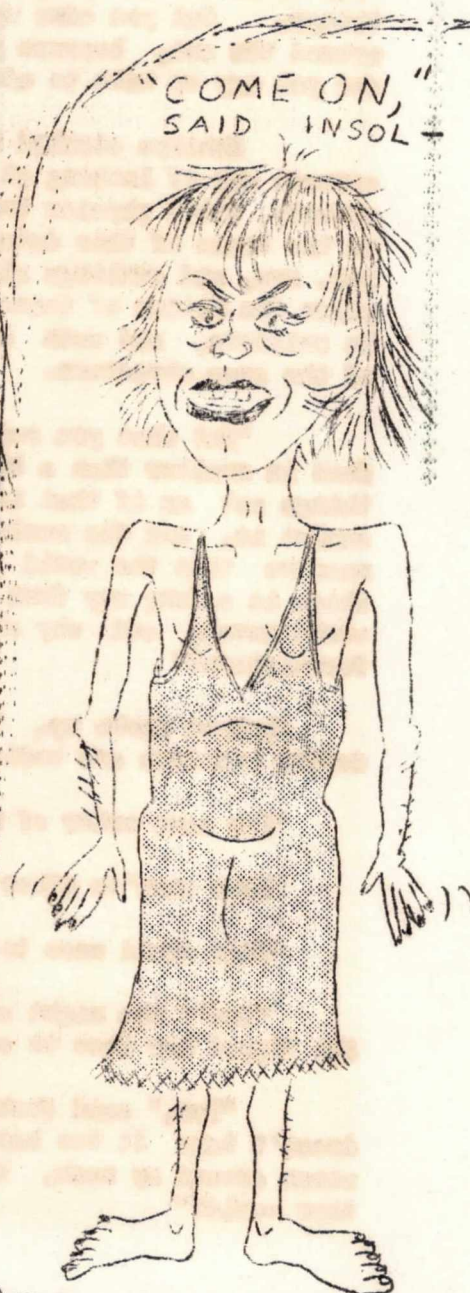
"GRAVY PREFERRED"

BY F. M. BUSBY

ILLUSTRATED BY HOLOCAUST



--and children--

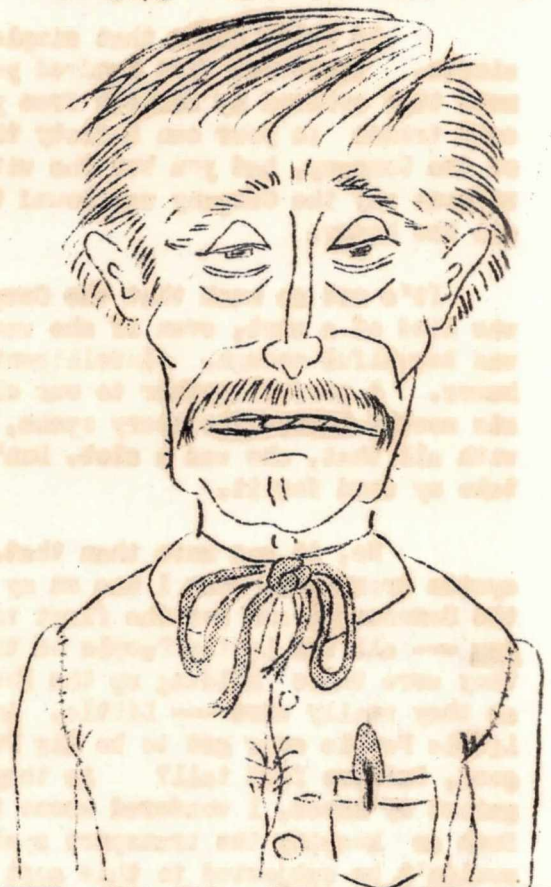


"YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO--"
HE GRIMACED--

(ED. NOTE: SOME STORIES STAND THE
TEST OF TIME! THIS ONE
DIDN'T.)



--I WAS MET
BY THE USUAL
VENAL
LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE--



"WHEN
IS
PAYDAY?"



I work for the company and the company rules the world, which is as it should be. Lately, however, I have been beset by Doubts. When the Company had the world's greatest philosopher-poet drawn and quartered for throwing a gum wrapper into the Garbage bin instead of the Trash bin, I wondered. When I saw the Company President's children wading in champagne while millions starved, I was confused. When the Company's bailiffs repossessed my wife because I made a payment only three days early instead of the customary full week, a question began to rise in the back of my mind.

I've worked for the Company since I was three years old. I'm not one of the Top Men, but I'm on the staff of one of the next-to-the-Top-Men. This makes it plausible for the Author to give, through me, a panoramic view of our society from Top to Bottom. So, after twenty-five years of faithful service, the question that arose in my mind when my wife was repossessed was:

"When is Payday?"

It isn't quite that simple, of course. Nothing is ever quite that simple. There are five hundred years of deep and profound social development that evolved my Society from yours, you primitive. There are significant trends in your own Society that would indicate the eventual dominance of the Company, had you but the wit to see. There are subtle and complex reasons why the Company was bound to come out on Top. For one thing, it had all the Money.

It's not so much that the Company repossessed my wife; after all, she was kind of a slob, even if she was a viceOpresident's daughter. Oh, she was beautiful enough. Intelligent, too. Passionate. Wonderful sense of humor. A perfect mother to our children, who also were repossessed, about six months before the story opens, for keeping a library book overdue. But with all that, she was a slob. Don't ask me a lot of stupid questions; just take my word for it.

No, it was more than that. Maybe it was the morning the transport system broke down when I was on my way to the Office. I had to walk along the Commonways and for the first time in all too many years, I saw - really saw --- all the Little People of the city. Oh yes, all my life I had known they were there holding up the Foundations of Society, but now I saw them as they really were --- Little. And I wondered. I wondered, why don't the Little People ever get to be Big People? Little People are all well and good, but two feet tall? As they scurried around, their heads bumping against my knees, I wondered about this. Something, I felt, should be done. Such as keeping the transport system operative so that junior executives wouldn't be subjected to this sort of thing and get all shook up like that.

I finally reached the office, that morning. After the usual genuflections to the local representatives of the Main Office, I crawled bare-kneed over the cindered aisle to the desk of the local Manager. Much as I dislike reaching for quotation marks, the local Manager said, "I have a mission for you.

"There are indications of unrest among the small stockholders along the

lower Fiduciary delta," he grimaced. I understood him perfectly; he could say more with a grimace than anyone I ever knew. Never said a word; just grimaced. "Agitators have been caught turning down the volume controls of their 3V sets. In the old days, this would happen occasionally; people would turn the volume up for the program and down for the commercial. But now that it's all commercial and no programs, we can't afford this sort of thing. Next they'll be bootlegging pituitrin to the Little People, and the food supply would give out. I think you know what to do," he grimaced, handing me an advance copy of the second installment so that there could be no question about it.

Debarking from the transjet liner, as the setting sun reflected from the waters of the lower Fiduciary, I was met by the usual venal Local Representative whose enthusiasm for the Company had waned as badly as mine is liable to do before this mess is over. I never did get his name quite right, as all my attention was focussed upon the Girl who joined us just as he was introducing himself. Ah, Insol of the Underground -- Insol Vent, she was, before the editor changed it to something more sexy for the paperback edition.

Insol wasn't exactly beautiful, or particularly intelligent, but she was very, very passionate. Or else she had a terrific sense of humor, one or the other, because she was always telling dirty jokes. Such as what the blonde stockholder said when she received her little dividend. Oh, if this wasn't a family magazine --!

I hated her on sight. This was stupid of me; I knew what the author had in mind, sending me down here into the boondocks and throwing her at me like that. But you can't get four installments out of a deal like this without a little extraneous conflict, so I hated her anyway. I hated the way her hair hung down over her eyes. I hated the way it hung down over her nose. I hated the way it hung down over her mouth, so that I couldn't understand a word she said. I wished she would get the hell up off her hands and knees. Boy, isn't this Virile Prose for you?

So that's why I turned against the Company and joined Insol and her subversive group in their attempts to overthrow the Company's control of the world. The author wrote it like that; that's why.

When I got in on the inside of the Underground and had all the lowdown, I escaped out from under and took all this vital information back to the Company's Main Office. It didn't do me any good. The Company was willing to make me vice-president, rerepossess my wife back to me on receipt of the missed payments plus interest, and let us go on vacation for the duration of the entire final installment of the story. But the author wouldn't go

for it. At his instigation, I delivered an obscene harangue to the Board of Directors (which will appear in full in the paperback edition), fought my way out of the Main Office with a ball-point sidearm, and entered the third installment at the point of death from multiple stapler wounds, staggering into the Underground Headquarters for succour. Insol was left in the clutches of the Company's bailiffs after an ill-directed attempt at my rescue. She couldn't see where she was going, of course, and she hated my guts as badly as I hated hers, but this author is truly an obstinate type. Rescue he says and rescue it is. Big deal.

I hardly had time to digest the synopsis and orient myself before the Company mounted an attack on U G H Q to rescue me. I was beginning to feel like Mister Sitting Duck of 2455. This attack was led by my wife, whose contract had been paid off by the Company president for considerations that would turn the stomach of any civilized man ----- she taught him canasta (a Webster classic).

She stormed into my sickroom, jammed a thermometer under my tongue and a revised script into my hand, and grated, "Cheese." The photographer thanked her and left.

Well into the third installment, with the plotline relatively undeveloped and loose threads hanging out all over and tangling things, the action picked up with a smash.

"Hunch down, dammit," said the overseer. "How are you going to learn what it means to be one of the Little People, really one of them, if you don't hunch down more?" I could not answer him; truly I could not.

We crept along the tunnel. Machine gun bullets whistled overhead, one of them slightly offkey. "I'll always love you," I shouted against the noise. "What did you say your name was?" "You're not really sincere," she said. "This is merely part of the rapidly developing plotline." I patted her reassuringly on the revolver.

"You have betrayed the ideals of the Company," said the Company President reassuringly, patting himself on the revolver. "The Company rules the world, which is as it should be. Haven't you read any of the story at all?" "I will never betray the underground," I retorted, "Not again, I won't." The girl with the mad eyes slashed me across the antrims with a copy of Panic. For this I had deserted a secure position with the Company. "I'll have to think it over a little more," I temporized. Where was Insol? Where was my rerepossessed wife? Where was the nameless girl of the tunnel?

"Here I am darling," she said. "You're safe again. The Bomb was a

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dud." No more so the plotline. "We'll never be separated again," she breathed. The next moment she was dashed to her death on the rocks a thousand feet below. What a lousy cynic that author is; the poor kid didn't even have a name yet and he knocks her off.

With daredevil valor, overcoming impossible odds, I won to my old desk: "Fire the Tierra del Fuego agent, Miss Arglebargle," I barked. "Sell three thousand widows and orphans, assorted, to the Southern Cartel," I said, keeping in character. "Don't let anybody into this room: there is a plot afoot, and I don't want any of the plotters to get at my bicycle." As the final installment opened, there was a brainshaking clamour all about; the Underground had come through. Into my shielded, guarded, protected, impregnable, soundproof office surged the Underground: the hopeful idealists, the frustrated hopefuls, the embittered frustrates, the idealistic embittereds. What a vicious circle this had become.

All factions beat at me with their arguments, their ideals, their emotions, their short lengths of bicycle tire. From my own bicycle.

"Darling, we can be together through all amortization, until the end of depreciation," said my rererererepossessed wife. (You missed one turn, but it's all in the paperback edition.) "Think what the Company can do for you; think of you twenty-five years of service. Think of all that Money."

Insol stepped forward. For the first time I saw her face; someone had given her the front half of a crewcut. Mice, apparently. "Come on," she said, "be a Hero. What do you think we have been saving you for through three-and-a-half installments. Besides," she blushed, "I'm what the French call enceinte."

"What? That's impossible. We haven't --"

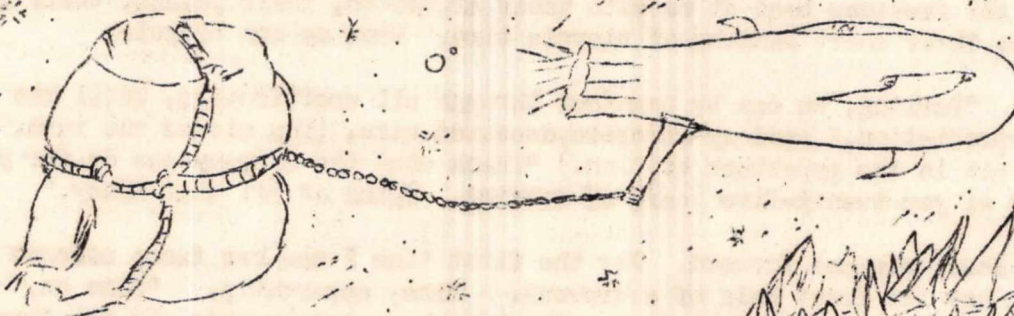
"I know," she agreed. "I don't understand it myself, but it's probably in the paperback edition. So come on, boy, do something. What does it take to get you off your lead-lined duff?"

Actually, that was just about all it took. I consigned Insol to the Company's borscht mines, signed a quitclaim deed at a discount to allow the rererererepossession of my wife, moved up four steps in the Company's hierarchy by virtue of the author's goodwill, telegraphed a wreath to the unmarked grave of the nameless girl of the tunnel and cliff, and settled down to a quiet but rewarding life of sin with my secretary, Miss Arglebargle. The Company rules the world, which is as it should be.

THE END

TEA for TWO

By: HUBBARD GREEN



Randall McCormick leaned back and smiled in satisfaction. So far this new job had been a lark. He glanced at the rear view plate. The two million pounds of tea was riding along as peacefully as you could ask. The biggest job so far had been to gather all that bulk out in space and lash it together for the trip to Ceres. The Cereans were getting this first load as a complimentary introductory offer in order to establish a monopoly with the newly discovered race. It had only been two weeks since the race had made contact via radio waves, though they had been monitoring Earth radio broadcasts for centuries. This would be the first physical contact.

He lovingly stroked the two pounds of tea riding beside him. These two pounds were to be delivered to Jupiter in return for a full load of pure Uranium.

Ceres now appeared as a bright disk directly in the center of his forward view plate. It was time to slow down, decided Randy. He switched on his radio hoping to contact the Cereans. He wished they had developed videocasting as he would like to see what they looked like, though he had been assured that they were humanoid.

"Earth transport vessel Teabag calling planetoid Ceres," he intoned.

He flicked on the receiver and was rewarded by static. He glanced toward the Sun. "Damn that sunspot!" He turned the radio off.

An extremely wild rocky landscape presented itself. Randy looked this way and that. No cities were visible, nor were any other signs of life or civilization. Slightly puzzled, he ran in close to the asteroid and released his bundle. He glanced at the rear view plate and satisfied himself that the bundle was in an elliptical orbit. He then systematically searched the little world. This was quickly accomplished, as the total surface area was only about a third that of the United States.

Randy was worried. He explored the planet again, slower this time. He shook his head. He spread out his charts. He took readings of his position from the view plates. No, he had not miscalculated. This was Ceres. Of that there was no doubt. But where were the Cereans? Where were their cities? He turned on his receiver again, but was again rewarded by static. The cone of radiation from the sunspot still enveloped Ceres.

Either the Cereans didn't exist at all, or they had buried themselves without leaving a single access tunnel. Randy shrugged his shoulders. He was being paid to deliver two million pounds of tea to Ceres. If the Cereans were not there to receive it, why that was none of his worry. They wouldn't have any trouble locating a bulk that size. He couldn't waste time waiting for the sunspot to pass over.

He returned to the bundle of tea, put the nose of his spaceship against it and blasted away. Eventually the mass slowed down and floated gently toward the rocky surface of Ceres. Randy stayed long enough to see it come safely to rest before he gunned his ship toward Jupiter.

As he approached the giant planet, he kept his videocast on. Though only one other human being had ever visited Jupiter, the Jovians had developed many of the modern conveniences of Earth civilization. The first Earth

man to land on Jupiter had never returned, since his spaceship had been irreparably damaged during its landing.

It was not until Jupiter became a fiery red deserted landscape under his eyes that an elfin-like face appeared on the screen.

"You'll have to direct me to your location," Randy explained as he gave the two pounds of tea a loving caress.

The little face smiled and a half dozen fragile ganglia waved from the top of its head. It's child-like chirping voice said, "You'll have to come in closer. We can't see you anywhere."

Randy rocketed in closer to the surface. Sweat appeared on his forehead. Circumnavigating Jupiter every thirty minutes at a hundred miles up was tricky.

"Can you see me yet?" Randy asked hopefully.

"Not yet."

Randy searched the landscape for signs of civilization.

"I can't find any sign of you. I need some data as to your location. Which moons can you see from your position? How far are you from the red spot?"

The little face showed worry. "Meester Garrigan tried to tell us about the moons and the red spot, but we still don't know what they are."

Randy racked his brain. The only landmark on the whole planet was the red spot. Locating the Jovians was becoming more maddening than locating the Cereans had been. His radiation detector buzzed almost continually, so it wasn't any use trying to locate the stockpile of Uranium which the Jovians had refined by some secret process.

The elfin face brightened. "Perhaps if you could fly down just over the tops of our trees we might catch sight of you as you flew by."

"Trees?" Randy gasped. "But - but ---"

At that moment the radio buzzed. "Central Earth Tea calling the spaceship Teabag. Urgent!"

His boss. Randy pressed the key. "McCormick here."

"You bungling idiot," came the voice of his boss. "What did you mean by letting the tea shipment to Ceres fall right on top of a city and smother hundreds of the natives? You've just caused an interplanetary war!"

"WHAT? You're kidding!"

"Like Hell I am. Hurry up with that Jovian run and get back here with the load of Uranium. I think we're goners anyway, but if Earth gets the Uranium we can at least put up a fight."

Before Randy could answer there came an incredulous gasp over the receiver. "Ye gods," came the terrified voice. "The Cereans are here! The whole city is being flattened around me. We haven't got a chance. They're making one awful lot of noise. It --- it's unbelievable, but I don't see a single one of the invaders. They're completely invisible."

"No wonder I had a tough time locating them," Randy observed.

"Hurry, for Heaven's sake. Aah --" The communication stopped.

The face of the Jovian showed worry. "You'd better hurry and find us. We have the only usable Uranium on the planet."

Randy remembered something about trees. He shook with uncontrollable nervousness. "How tall are your trees?"

"Oh, they're very tall."

Randy screamed. The only plants on Jupiter were less than an inch tall, and they grew everywhere. The Jovian on the screen was probably about a millimeter high. According to Jovian communications the total population was only a few thousand. Now he knew why they only needed two pounds of tea.

"What do you use tea for anyway?" he asked.

"It's so nice and soft to sleep on," the Jovian sighed.

Randy screamed again. There was no chance at all of finding them.

The sudden knowledge that he had brought about Earth's doom was too much for his strained nerves. The Teabag flew out of control, and as its last wild gyrations carried it toward certain destruction, Randy decided that this job wasn't quite as easy as he had at first thought.

THE END

THE PEOPLE FROM HOME

BY ELINOR BUSBY



"I DON'T HAVE TO LOOK
FOR THEM ANY LONGER."

PH

The patient who was soon to be released spoke to the attendant who was going off shift.

"May I speak to you for a moment?" he pleaded. He looked around. There was no one within earshot.

"Yes." The attendant buttoned his raincoat and looked at the elevator indicator. He had just missed it.

"I'm going home tomorrow," the patient said. "I had a delusion, but now I'm cured, and I can go to school and work, and eat and sleep, just like anybody. Because I'm cured now. I don't have to look for them any longer."

"Look for --?" The attendant offered a cigarette to the patient, took one himself, and lit both with an air of careful formality.

"The people. The people from home. That was my delusion, that there were people from home right here, on this very planet, and I had to look for them. I hoped they'd take me there with them. I wanted to go with them very badly. I couldn't do anything but look for them --"

"You mustn't get so excited."

"I know I mustn't. It was just a delusion anyway." The patient ran his thin brown fingers through his short pale hair.

"Why do you want to talk to me?"

"I just do. Please. I'll begin at the beginning. I think it was in high school they first told us about Neanderthal Man and how men were descended from ape-like ancestors, and all that. I didn't say anything, but I didn't believe it. I guess that was the beginning of my delusion, but it didn't matter then."

"What did you think man was descended from?"

"Where. Maybe from apes, but not on this planet. I looked at the pictures of reconstructions of Neanderthal Man and I didn't get any feeling of kinship at all. He wasn't an ancestor. He wasn't even a collateral ancestor. I just knew it. Then suddenly I knew that man originated on a planet belonging to another star. Of course it was just a delusion, and I'm cured now."

"Why are you telling me this?" The attendant looked around. Of course there was no place to sit down.

"I just have to. Please. So then I forgot about it for a few years. But last quarter I took a survey course in physical anthropology, and there was a lot about the origins of man. I remembered this old delusion and it got worse and worse. It changed. I began to see, almost like a picture, the home planet. It was beautiful. Humans had been living there for a million years or more and they had finally achieved civilization. No war, of course. Nothing to fight about. No government. No need for any, with a completely civilized population. No insanity, no poverty, no cruelty. Nothing but beauty and gentle ways, music, philosophy and love. I can hardly talk of it without crying. I know it's just a delusion."

"It sounds monotonous." The attendant shifted from one foot to the other.

"Perhaps. I've been to war, and I don't think I could ever get tired of peace. Real peace, happy peace. We don't have it on this planet that I know of. Anyhow, a few months ago I suddenly seemed to realize that the people at home had a very serious problem. Their fertility rate had been dropping slowly for centuries, and they knew that eventually they would become extinct unless something could be done. Without a government it took

them a long time to do anything, but at last a plan was hit upon. At one time they had colonized extensively but the connection between home and colonies had always been a tenuous one; and after their last war 20,000 years ago with the oldest colony, it had been broken off completely with all of them. Can you imagine 20,000 years of peace?"

"The plan?"

"One day while I was eating dinner it came to me that a ship had already been built and sent out. A party was to enlist volunteers secretly from each of the colonies to go home to live. It was thought that new blood would probably renew the fertility of the race."

"Why secretly?"

"For fear. When dealing with savages one uses caution. The people from home will be a very small party. They will carry no weapons. They will be defenseless, easily overpowered by force. Our people might not believe in the harmlessness of people with a technology capable of building a starship. They might think their safety depended upon killing them off at once. How can you explain sight to a blind man? How can you explain civilization to the uncivilized?"

"You are very eloquent." The attendant stroked a non-existent beard.

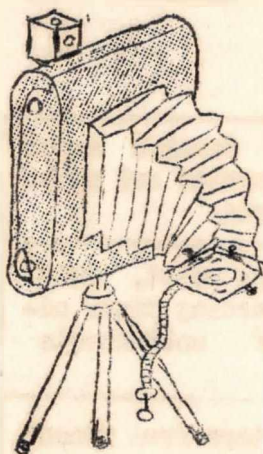
"I feel strongly about this. I want to go home very badly. I hoped that if I could find them I might perhaps be able to persuade them to take me too. I was a fool. It was all a delusion, and even if it hadn't been they wouldn't have taken me. They wouldn't want unstable types. They will want the sanest people they can find, and even then perhaps they will be importing insanity." The patient paused, gasped as if leaping into cold water, and went on. "One of the party might even work for a while at a mental hospital, to learn something of our way of treating the mentally ill." The patient's voice trembled. "But they wouldn't take me. Why should they?"

The attendant looked at the patient with a careful, analytic kindness. He was small and very thin, but wiry rather than frail. His large pale blue eyes had the luminosity of the visionary rather than the madman. His skin and the whites of his eyes were clear and healthy-looking, and he had an air of intense vitality. The attendant made up his mind. "Clairvoyancy is always a useful trait," he said. "I believe that there will be room for you."

THE END

—THE AGONY COLUMN—

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<p style="text-align: center;">paid advt</p> <p>"I am not either Squink Blog" — Malcolm Willits.</p>	<p>VOTE for Joe Jim Gregory, the "UNIVERSAL" candidate for ALL the people! His left head is liberal; his right head conservative. Send all contributions to Jordan Foundation.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">--paid rebuttal--</p> <p>"I am not and wouldn't admit if I were Malcolm Willits" — Squink Blog</p>	<p>BE THE FIRST in your neighborhood to own a genuine surplus atomic bomb! These bombs are duds from unannounced tests at Bikini and are only slightly radioactive. It is very likely that they will not explode for years, if at all. Lightweight protective lead suits included at a slight extra charge. You'll want enough of these for your guests as well as your immediate family. Some of your guests, anyway. WRITE TODAY to AEC Surplus Depot, just a little bit south of Eniwetok, c/o General Bullmoose.</p>
<p>FANS: Your opportunity! Our organization has recently purchased the ABC Alphabet Soup Corp. Now we can give you Bheer with an "H" in it! Rhainier Bhreweries, Seattle.</p>	<p>OVIPAROUS comedienne wants booking on planet where audience applauds when act lays egg. Have incubator; will travel. Double-yolk Delpha, the Girl with the Flexible Shell.</p>
<p>WANTED: Information for locating and reaching alternate universe in which a busted flush beats three of a kind. Reward contingent on winnings. Joe Fastbuck, Inside Straight Blvd., Los Antes, Calif.</p>	<p>DON'T SELL YOUR SOUL until you see the deal we give you! HONEST ASMODEUS gives higher trade-ins than anybody. Write c/o Pit 7.</p>
<p>WANTED: Fifty plump gourmets with no close relatives, to learn the restaurant business from the INSIDE, across the galaxy. Experience new thrills in cooking! Cann I. Ball, Carni Varous VII.</p>	



CAMERA AT THE CLEVENTON -WALLY WEBER-

If the persons shown on the page of photographs occasionally appear a bit on the negroid side, keep in mind that the photographs were originally kodachrome slides, and under-exposed flesh tones had a tendency to show dark on the black-and-white prints.

TOP ROW

First picture; Don Ford, Pamela Bulmer, Mrs. Ford, and Ken Bulmer (with beard). Second picture; Mark Clifton (left), and James Gunn. Third picture; Forrest J. Ackerman signing autograph. Last picture; Alderson Fry (center).

SECOND ROW

First picture; Don Ford (with camera), and Robert Bloch. Second picture; Lloyd Eshbach (left), and Doc Smith (with book).

THIRD ROW

First picture; Anthony Boucher. Second picture; Mel Korshak and Evelyn Gold. Third picture; Mr. and Mrs. E. E. Evans. Fourth picture; Rog Phillips and Honey Wood (now Mrs. Phillips). Fifth picture; TV man at the costume ball. Sixth picture; Olga Ley (back to camera), Anthony Boucher, and Mildred Clingerman.

FOURTH ROW

First picture; Jean Bogert. Second picture; Olga and Willy Ley. Third picture; Honey Wood (in shadows by microphone), Bob Tucker, and Noreen Falasca. Fourth picture; P. S. Miller. Fifth picture; Mary Southworth and Karl Olsen. Sixth picture (below fifth picture); Ken Bulmer.

FIFTH ROW

First picture; Evan Appléman. Second picture; Bob Bloch. Third picture; Isaac Asimov. Fourth picture (below third picture); Mrs. E. E. Smith (far left), and Ed Wood (far right). Fifth picture; Mrs. Ley (in white), and Honey Wood. Sixth picture; Frank Dietz.

BOTTOM ROW

First picture; Marty Greenburg (left), and Bob Bloch. Second picture; Fred Remus Jr. (far left), and L. Sprague deCamp (far right). Third picture; two extra-terrestrial pickets. Last picture; Gerry de la Ree (left), and Mel Korshak (center).

