

All that we know about this author you should watch is that she has written a novel of suspense, published by Harper in 1951, and has produced here a story which may well explain everything for you . . . unless, of course, you are one of those types who are inclined to go around putting piranhas in the water cooler. . . .

## GO FOR BAROQUE

by Jody Scott

THE PATIENT WAS A SMALL man with wiry white hair and a white mustache. Dr. Brant nodded across the desk at him, and the patient smiled. It was a peculiar smile. A radiant but eerie smile. It bespoke security, which was obsolete. It looked copied from certain smiles Brant had seen on cherubs in old paintings. So what kind of complex might this indicate? Brant smiled right back. "Good morning," he said pleasantly. "You are Mr. Yog Farouche."

"I'm glad to meet myself," Mr. Farouche said, letting his left hand shake his right.

Well, well. Interesting deviation.

"Odd name," Brant said. "What nationality?"

"Plutonian."

"Plutonian?"

"From Pluto."

"Pluto?"

"Ninth from the sun."

"Ah," Brant said. "Pluto. Yes indeed." He shuffled some papers on his desk. He cleared his throat. "Well, Mr. Farouche; the report from the state hospital says you're much too difficult a case for their staff, yet you are an intelligent and peaceable man. I mention this because it's the oddest referral I've ever seen. Wouldn't you say so?"

"Give me two minutes to run through all the referrals you've ever seen," Farouche said, closing his eyes.

The psychiatrist was about to say something, but he shut it off. The patient's expression . . . very strange . . . not quite definable . . .

"Yes," said Farouche.

"Yes what?"

Farouche looked pained. "If you'd do me the courtesy—" Then he smiled again. "But I'm expecting too much. Your question was loaded to find out how paranoiac I am. Let me answer: that word isn't even in my vocabulary."

"But you've just used it."

"If you're going to stick on logic we'll never get anyplace."

Brant settled back in his swivel chair. Okay. So this bird was intelligent, peaceable, difficult. The usual patient was pretty dull, which made life boring for Dr. Brant; Mr. Farouche offered a pleasant change of pace. "All right, you tell me. Suppose you start with a run-down of your past life. Make it as long or short as you like. . . . Sit down in the easy-chair, and relax."

Farouche sighed and obediently sat down. He let his eyes wander over the little room. There were three doors, one to the ward, through which he had come, one to the lab, and one to the reception room. It was a warm sunny morning and the smell of fresh-clipped grass blew in through the open window. . . .

Gradually his eyes clouded, half closed, looking inward, and Brant took the opportunity to study him. A man of about sixty, in the usual tan trousers and tan open-collar shirt. His eyes were a deep amber, his skin as smooth and pale as

new parchment. Looked healthy. Must have done a good amount of outside work. Ruffled hair, thick and pure white, lots of it. His eyes had that childlike look that Brant had seen often; innocent eyes, not deep, but not shallow either—very curious. Not psychotic. Not by Brant's yardstick. That was obvious right away.

"As a child," Farouche said at last, "I was too simple and beautiful to live. . . . So I died."

. . . Now don't leap to conclusions. I mean this in the mystical sense. Mystical—you don't like it? Too many bad connotations to that word. Mother used to say, 'Don't play near the aqueduct' . . . No, strike that out; that was earlier. I'll tell you about whip-whiskered Uncle Sigh (he was Cy, really, but I called him Sigh, for obvious reasons). He used to say to me 'Yoggsy, if you keep on like this, there will be no face in the mirror when you look.' Such a horrible warning! I was like an ice child—he drinks warm milk and melts; he doesn't, and starves. . . . Anyway, we lived in Penury, a well-known subsection of Chicago. As a child I was needed at home for certain dramatic scenes. I'm sure this sounds like the regular run of dull cases, eh? But I can't tell you; I've got to show you. Do you mind?"

Before Brant could open his mouth the little man had vaulted across the desk and perched him-

self on the psychiatrist's knee and begun to weep, loudly, violently, heart-brokenly. Then just as suddenly he was back in his chair across the desk. He seemed perfectly calm now. "Rejected! Rejected by my very own mother," he said dreamily. "Not that she knew it; she thought she loved me; they all do, but they nearly all love only some two-dimensional figure of their own scrawny invention. . . . Anyway, I made up for all that. I began to develop certain powers, such as—"

Instantly he was down on all fours creeping around the floor under the desk. He began to gather up coins from hidden nooks; a dime, two nickels, a handful of dirt-crust-ed pennies. "Here. You've lost these over the last three years," he said, handing up the change.

Neat trick, Brant thought, taking it. He watched, fascinated.

"Then I played with other kids," Farouche said. "We played simple, familiar, every-day games, such as cowboy and Indian. . . . Do you mind?" He opened the desk drawer and took out a length of stout twine and doubled it and tied Brant's hands and feet, deftly, making him fast to the swivel chair. Then he smiled and sat down. "All right, now just go on relaxing while I continue. One point: I want you to express yourself, always. If you have anything to say, say it. Is that clear?"

"Perfectly," Brant said. He was feeling a little bounce of exhilaration in the pit of his stomach. It was like being tickled. This guy could certainly generate excitement. Also, it was harmless; all he had to do was reach out and flip the intercom switch and Dr. Eyck and Miss Potter would be here inside of two minutes. Besides, this was good therapy. Brant believed in going along with the patient all the way, as long as things didn't get rough.

"Ropes too tight? How do you feel?"

"I feel fine," Brant grinned. "Excellent! Care for a cigarette?"

Brant nodded. Farouche lifted a cigarette out of the doctor's breast pocket and put it between his lips and lit it for him. "I'm delighted to be here," he said. "I'm glad to have been referred to the famous and capable hands of yourself and your young partner, and of Miss Potter, that understanding nurse with the starched bosom and the prim smile. You're one of the few men around with imagination. You're accessible, you can change; so you can be cured. And Eyck tries to follow in your footsteps. That's why I chose this place."

"Ah," said Brant. "You chose this place."

Farouche smiled. He removed the cigarette so the doctor could exhale. "Yes; I like a small private

institution like this, although the large joint of which I was so recently a part was pretty cool too.

. . . But I was running through my past for you. For instance, Grandma dreamed she died of heart failure. This scared her so badly she woke up and died of heart failure. Silly, wasn't it? And that's the way they go. I have an early memory of Grandma bending over me to whisper, 'Go to sleep and *don't worry*, Daddy Warbucks will be here in the morning with the helicopter.' That's all I remember about Grandma, for which I'm grateful. . . . Did you realize that I'm not at all sophisticated? I should say pseudo-sophisticated; that's the fashion of the day; everybody who is anybody is pseudo-sophisticated, with tailfins. I'm a bit of a primitive myself. And I can tell you a story to prove it. Would you like to listen?"

"No," Brant said.

"Good. I like a bit of spirit in a prisoner. What would you like to hear instead?"

"Tell me about your sex upbringing."

"Ah! The first honest psychiatrist I've ever seen," Farouche marveled. "Well, as usual, I had a sex upbringing that could choke a crocodile into not laying eggs. However, I made up for all that later; and since you're being so honest, I'll tell you some hot love stories out of my past. I see that

you're fond of sex, comics, and adventure stories, in that order. So okay: My past is full of all three.

"Now this episode happened south of Pago-Pago, in a Spanish galleon, of which I was the captain. Also the absolute bloody dictator—what fun, to be a bloody dictator! I loved it. The ship was naturally not a real Spaniard; she was a Hollywood mock-up swiped off the MGM back lot one dark night, complete with skull flag and keelhauling equipment and her name in blazing rubies, *Corsair's Revenge*. . . . Now relax; the copulation scenes come later," he said, smiling.

"I'm not that hung up," Brant said huffily.

"Oh, come on. I'm a telepath—haven't you noticed yet? Anyway, I'll tell you about the crew. The crew! Some boys. I rented them along with the ship, see. I rented the whole works from MGM, right after that studio brought out its colossal sea epic, *SWORDS ACROSS JAMAICA*. As my first mate I rented the star of the picture, a typical Hollywood wax-work named Rock Bottom. I suppose you think the whole idea was silly."

"Not at all. Except I'm wise you use the term 'rent' advisedly."

"Ahhh!" Yog Farouche smiled, leaned back in his chair and stared at Brant. "You're coming along fine. You'll be a well man in no time. Already you sound half

alive. . . . Well, do you get the picture? Here we are, a blood-thirsty, horny crew, clipping across the Spanish Main, looking for Yankee ships to plunder. The boys all wear faded blue dungarees, calf-length, with daggers at the waist or between the teeth, and no shirts except on brisk evenings; also technicolor make-up at all times; they are a typical strength and health crowd from Vine Street. I myself wear an Admiral's costume, with sword and much gold frogging, the cat-o'-nine-tails always twitching in my hand. . . . Tell me, because out of the four-paned windows came a lot of white balloons, and in each balloon was a saw cutting a log in half, and above the log was the word ZZZZZZZZZ. . . .

"Very clearly," said Brant, spellbound.

"Okay. So the first Yankee ship to cross our path was the Queen Mary. Wasn't that a bitch? Naturally we couldn't back out after all that rehearsal, so we figured what the hell, go for baroque. At first the ship was a dim bug on the horizon, but she expanded, gradually, inexorably, like a bad dream. We came about and hove to, taking up picturesque positions about the deck. Mr. Bottom was especially magnificent, with his drawn cutlass and bare chest; he re-

rum and swam bare and chased the cabin boy round the mizzenmast and so forth. Myself, I am up in the crow's nest yelling salty obscenities and enjoying the whole scene. Get the picture?"

His amber eyes clouded. He relapsed into silence. Brant said, "But everything turned out all right, didn't it? Because you're here, aren't you? Alive and happy and all?"

"Alive?" Farouche said with a bitter little laugh. "Happy? . . . I never knew what became of my crew. I couldn't swim in my admiral suit. Straight down I went, like a stone, to the bottom of the sea, and then I lost consciousness. When I awoke the most beautiful woman was giving me artificial respiration. As I reached for her

and this was no dummy, and we sank on the spot. Oh, it didn't take much. After all, the galleon was quite fragile. Like so many of our hopes and fears and desires . . ."

yellow moon appeared in the upper righthand corner of the square. I moved down a street of houses which were all facades; when I went behind one, I saw the back of the house, with its two-dimensional porch upon which stood some flat milk-bottles, and a drunken two-dimensional husband trying to sneak in the back door before the clock struck. I knew there'd be trouble so I moved off in a hurry. Farther along were fire-plugs, and dogs to sniff them—you've seen a city landscape in the comics? Well, Grandma, or scene in a comic strip! Grandma I thought instantly; she's laid a curse on me.

"It was ghastly. Yellow light gleamed through four-sectioned windows, and suddenly a huge

"I've never been so scared in my life. A rolling pin flew toward me and went POW and flew away, and I began to run, my shoes pounding on that 2D pitch-black alley between the jagged fences under that slice of yellow moon. It was so utterly—"

"Horrificing," Dr. Brant breathed, wriggling in his bonds.

"Completely. I lived in that country for six months. Six long months, evenings and Sundays only! Can you imagine what that would do to a man's sense of balance? What a freak I felt. How round, how queer, how rejected. There was a disease they got, it never appears in the papers, but sometimes it causes the corpses to twitch and jerk; these symptoms set in at the moment of death. . . . You remember Miss Raven, don't you? Such a terrible thing. But I promised not to tell. Anyway, I don't want to chill you with tales of two-dimensional corpses. It was worse than that. Far worse. I fell in love."

"Ahhh," said Brant, his eyes widening.

"Well may you ahhh," Farouche said sadly. "She was gorgeous. She was a redhead. She was a sensation. Her dialogue—you should have seen her balloons! Witty! Sparkling! Sexy! She made dumb broads like Snow White look like lumps of coal-tar. Her face was so round, so pink, without a lot of hideous detail; just

eyebrows, eyes, nose, and mouth, and a couple of red spots for the cheeks. No shaded contours, no lights and shadows—this girl was pure. Like you don't often find them any more. And when she spoke! Clear black words, in a white balloon, floating over her lovely head: BANG!, she would say, and HOT DINGIES!, and HEY THERE, LOVER BOY, LET'S GRAB A COUPLA HAMBURGERS—Oh, my God! I'll never forget her, to my dying day!"

He burst into tears. Brant watched, disturbed and saddened. Gently he said, "But you left that country, anyway, and came back here, didn't you?"

Farouche nodded, tears streaming down his cheeks. He took out a blue polka-dotted handkerchief and blew his nose. He caught his breath. "I got a letter from a guy who signed himself Zarkov. It said, 'You cubist, you are a walking crime against nature. I have constructed a duplicate of you using chicken skin and wire. Get out of this strip immediately or I will turn it over to the brutal and sinister Kah-Mee for torture.' . . . Do you think I'm a coward, Brant? Tell me honestly."

The psychiatrist smiled grimly. "I've heard of the Kah-Mee," he said shortly. "You're no coward. It would have been a fate worse than death."

"Yeah. That's what I figured

you'd say. So anyway, I split until the heat blew over. You're a sympathetic sort of chap, Brant. Would you like to see a picture of my girl?"

"I'd love to," Brant said eagerly.

Yog Farouche pulled a wallet out of his hip pocket, extracted a piece of five-colored paper from it, unfolded the paper and spread it out on Brant's knee. The psychiatrist sucked in his breath. "Wow," he said. "What a build. Gorgeous!" Across the bottom of the page was written, in a delicate feminine hand: 'To Yoggysy, for memories and futures, with all of my love, Brenda Starr.'

"She's a honey," Brant said, licking his dry lips. "You sure were one lucky guy."

Farouche grunted. "That's what you think. What relationship can anybody have with a two-dimensional woman? Just imagine it! Go ahead! . . . Frustrating, isn't it?"

"Ahhh," Brant said, a new light coming into his eyes.

"Yeah." Farouche put the picture back in his wallet. He rubbed his head with his knuckles and he yawned. "Well, it's over and done with, a good many years now. I'm not going to weep my weeps in public. Once again I escaped out the northeast corner of the world. Hunted, persecuted, the man without a country, always by submarine, Miami to Boston, New Orleans to San Diego, forever the

neon jungle and the low-register clarinet and overhead the moon like a monocle, like the big eye of the angel. . . . My friend, we are two puppet masters making our dolls shake hands, believing this to be the only medium of communication. But let me put you wise to the secret of the universe. Here it comes: The grail blends into a trolley line that goes over your head."

"I don't understand," Brant said.

Farouche grinned. "Honester and honest. You're hardly a homo sap any more. Can you see suns going around inside of stars going around inside of suns? Then you're on the right path. Listen, pal. Let's face it. I am seventy-three trillion years old. I've seen empires rise and fall: Rome and Athens, Ur and Egypt, Atlantis and Mu, Fanthor and Grograndina, back before the beginning of time, and you don't seem surprised at all. . . . What's wrong? Did you suddenly remember something?"

"Yes," Brant whispered, straining forward in his bonds, his eyes alive and eager. "Listen, you know where I come from? Yeow! Where the electrons are slightly smaller, hence the chronons are shorter—think what this does to a Micky Mouse watch! So we have electrons hopping from now to the other side of now, forming different elements; this is the Flipped

Coin theory, beautiful as light running through water in space! Do you know that I watched—"

"You're cured," Farouche said. He threw his leg over the chair-arm and began to buff his fingernails, looking bored. "The rest is old hat to me, pal."

"I watched Titanosaurus hatch and wither, right here on this little planet! This planet—hab! Once I wouldn't have stopped here for fuel. This is the backwoods, the edge of town—up *there* is where all the interesting people live. You can see it on starry nights, the stamping ground of the intergalactic smart set. . . . If you knew what games they play, and against what fabulous settings! Listen, Yoggysy. Help me. I've got to go back home. I've got to go back home! I've got to go back home!"

His voice rose to a shriek. Farouche got up, waving him silent. "Shhh! Do you want that Potter bitch in here, that starched custodian of wilted souls? Wait!" He went over to the window and threw one foot across the sill and disappeared into the garden. In a few moments he was back, with a flat green leaf in his hand and the radiant smile on his face.

"Look here, friend." He held the leaf in front of Brant's eyes. In the cupped center of it stood a round firm shimmering dew-drop. He said, "Nasturtium, with a jewel. Look. Don't think; simply look."

Brant looked. The drop was only a dew-drop. It was a moist solid tiny crystal ball. Inside was the room, turned upside-down, and his own curved attenuated face, and the open window, the sun streaming in, Yog Farouche holding a nasturtium leaf, with a crystal ball in the center, and inside the ball was a room, with an open window, and the sun streaming in, and a world in a world in a world in a whirled—

Brant began to laugh. "Take these ropes off me," he said. "Yes, sir, I see what you mean, I certainly do exist. And not because I think, either. Just the opposite. Zowie! Untie me fast!"

Farouche jerked a knot and the rope fell loose. "Here there and everywhere," he said. "It's all yours, beyond the groping fingers of time. Will you remember that?"

"Certainly. Why not? Think of all the hours I wasted! Powiel! What do I do now?"

"You go back to my cubicle. If anybody asks, your name is Yog Farouche. If they keep asking, tell them about the land of Yeow. By the way, you are completely rehabilitated in three days, after which you take over Superman's job both daily and Sunday and from there on you're on your own. Are you pleased?"

"Delighted," Brant said, beaming.

"All right; tomorrow, same time, same wave-length. But first,

push the intercom button and ask Dr. Eyck to come in here."

Brant flipped the switch and said, "Send Eyck in, Miss Potter," and closed the switch again.

Farouche said, "How do you feel now?"

"I feel very happy. I feel absolutely secure and unspeakably serene."

"Good; you'll feel even better tomorrow. I'll see you then."

He closed the door, rubbed his hands briskly, and sat down in Brant's chair behind the big desk. He picked up a blank card from the pile on the desk, and looked at it. Then he opened the drawer and found a bottle of ink, poured some ink on the card, smeared it around with his fingers, blotted it off, and placed the card second in the pile. At that moment, Dr. Eyck came in.

Eyck looked alarmed. "Where's Dr. Brant?"

"Out," said Farouche. "Don't worry; he's put me on minimum security." He smiled the radiant smile.

"Oh." The young psychiatrist sat down in the easy chair. He was a husky blond in whites, with a long face and a broken nose, and he was wearing horn glasses. "Minimum security, hey? You sound like an old hand around here. . . . Hello, a nasturtium leaf. Where'd this come from?"

"Outside in the garden," Farouche said.

Eyck smiled gently. "Not in this garden. We've only got roses."

"This year, yes; but you will have nasturtiums, summer after next."

"Well, now, that may be true," Eyck said, letting his expression go bland. "So Dr. Brant put you on minimum security, did he? Where did you say he went?"

"I didn't say, but he's out getting in touch with some people he used to know. He wants you to check me on Rorschach while he's gone. Said to tell you he slipped a couple of different blots into the pack, but you just record my statements as usual. Whatever *that* means," he smiled.

Eyck smiled back and settled in the chair, on familiar grounds now. "First, you're to look at the ink-blots I show you, and then describe what they seem like to you. I'll just jot down what you say. Say anything that comes into your mind," he said, handing over the top card.

Farouche looked at it. He squinted. He turned it upside down. "Reminds me of blue light passing through a chunk of ice. . . . You can feel the wind in it. It's a man who puts his fingers to his temples and concentrates on smashing eggs. Ever try that? . . . Yes, he's obviously from Betelgeuse, where I was born; crepuscular, in moss gray and moss green, under the blurred signs; and now he's a young psychiatrist

whose heart is doing a different thing than his hands. Very sad. Very sad. Very sad.

"Ah," said Dr. Eyck, looking at Farouche for the first time. "Go ahead. What else? Does it remind you of anything in your past?"

"Yeah; it reminds me of the time I put some dough on three race horses; one named Fat Chance, one named Zeitgeist, one named Go for Baroque. . . . Funny how some guys like long odds more than life itself. . . . I took one look at your paint-smearred face and I knew you were one of them. . . . Anyway, I was saying—Goethe, who dropped out of the race some time ago, once asked me this question: Did you ever watch while a bird hypnotizes a snake into eating it?"

Dr. Eyck wrote busily, nodding. "Go on, go on," he said.

"I remember I dumped five grand on Fat Chance and another five on Zeitgeist, simply because I hated myself that day. But the very next day I loved myself and I won a quarter of a million on Go for Baroque. I want you to remember that. The horse's name will remind you. Baroque—that means 'irregular in form'—it's more fun that way, see. Will you remember?"

"Certainly," Dr. Eyck smiled, writing.

"Eyck, old boy, no wonder you never change anybody. You don't even know anybody is there."

". . . How's that?"

"You're alive like a machine," Farouche said. "You don't experience anything. You have a shortage of viewpoints. So naturally you don't help anybody; you just wear a white coat and follow the rulebook."

"We effect a good many cures —" Eyck began stiffly.

"Oh, snap it off. A witch doctor will cure the same percentage. Check the figures some time. Look at me." He held Eyck's eyes with his amber ones for a few seconds. "You've been thinking along the same lines, haven't you?"

Eyck stared, opened his mouth, closed it again, and nodded.

Farouche said, "All right. Go back to your notebook." He picked up the card and squinted at it, and Eyck did as he was told, with a flicker of puzzlement on his long face. Well, some patients could sure be peculiar. That's the way it went on this job. . . .

"Okay," Farouche said, flipping the card. "Next picture. Here we are, squeezed between Was and Will-be like yellowed photographs in the family album. . . . Here's a snapshot of you graduating from high school, with a vulture on your shoulder; that was before you died. . . . You know what? Sometimes I'm full of nostalgia for something that hasn't happened yet. Or for the second just gone by. Or for wind in a chimney that fell to pieces five hundred years

ago. It's funny, saying this to a guy with no imagination, and watching his inner reactions. It may take several weeks to shake you loose. . . . Well! Here I see a field of flowers growing on the bright sidewalks of eternity," he said, pointing; and then he put the card down. "That's all. What's the next one?"

Dr. Eyck put the first card face down on the desk, and reached for the second card. He glanced at it. This must be one of the special ones Brant slipped into the pack. H'mmm. What a strange day it was today. This card was unusual too, all right. Never seen anything like it. What could the blot be? It seemed like an eye, the eye of a cyclops, wearing bifocals. One single eye with a fountain of tears rushing out of it. The tears were so real they were getting his hands wet. . . . How terrible. . . . Things he'd never thought of before. . . . Ancient things. . . . Tears like liquid diamonds, the sorrow of the ages. . . . What a pit of grief, how sad, how terrible. . . . Excruciating!

"Don't cry," Farouche soothed. "You're almost born now. Everything's going to be all right very soon."

"Soon!" Eyck sobbed, staring at the gushing tears. "Soon, soon, soon! Always the big waiting room. Pie in the sky. That's how they've fooled me. A crock of lies! No wonder everybody's crazy! Hoo,

hoo, hoo. . . . I'd like to stuff 'soon' right—"

"I know," Farouche said bitterly. "It's awful. Like they say When at Delphi do as the delphiniums do. Even if you're a tiger lily. What fools people are! How they love their chains!"

"Yes! Yes!" Eyck wept, tearing up the card and throwing the pieces into the sunshine. "It's true, you're right, I'm surrounded by fools, blind fools; they've got my worst interest at heart."

"Suicide-prone," Farouche prompted. "The race is heading down the big drain. . . . No scream could do justice to that horror!"

Eyck nodded, sobbing. He put his head in his hands.

"Here everything is slick, glossy, tasteless, like expensive cardboard. What's the use of living? The houses, the entertainment, the people—a bunch of lemmings playing follow-the-leader down to the sea!"

Eyck nodded jerkily, head in hands.

"But so what?" Farouche said. He relaxed suddenly. He stretched widely, and he yawned. "When I'm eating a plum, I don't remember how pineapple tastes. So this world is full of debasing attitudes and fashions. Who cares what other idiots do? There are games beyond games beyond games, my friend; and this one is a pip-squeak."

Eyck quit sobbing. He looked up, between stiff fingers. He snuffled. "Yeah? Says who?"

"Says me, that's who. For instance, in the cracks between moments lives a world, which contains beings. Even the terms misrepresent. For when an X is utterly alien, we don't speak of it, we fold our sentence, we freeze the bursting limb. 'Repress' ain't the word for what you are doing one hundred percent of the time," Farouche said.

Eyck stared at him. He looked wary now. His face was wet and contorted. "Who told you about me?"

"Nobody had to tell me. You're fond of flowers, horses, canned ideas, and pessimism. Some combination! No wonder you always lose when you bet. You can't see the future for the trees. You dislike women, because they've kicked you around, because you and other people have kicked them around, around and around. But you buy just about anything anybody tries to sell you, which later makes you mad. So I'll have to use these quirks until I can cure them. And that, pal, is the secret of changing the world."

Eyck began to get to his feet, slowly.

"You're the one," he whispered. "You are the Voice I've been waiting for. You—"

"No doubt! Pleased to meet you. I remember you well. When

you were a kid they took you to Dr. Lamb with the white marble smile, he who washes his hands in formaldehyde and says, 'All right-ee, we'll have those wings off in no time!' . . . This is the way they do it, this gang of local murderers. Because wings sometimes break the furniture."

"Yes!" Eyck said excitedly. "How did you know! Every night I used to dream about— Say, what's your name? What's happening here, anyway?"

"We're changing games. The old one was a bore. My name is Farouche. I've taken over three state hospitals, two rehabilitation centers and a chamber of commerce, and my next goal is to induce governmental leaders to come here for my cure. When I've finished with these birds there won't be any war, among other things. And you can assist me. Does that make life worth living?"

"Zowie!" Eyck said. "Pow! It's the answer! I never thought I'd—I'm wondering what—"

"Don't worry about a thing. First, I'll ask you to step into the lab and fix me up a needleful of pentathol, because Miss Potter is my next patient, and who knows how she'll react? Except me, of course. She's sub-clinical schizophrenic. You may not have noticed, because anybody who isn't putting piranhas in the water cooler passes for normal in this corrupt society. You think you've

suffered? Take a look at the face of Potter. She may require three or four weeks. And I've got all those patients in the ward to take care of today."

"I see what you mean," Eyck said thoughtfully.

"Before you go, ring the bell and ask Nurse Potter to step in."

"Right," Eyck said. He leaned across the desk and pressed the intercom button. "Will you come

in for a moment please, Nurse?"

Then he winked at Farouche, and went out through the laboratory door.

Mr. Farouche moved after him and bolted the door so he wouldn't be disturbed too soon.

He sat at Dr. Brant's desk and smoothed down his wiry hair.

He leaned back, relaxed, smiling radiantly, waiting for the nurse. . . .

#### *Through Time And Space With Ferdinand Feghoot: XL*

IN 2631, FERDINAND FEGHOOT FOUND himself spaceshipwrecked on the fifth planet of Schimmelhorn III. The only other survivor was Dr. Jacqueline Cusp, the famous biologist, advocate of parthenogenesis, author of the popular work entitled *All Men Are Beasts*, and founder of a female movement which required its members to wear Mother Hubbards and full masks at all times.

In the wreck, their clothing had been almost completely burned off, but Feghoot, whose chivalry was proverbial, had salvaged part of the ship's cargo of cured hides at great risk to himself, and had fashioned robes for the two of them.

"We had no idea," he told his friend Robert Louis Stevenson on his next junket into the past, "that this planet was the home of the gnurrs, who devour fabrics, and leather, and even synthetics. That same night they descended upon us, and, without even disturbing us, ate up every one of the hides, including those we were wearing. At dawn I was wakened by the most hideous scream that ever I heard. The good doctor had found herself stark, staring naked!"

"It's an interesting story," commented Stevenson. "I might be able to use it if I could think of a title."

"Why not call it 'Dr. Jacqueline Missed Her Hide?'" suggested Ferdinand Feghoot.

—GRENDAL BRIARTON  
(with thanks to E. Nelson Bridwell)