

"Oh, G—!" we exclaimed, unpardonably profane, when we first saw the title of this story. "Not another Pact-With-The-Devil story! Mercy!" But Duty, to which all Science Fiction editors are notoriously slaves, called; we answered; read; were so taken by the story that we not only bought it on the spot (with some questionable moldores we keep on hand for such occasions) but ate our words—au gratin, and a little sprinkling of chives. Terry Carr now joins the many SF fans who have gone on (or descended) to professional SF writing. He says of his career to date: "Railway Express flunkey, jr.-jr.-jr. accountant in stocks and bonds, phone solicitor, encyclopedia salesman, market surveyor, bookmending assistant, and Documents Department and Special Project worker in University of California Library (sounds dull but is actually duller) . . ." If this sounds like book-jacket blurb stuff, good: Carr has just sold his first novel, and is working on two more in his Greenwich Village apartment. And now—How To Succeed In Hell Without Really Trying . . .

## WHO SUPS WITH THE DEVIL

*by Terry Carr*

"I'VE SEEN THROUGH YOUR little game, you know," said John Ellsworth Gaines.

"Ah," said the Devil, scratching primly behind his ear with the tip of his tail. "And how is that?"

"Contracts such as this," said

John Ellsworth Gaines, indicating the parchment spread before them on the table, "are not as binding as your stories have made them out to be."

"My stories?" said the Devil.

"Yes indeed, your stories," said



John Ellsworth Gaines, who was a short, red-haired man in his middle thirties. "You see, I've been reading up on this subject—compacts with the Devil and so forth." He inclined his head briefly to the dapper gentleman across the table from him.

"Ah," said the Devil. "A little basic research?"

"Quite right. You use the term facetiously, I realize, but it is valid. Basic research, the scientific method—what better way to deal with the Devil?"

"What better way indeed?" murmured His Satanic Majesty.

"So I have taken up scholasticism as a sideline this past year. And I've discovered some very interesting facts about you." John Ellsworth Gaines leaned forward in his chair, causing the light from the single table-lamp in the small room to move dark shadows across his ruddy face. "I have discovered, for instance, that your business dealings have not always been as profitable for you as I had at first thought."

"I've had my difficulties at times," the Devil admitted mildly.

"As a matter of fact," continued John Ellsworth Gaines, "for many centuries you had extremely few successful cases. Lost almost all, it seems, when it came time to collect the souls. Of course, most of the stories involved some sort of Divine Intervention, but I don't think it's necessary to assume that.

The people of the Middle Ages were, after all, quite in a rut as regarded their way of thinking."

"Ah," said the Devil. "I remember that."

"I believe," said John Ellsworth Gaines, "that you proved over and over again to be a poor student of law." (The Devil raised an eyebrow, but said nothing.) "In case after case you were defeated. In fact, not once, up until the time of Dr. Faust, can I find evidence of your having collected a soul for which you had bargained."

"Those were lean years," said the Devil.

"Lean years indeed," said John Ellsworth Gaines. "Here, let me show you something." He rose and went to a shelf of books, returning with a rather bedraggled volume of some age. He set this in front of his guest, opened it to a marked page, and standing behind him pointed over his shoulder at a particular passage. "This is James Russell Lowell, writing in 1882. See the passage here about you: 'One is tempted to ask, Were there no attorneys, then, in the place he came from, of whom he might have taken advice beforehand? On the whole, he had rather hard measure, and it is a wonder he did not throw up the business in disgust.'"

"Hmm," said the Devil.

John Ellsworth Gaines closed the book and returned it to his shelf. He waved a hand to indicate



the rest of his library. "There is more here—documented cases, trials of witches and sorcerers and the like. But Lowell sums up the matter quite clearly. It is obvious that you have proven yourself over and over again to be totally incompetent at law. No offense meant, of course—I'm merely stating the results of my research."

His Satanic Majesty waved a taloned hand in a mild gesture, and shrugged. "I wouldn't think of arguing the point," he said. "You're quite right."

"Thank you," said John Ellsworth Gaines. "Now, considering this, what am I to think of the stories prevalent in more recent years? Stories of your extreme cleverness and subtlety, of the way you have proven over and over again that your contracts are unbreakable."

"Perhaps I have changed?" suggested the Devil, with a dark smile touching his lips.

"I doubt it," said John Ellsworth Gaines. "Your whole psychological history has been one of stubborn immutability—you have far too much faith in your own abilities. You are, in a word, ego-centric."

"You may be right," said the Devil carelessly. "A little power is, after all, a dangerous thing—sometimes even for he who has it."

"Another of my studies has been psychology," said John Ellsworth Gaines. "Particularly, of course, as

applied to you. You are rather a classical type, you know . . . with interesting complications. Rejection of the father figure, of course—but with no mother to turn to. And the implications of sibling rivalry inherent in your continuing battle with the Son of God . . ."

"I don't think we need discuss that," said the Devil shortly.

"Still," said his host, "it would be fascinating to do a fullscale psychological study of you. Your sex-life, for instance . . ."

"It has been varied," said the Devil. "The witches were not the only ones, of course. And there are passions of which your wildest heretics had only the slightest hints."

John Ellsworth Gaines regarded him closely under the light, and at length shrugged. "It is perhaps beside the point. We were speaking of your psychology simply because I believe that you reject all but yourself. And in this you have limited yourself, so that I simply do not believe that suddenly, after millenia, you could have mastered a subject that was so obviously beyond you. It would require too deep an insight into relationships between people and the rights of others."

"That has certainly never been my strong point," the Devil admitted.

"But there *are* those stories which have circulated in recent



years," said the other. "Is it possible to assume that they are anything but propaganda? I think you have deliberately *caused* such stories to be circulated, in order to build up a reputation for yourself as an invincible opponent in contractual agreements."

The Devil frowned slightly. "I don't quite see your point. Why should I want to think of me as an invincible opponent? Surely that would forestall them from coming to me with their business."

"On the contrary," said John Ellsworth Gaines, "I don't think anything could cause a decline in your business; it seems to have a perennial attraction for mankind. We all crave wealth, women, success . . . and we are willing to go to great lengths in the pursuit of them." Even to the extent of selling our souls for them."

"I've noticed that," said the Devil. "Unfortunately, so many men sell their souls directly to women instead. That is a problem, you know." His surprisingly youthful face fell into the attitude of reverie. "Helen of Troy, for instance . . . She had a quite fascinating birthmark on her right breast . . ." After a moment he looked up. "I assure you that it was not her *face* that launched a thousand ships."

"Nevertheless," said John Ellsworth Gaines, "despite any such problems you may have had I'm sure you have never had to fear a

. . . shall we say . . . recession, in your line. Rather, the only thing you need fear is being beaten out of the souls for which you bargain. And it seems obvious, knowing your background, that your recent propagandizing is aimed at quenching all hope in the hearts of those with whom you do business, so that they will feel it useless to try to outwit you. Thus, you are saved the inconvenience of legal battles to collect your fee—contests which you have found from experience so often so against you."

"Truth to tell," smiled the Devil, "there hasn't been such a case in court for well over a century."

"Then you admit that what I have said is true!" said John Ellsworth Gaines, standing up and leaning over the table.

"A very great deal of it is true," said the Devil mildly, inserting a cigaret in his long holder. He struck a talon against the bottom of one cloven hoof and watched it flare into flame.

John Ellsworth Gaines placed the tip of his finger on the document on the table as the Devil lit his cigaret. "Have you read the fine print?" he asked.

"Yes, I have," said the Devil. "It seems quite acceptable to me. In fact, I have signed it already." He stood up, exhaling a stream of smoke smelling faintly of both sulfur and menthol. "And now," he said, "will you sign? This has real-



ly been very diverting, but as you say, there is no recession in my business, and I'm afraid I have other appointments."

"You are willing to make the contract, in spite of the fact that I know all that I have told you?" said John Ellsworth Gaines.

The Devil shrugged. "My services cost me little inconvenience. At any rate, I've already signed. Now—will you?"

John Ellsworth Gaines hesitated, and the Devil smiled.

"Mr. Gaines," he said, "you drew up that document yourself, and you have just spent the better part of an hour bragging to me of your discoveries about me—yet still you hesitate. Why is this?" His eyes narrowed and his lips drew back in what might have been a half-smile. "Could it be that you have merely summoned me in order to tell me of your discoveries, with no intentions of consummating any bargain? Perhaps you thought I would be afraid to sign after finding out that you knew my secret. But as I say, my services are quite easy for me to perform. Now, have you enough conviction to sign?"

John Ellsworth Gaines frowned. He turned and paced the small room twice; then he looked directly at his guest. "You are trying to frighten me," he said.

"And are you frightened, Mr. Gaines?" said the Devil, extending a sharp quill to him.

There was only the slightest hint of any further indecision, and then he said, "No!"—and taking the quill he jabbed himself (rather clumsily) in the wrist and signed his name with bold strokes on the parchment.

"Thank you very much," said the Devil, bowing. "Now, as I say, I must be off to another appointment."

John Ellsworth Gaines laughed, a trifle recklessly, his eyes narrowed and his head cocked. "I don't think you'll find your business to have been very profitable in my case," he said boldly. "You see, in addition to my other studies, I have spent the last fifteen years of my life studying and practicing law. I have a quite thorough knowledge of the subject, I assure you."

The Devil looked intently at him over his shoulder. "I am quite aware of that," he said. "As a matter of fact, your references are overwhelming—I don't see how I could afford to get along without your services as, ah, Devil's Advocate. You have spent nearly a lifetime studying my problems, and seem to have an incisive insight into them. Under the circumstances, I shall make sure you are on my side when the time comes."

John Ellsworth Gaines' head jerked up. "But you can't—"

"Oh, I can, I can," smiled the Devil. "I assure you, in special cases I am simply prepared to



cheat." The flames of Hell rose about him as he stood in the middle of the room, his gaze transfixing his client. "Yes, quite prepared," he murmured as the flames

roared up and then disappeared.

John Ellsworth Gaines' vision was clouded by the after-image of those flames for many long minutes.



## 1962 HUGO AWARDS NOMINATION BLANK

20th World Science Fiction Convention

P.O. Box 4864

Chicago 80, Illinois

Please enter my nominations in the following categories. I feel this is the best science fiction *published during 1961* and should be considered for recognition at the Annual Hugo Awards Banquet on September 2.

1. Novel .....
2. Short Fiction .....
3. Dramatic Presentation .....
4. Professional Artist .....
5. Professional Magazine .....
6. Amateur Magazine .....

To become a valid nomination, this blank must be signed with name and address and postmarked by midnight April 20. Only Convention members will receive a voting ballot, distributed June 5 with the 4th issue of the Progress Report; a \$2.00 membership fee, payable to George W. Price, Treasurer, will insure your vote and enter your subscription for the Progress Reports.

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... Zone ..... State .....

I already hold convention membership #.....

F5

CHICON III • Pick-Congress Hotel • Chicago • Aug. 31—Sept. 3