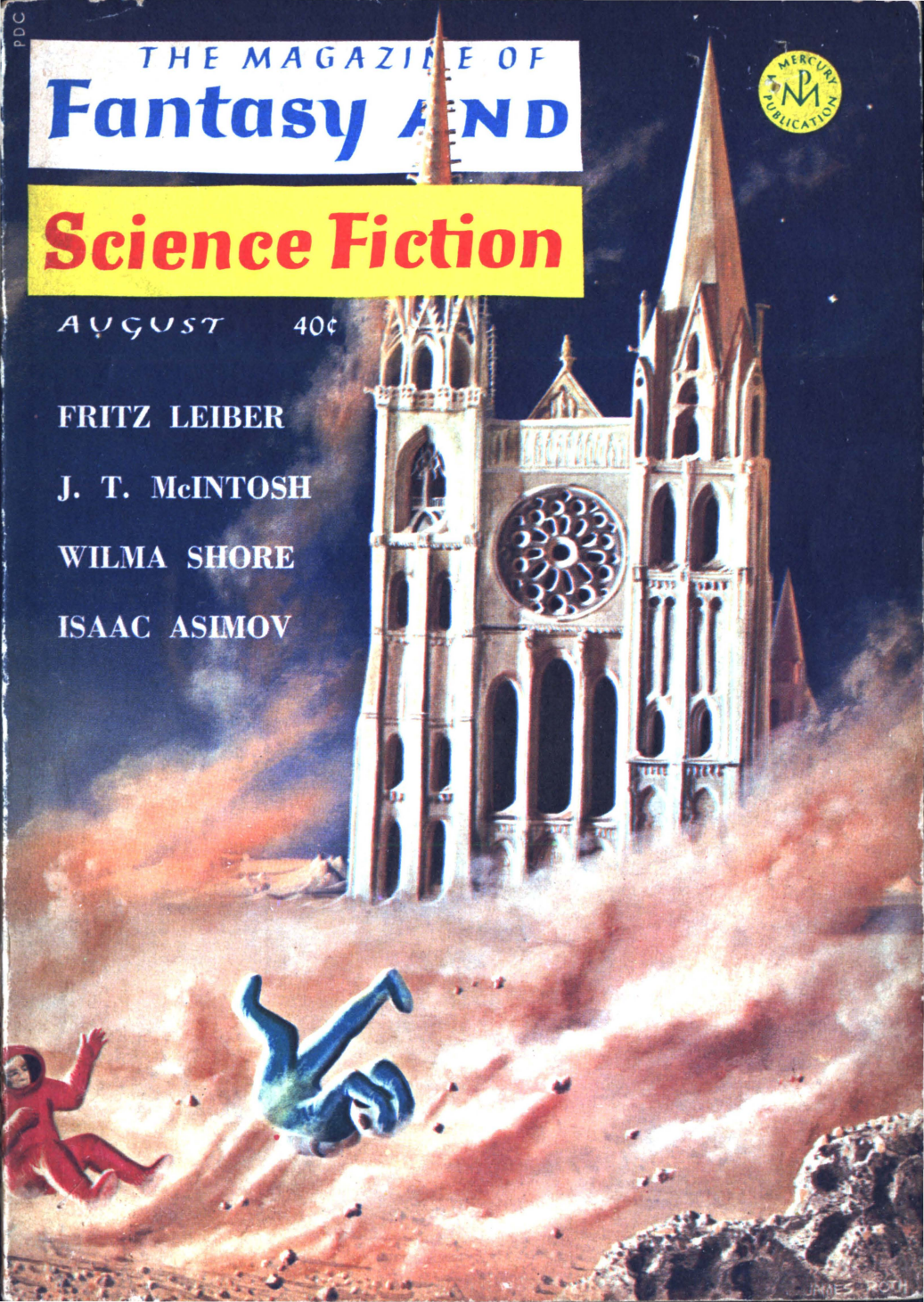
THE MAGAZINE OF
Fantasy AND
Science Fiction
AUGUST 40¢
FRITZ LEIBER
J. T. McINTOSH
WILMA SHORE
ISAAC ASIMOV
MERCURY PUBLICATION
JAMES ROTH

Fantasy and Science Fiction

AUGUST *Including Venture Science Fiction*

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Cover by James Roth (illustrating "When The Change-Winds Blow")

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EDITORIAL

The wife of one of our authors, recently pressed to reveal what was distressing her handsome features, said as follows, "I happened to be in Philadelphia the other day and I thought I'd just drop by at an auction there to pick up a few astrolabes. There were eleven Persian ones up for sale and, wouldn't you know it, one man bid them all in. I wanted to ask him if he'd sell me just one, at least, but he hurried out so fast that I didn't have a chance." There are several curious features in her account—for example, no one "happens" to be in Philadelphia, ever. For another, note the casual usage of *a few* astrolabes. However, mysterious as the lady's motives may be (and, gallantly, we did not ask), what shall we say of those of the *inconnu* who secured her intended treasures and then departed in haste? Why on earth—or anywhere else—should anyone who has just bought eleven Persian astrolabes hurry away? Mere collectors do not hurry. No . . . Only one solution presents itself. Somewhere, somewhere, eleven ships—galleons, caravels, carracks, dhows, junks—which disdained not only radar and sextant but even astrolabes of other provenance lay restlessly at anchor waiting for their navigation instruments to arrive. Where this roadstead may be, on the foam of what perilous seas in what faërie lands forlorn, we are not prepared to say. A listing of the ports the fleet intends to make might be of interest . . . Calicut, Coromandel, Cambulac perhaps. Zimbabwe, Zipangu, and Zind . . . Is Sir John de Mandeville on board of one of the craft of it, and a M. Marco Polo? What cargo do they carry and what do they plan to adventure for in exchange? Oliphants' teeth, unicorn, powder-of-gold? Faulcons out of Greenland and adamants and lodestones? Speculation, though thus far in vain, is not without interest. It is all really very curious. Other editors perhaps do not have these problems. But we are not sure we would change them for the ones they do have.

—Avram Davidson

One dull, steam-heated winter day this story blew into our office like a breath of fresh, spring air; and we determined to share it with you.

A BULLETIN FROM THE TRUSTEES OF THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED RESEARCH AT MARMOUTH, MASS.

by Wilma Shore

THE FOLLOWING TRANSCRIPT was made from a roll of recording tape found in the laboratories of Dr. Edwin Gerber at the Institute for Advanced Research in Marmouth, Mass., two months after his death, among 67 such tapes containing notes, lectures, and comments upon work in progress.

Although internal evidence suggests that this tape was recorded more than a year before Dr. Gerber died, neither study of his notes nor inquiry among his colleagues have elicited any corroborative data. Grants of the Institute are unconditional and recipients may publish or withhold the results of their investigations; nevertheless, in view of the nature and significance of the experiment purportedly recorded on the tape in question, the Trustees and staff are unable to explain Dr. Gerber's reticence.

Though in no way vouching for its authenticity, the Institute is releasing this transcript with a sense of its own responsibility toward the scientific community and the hope that it may recall to those physicists with whom Dr. Gerber was in correspondence some reference, however oblique, to the theoretical or technical premises of this experiment.

Several Institute members consider the first recorded voice that of Dr. Gerber but, lacking positive

identification, we have preferred to designate the voices arbitrarily as "Q" and "A". The transcribed section represents approximately the last half of the tape, the first half, presumably consisting of Dr. Gerber's prefatory and explanatory comments, being hopelessly distorted, possibly by interference from equipment utilized by Dr. Gerber. Unintelligible or inaudible speeches are indicated by the ellipsis (. . .).

(A HIGH, WHINING SOUND)

Q. . . . take a chance . . . up to seventy billion, but . . . knows? . . . maybe the vertical magnetic . . . eighty billion? . . . another four seconds . . .

(THE WHINING SOUND INCREASES)

Q. . . . keep it down . . . conserve the . . .

(FIVE SHARP REPORTS, IRREGULARLY SPACED. THE WHINING SOUND DIMINISHES)

Q. . . . and now . . . highly unlikely, but . . . Yes! *Yes!* . . . *works!* . . . a *man* . . . *did* it! . . . all right, sir? . . . first person ever to . . . feet out, easy, easy . . . Einstein? . . . through the time barrier . . . over here, sir? . . . microphone . . . name?

A. . . . elman.

Q. Mr. Harry Wencelman, brought back from the year two thousand and . . .

A. . . . go of my arm.

Q. . . . frightened, Mr. Wencelman?

A. I was almost asleep and suddenly . . . figured it was some kind of a rib.

Q. Tell me . . . really believe . . . Twentieth century?

A. It was the middle of the night. I thought, why didn't they wait till Sunday?

Q. How does it feel to go back a hundred—

A. I feel all right. The only thing, my arm, here—

Q. Good! Because I've got a lot of—

A. —very glad to—

Q. —about the next century—

A. Next century! How'm I supposed—

Q. No, no. Next for *us. Last,* for you.

A. Oh. I'm a little turned around.

Q. Well, after a trip like that!

A. Oh! I'm used to traveling. But I've always had some trouble with this arm.

Q. Now, what do you consider the greatest events of your lifetime? That would be—how old are you, Mr. Wencelman?

A. How old would you think?

Q. Forty-five? Or has medical science—

A. Forty-seven.

Q. Well. Now, within your lifetime—

A. All right. Let's see. I was born just outside of Chicago, and

when I was ten we moved to Detroit. I went to school, high school and college, then I went with Federated Industries, where I am now, and when I was making a decent living—

Q. Mr. Wencelman—

A. —decent for *those* days, anyhow—I got married. My wife is a year younger. Than I am. We have three children, two boys and a girl.

Q. Thank you. Now, while all this was going on—

A. How do you mean, going on? We had our little problems like any marriage, but—

Q. No, no. In the world generally.

A. Oh. Quite a good bit.

Q. The most important.

A. Well, to my way of thinking, people are getting more selfish. There's too much selfishness in the world. Why we have all these wars.

Q. Where?

A. Africa. Asia. All over.

Q. America?

A. America had the Revolution, Civil War, World Wars. Didn't you get that in school? It must have been in your time—we just had the Centenary. Fireworks. Fellow I know, George Marsh, lost his middle finger. He has to push down his pipe tobacco with his left hand.

Q. Well, actually, Mr. Wencelman, if you could tell about the *later* conflicts—

A. I used to follow all that very closely. But those are the ones get heart attacks, that worry about every little trouble in every little country. What's the use? Nothing you can *do*. Of course, I have a pretty good *general* idea of the situation.

Q. Is the U.N. still in existence?

A. Of course. No, wait. U.N. I thought you said U.S.

Q. The U.N. is not in existence?

A. Now wait a minute. I didn't say is not. I was just reading about it, but whether it was about *now* or *then*—Well, I'm not positive.

Q. Maybe if you stop and think for a minute.

A. Yes, but you keep firing questions at me.

Q. Excuse me, Mr. Wencelman. Naturally I'm pretty excited. And our time is limited. Now, could you just, in your own words, give me the political picture—

A. My own words? Well, then, I have to say, the last election was pretty dirty.

Q. When was that?

A. Last Election Day.

Q. Which was—

A. Some time in the last four years, roughly.

Q. Go on.

A. It was common knowledge. They bought the election.

Q. The winning candidates.

A. Well, naturally.

Q. Who were they?

A. *All* of them?

Q. What was it, a presidential election?

A. Yes. Well, president or governor, a big election. I was out of town, as it happened. I had a terrible sore throat, fever over 101. Then when it returned to normal I just felt rotten. My wife thought we should go South.

Q. Who's President?

A. President?

Q. What's his *name*?

A. You know, you drove it right out of my mind.

Q. Well. Whenever it comes to you. Now, you live in Detroit?

A. Since I was ten. Ten and a half, really.

Q. Who's your mayor?

A. Of Detroit?

Q. Yes.

A. Not Harvey. He *was* Mayor. Big, heavy-set fellow.

Q. Is the present mayor a Republican?

A. Republican?

Q. Or a Democrat?

A. Or a Democrat. Now, it's one or the other. Six years ago it was a Republican, because I bet Len Sammis a hat. I figured five, six dollars. He sent me a bill for twenty-two fifty. Twenty-two eighty, with the tax.

Q. Well, can you tell me—

A. I frankly don't keep up with politics the way I used to. It's too crooked. Then anyhow the last few years I took up Receba.

Q. Receba? That some religious—

A. You don't know Receba? Receba. You play with a poker deck.

Q. Oh. Very good. Now, what other new inventions—

A. Receba's a game, not an invention. But there *was* one thing last year. I got one as soon as it hit the market. You smoke a pipe? It's for cleaning the *bowl*—

Q. What's new in industry? Atomic energy?

A. Oh, there've been enormous changes. Well, now, let me think how I can explain.

Q. What about your own work? Federated Industries? That where you said you worked?

A. That's where I *do* work.

Q. Fine! What exactly do you do?

A. Well, when the invoices go through the accounting department—

Q. It's a manufacturing firm?

A. You kidding? I don't think there's a pound of steel in the country wasn't processed by F.I. equipment.

Q. What's the nature of the process?

A. That's in the engineering department. They handle all that in Engineering. And Patents.

Q. Well, there must be a lot of discoveries in other fields.

A. It's hard to keep up. There was some big surgical—surgical? Or medical. It was in all the papers, everyone was talking about it. Of course, I keep in pretty good

shape myself. A few years ago I had this sore throat—

Q. What about the way people live? Their recreations, what they eat?

A. Well—

Q. For example, what do you eat for dinner?

A. Whatever my wife gives me.

Q. Well, *that* hasn't changed! What does she give you?

A. What I like, mostly. I can't complain.

Q. Well, nowadays food production is on our minds, with the population explosion—

A. The *what*? When was that?

Q. Populations expanding. More children born—

A. We have three. Two boys—

Q. I'm referring to other parts of the world.

A. We plan to travel later on. Right now I'm kind of tied down.

Q. So anything you can tell about food preservation, transportation, new sources of food supply—

A. Well, *there*, you picked a hard question for me to answer. I don't go in the kitchen. She doesn't like me messing around in the kitchen.

Q. Interesting garment you're wearing. What's it called?

A. This? Why, that's my—my jacket. And this here, this is my trousers.

Q. Interesting. What's the fabric? What's it made out of?

A. Why, this is—let me look. Well, it's either wool, or—My wife buys most of my clothes. One thing I do know, it *binds* a little. In the—

Q. How about your house? Where you live.

A. We've been in the same house ever since we're married. I bought wisely, it was a wise choice, and I've never regretted it. My wife neither.

Q. You're located in the city? Suburbs? How do you get to work?

A. I catch the East express. I only have one change. It's about a nineteen minute ride.

Q. On what?

A. The East express.

Q. I mean, does it go through the air?

A. How'd you *think* it went? On the ground?

Q. Well, but, is it a plane? A jet? You still have jet planes?

A. Only for locals. I take the express.

Q. And what is that?

A. I *told* you. The East express. Leaves 7:39, 7:52 and 8:16. Then not till 9:48. Seems crazy, bring a man back all these years and then not listen when he tells you.

Q. Well, you've given me so much interesting detail. Hard to take it all in. About the construction of this—express?

A. The seats are too close together. Your legs—

Q. And the over-all shape of the thing?

A. How do you mean?

Q. How is it shaped? How would you describe it?

A. Well, as a general rule, I just see the back end. I get in the left rear door, then when I go to change I'm right there at the local.

Q. What keeps it up?

A. Why, the machinery.

Q. It burns fuel?

A. Well, of course it does.

Q. You're being very helpful, Mr. Wencelman. Now, suppose you tell me what kind of fuel?

A. They keep saying they're going to invent something without fuel, but I'll believe it when I see it. And in the meantime, every year they raise the fare. *Some*one's cleaning up.

Q. A nuclear fuel, Mr. Wencelman? Can you tell me that?

A. I can tell you anything you want to know, just so you phrase your questions—so you *phrase* your questions, see what I mean? So I can understand them.

Q. Well, then, is this fuel a *nuclear* fuel?

A. Now, you know, I haven't been into all this since high school. If I had a little notice, instead of *grabbing* me in the middle of the *night*—

Q. You're doing very well. Now, about the express—

A. But no matter what they charge, the service is rotten. Last night it was so jammed, when I went to change, the guard gave me a push, I fell against the—

Q. Where do you change?

A. Third stop.

Q. Yes but—What's the name of the station?

A. East Junction. So I said—

Q. Where is that? What state? Do you still call them states?

A. Call what states?

Q. Or is there some other geographical division?

A. He said, "Why don't you put down your paper and look where—

Q. Paper? A daily paper?

A. The Report. I guess it's daily. I get it every morning. At the station.

Q. Good! Good! Now, Mr. Wencelman, what I'd like you to do, if you would just tell me what you read in yesterday's paper. Would you do that?

A. Well, to start with—

Q. One second. Before you begin—exactly what was yesterday's date?

A. February 23rd, 2061.

Q. February 23rd, 2061. All right, go ahead.

A. Well, the word to break up into little words was LIQUEFY. That means, to make into a liquid condition.

Q. Go on.

A. The Prairie Dogs won 64-35 over the Cayugas. Hamill by a knockout in the eighth. Lucky for him, because Ortega took every round but the—

Q. Yes. Go on.

A. The veterinary column, some woman had a turtle—

Q. Now wait. Mr. Wencelman. Let me ask you this. Did you look at the first page?

A. Of course.

Q. All right, I want you to close your eyes and think back to yesterday's paper, the first page. See if you can picture it in your mind.

A. Yes.

Q. Yes? Now, up near the top, over on the right—

A. The lead story.

Q. Did you read it? The lead?

A. Well, a person buys a paper—

Q. And you remember it?

A. Not word for word.

Q. Never mind. What was the headline?

A. Sam and Trig meet, vow lasting truce.

Q. Sam? *Uncle* Sam?

A. Sam Prentiss, the singer. And his wife, Trig Slade, supposed to be this ideal marriage, but last spring she started playing around with Hop Parker. Sam took the kids. He acted on impulse, but I think he did the right thing. Of course, it's trivial, really, but my wife eats up all that stuff.

Q. Mr. Wencelman. Mr. Wencelman, listen. What else was on the front page?

A. Cloudy and seasonable, a high in the low thirties. I believe the winters— What's the matter?

Q. Time's up. Have to get you back. Just step over—

A. What's the hurry? My night's sleep is shot anyway.

Q. It's the rotation of the earth —don't want to take chances. This is a new operation.

A. Well, you're doing a great job. I'm certainly going to spread the word. Just one thing I'm not quite clear on, and that is, how you came to—how you picked me.

Q. Pure luck, Mr. Wencelman. Now—

A. . . . say *that* again. Ever stop to think who you might have gotten? A farmer, some kid? Maybe—even a foreigner.

Q. Now. Here we go.

A. . . . piece of *practical* advice? Fix this arm thing, here . . . wouldn't care except I've always had some trouble . . .

(SIX SHARP REPORTS, AS BEFORE. A LOUD WHINING, AS BEFORE, POSSIBLY DUE TO INTERFERENCE)

Joanna Russ says of her latest story, "The title is from the end of H. P. Lovecraft's Pickman's Model, *which is about an artist who paints dreadful pictures of ghouls. The narrator, who visits Pickman's secret studio, happens to be looking at one of the snapshots Pickman has tacked to the wall (Pickman says he takes snapshots of local places to use as backgrounds for his imaginary ghouls) when a distracting incident occurs, and the narrator vacantly crumples the snapshot into his pocket. Later, he takes it out again and sees that the snapshot* includes *the figure of the ghoul whose picture Pickman has been painting, that it is in fact a photograph from life, and that Pickman's horrid subject is real. I used the title because Irvin Rubin is just the sort of nut you meet sometimes and yet his life is real and his tragedy is real. Moreover, you certainly would never think that his imaginings might turn out to be real, or that a sort of vacuum in such a soul might invite something corresponding to it, from the outside—? But Irv's girl is real (more of the* Harper's Bazaar *type of model)! The whole fantastic story is quite literally a 'photograph from life.'"*

"I Had Vacantly Crumpled It Into My Pocket . . . But by God, Eliot, *it was a photograph from life!*"

by Joanna Russ

IN AN ANCIENT ROOMING HOUSE in New York, where the dirt covered the molded plaster ceilings, where the creak of the stairs at night echoed like pistol shots in the dark, amid the rickety splendors of peeling red velvet wallpaper and indescribably varnished furniture, Irvin Rubin lived. He was a bookkeeper in a cheap publishing house: *Fantasy Press;* he worked there for the discounts. He told this story to a woman in the office, and she told it to me, one winter morning in a cafeteria with steam that covered the

plate-glass windows running down in clear patches that displayed nothing at all, so distorted were they, but drops and streaks of the scene outside. Irvin Rubin, who never ate without a book propped up in front of his plate, his pale eyes fixed on it, his cheeks rhythmically bulging, and his fork blindly hunting in front of him, took all his meals in cafeterias. Then he read in his room. He had nothing in particular to do. He knew nobody. The woman who worked with him had tried to engage him in conversation, but fruitlessly, for Irv had nothing to say except shrill denunciations of the latest writers put out by Fantasy Press ("he called them a bunch of hacks" she said) or complaints about his desk, or his office-mates, or his salary, for on other topics he had no opinion at all, but one morning he came over to her desk and stood with his hands behind his back, red, sweating, and trying visibly to keep calm.

"Miss Kramer," he said to her, "Where would you take a girl?"

"Goodness! do you have a girl?" she said lightly. He looked a little dazed.

"Where would you take a girl?" he repeated plaintively, apparently twisting his hands behind his back; then he said, "Where would you take *a real lady,* Miss Kramer?"

"I don't know," said she, "I don't know any," and Irvin—vastly relieved—dropped into the seat next her desk. "Neither do I," he said simply. At this point (she told me) he smiled and June Kramer saw with something like dismay that for an instant his face became distinctly human, rather young (he was twenty-eight), and even genuinely sweet. He frowned and it vanished.

"I certainly wouldn't ask *anybody else,*" he said significantly, "I wouldn't ask anybody else in this joint." He shifted from foot to foot. He frowned again. "Do you think she'd like to read something?"

"Well—" said Miss Kramer, "I don't know—"

"Do you think she'd like to come to my place?" he burst out.

"Not right away," she said, alarmed. He looked at the floor.

"Perhaps you should go for a walk," said Miss Kramer cautiously, "Or—or maybe she would like to go to the movies. Maybe you could see" (here Irv, looking at his feet, muttered "it's all trash anyway") "Well, maybe you could see—" but before she could finish her sentence, Irv started violently and then walked jerkily away—scuttled, rather. He had seen the supervisor coming.

"How's the nut?" said the supervisor in a whisper to June Kramer, who looked at him over her glasses, set her lips severely, and said nothing.

It turned out that Irv had met his girl near Central Park, walking two dachshunds on a leash, though neither June Kramer nor I could see what such a girl would want with him. Perhaps she was not a girl exactly, and perhaps not exactly a lady either, for although he always described her as a compound of a "real lady" and a "glamor girl" with "that husky sort of whisper, Miss Kramer" like you-know-who in the movies, Irv Rubin's girl friend always seemed to me like the women drowned passively in mink or sable in the advertisement sketches—lost, lifeless, betrayed, undoubtedly kept by some rich sadist—at least that's how they strike me. He had caught glimpses of her many days before he actually met her, for Irv's furnished room was located in the decaying blocks near the rich section of Central Park West, and he had followed her pure profile down many side-streets and even into the Park, catching glimpses of her black coat and bobbing, straining double dogs in unlikely places—once, I believe, the supermarket.

Irv loved his girl. He dwelt on her obsessively with Miss Kramer, in a way that seemed new to him, as if he were awed, almost (said June Kramer) as if he were frightened by her superiority, by her elegance, by her fashion-model paleness, and most of all by the silence with which she tolerated him, by the way she listened to him as if he had a right to talk to her, to take her on walks, and to tell her (with spiritualized earnestness) that Howard Phillips Lovecraft was the greatest writer in the world.

He had met her, he told June Kramer, on Central Park West, on a cold, blue, brilliantly sunny Sunday afternoon, when every tree in the Park was coated with ice and icicles hung from the eaves of the buildings along the street. Sundays were bad days for Irv; the bookstores were shut. (He gave Miss Kramer a recital of all the places he had been to on the last nine or ten Sundays; I forget most of them, but he went three times to the zoo and once rode up and down Fifth Avenue in a bus, though he said looking at expensive things in windows "was as nothing compared with the Imagination;" his own clothes were so old and in such bad repair that people noticed him in the street —at any rate, it was a pitiable catalogue.) He had seen the girl sitting on a park bench, reading a book, with her twin dachshunds nosing about in the snow in front of her, and he had crossed the street with his heart beating violently, knowing that he must speak to her. Luckily the book she was reading was by his favorite author. His voice cracking horribly, he had managed to excuse himself and inform her that the edi-

tion she was reading was not as complete as the one of 193-, and "pardon me, but it has everything; I got that book; it's much better; do you mind if I sit down next to you?"

No, she didn't mind. She listened to him, her thin, handsome face pale and composed, giving every now and then a little jerk to the leashes of the dachshunds who —thus caught up rather drily in their explorations—whimpered a little. ("She got real leather gloves," he told Miss Kramer, "black ones.") What she told him I do not know, for he couldn't remember it, but whatever it was (in her hoarse, husky whisper) it sounded to him like the assurance that he was the most intelligent man she ever met, that she too thought the books of H. P. Lovecraft of the utmost importance ("He's a real writer" Irv used to say) and she thought she would like *very much* to take a walk with him. He told all this to Miss Kramer. He told of their walk through the park, amidst icicles falling to the ground with a *plink!* and everything shiveringly, blindingly bright under the sun—the mica in the rocks, the blue sky, the shriveled leaves hanging infrequently from the trees, the discolorations of the snow where mud, or dogs—or her dogs—stained the white. All the time his radiant companion (she was a little taller than he) walked beside him, with her black coat blossoming into a huge, enveloping collar that half hid her face, with her black elegance, her black stockings, and crowning all a hat —but not a blue hat, a hat almost violet, a hat the color of twilit winter skies where the yellows and the greens and the hot, smoky pinks riot so gorgeously in the west while all the time you are freezing to death. He really made it come across. The hat she wore was made of that silky, iridescent, fashionable stuff, "and get this!" (he said) "get this, Miss Kramer, that hat is the *exact same color as her eyes!*"

Alas, poor Irvin Rubin! Miss Kramer thought, but his lady did not get tired of Irvin Rubin. They went to the movies. They went on walks. They went to bookstores. I saw them myself, once, from a distance. And every evening Irv's girl waved goodbye (though it is impossible to think of her doing anything even that vigorous) and walked into the Park, into the blue with her blue eyes shining like stars. She lived on the fashionable east side. Late one Saturday afternoon Irvin knocked on Miss Kramer's apartment door in the Stuyvesant Town project, and then stood there miserably with his hands balled in his jacket pockets while she fumbled with the latch. She had women friends in for bridge, who were playing cards in the living room.

"Miss Kramer!" said Irv breathlessly, "You just got to help me!"

"Well—well, come in," said she, sensing uneasily that her guests had stopped talking and were looking at Irvin in surprise. "Come into the kitchen. Just for a moment." He followed her like some ungainly creature in a fairy tale, only stopping to remark in surprise "Gee, you're all dressed up," (her hair was newly set and she wore a suit), but otherwise taking no notice of his surroundings, not even the extreme tininess of the little kitchenette when the two of them had crowded into it.

"Now what is it, Irvin?" said Miss Kramer somewhat sharply, for she was thinking of her guests. She even made a mental note of the number of clean coffee cups left on top of the refrigerator. He looked vacantly round, his mouth open, his hands still in his pockets, one side of the ancient plush collar of his jacket turned up by mistake.

"Miss Kramer—" he faltered "Miss Kramer—please—you got to help me!"

"Yes, what about, Irvin?" said she.

"Miss Kramer, she's coming up to my place tonight. She's coming up to see me." ("Really!" thought June Kramer, "What's so awful about that?") He dropped his gaze. "What I mean, Miss Kramer—I mean—" (he breathed heavily) "I don't want her to think—" and here he lifted his head suddenly and cried out, *"Please, Miss Kramer, you come too!"*

"I?" said June, thinking of her guests.

"Yes, please!" cried Irv, "Please! I want—I mean—" and with a sort of shuddering sob, he burst out "I told her there would be people there!" He turned his back on her and doggedly faced the refrigerator, rubbing his sleeve back and forth across his nose.

"Irvin, don't you think that was wrong?" said she. No answer. "Irvin," she said gently, "I think that if this girl likes you, you don't have to invent things that aren't true and if she doesn't really like you, well, she's going to find out what you're really like sooner or later. Now don't you think it would have been better to have told the truth? Don't you?"

"I don't know," muttered Irvin. He turned around. He looked at June Kramer silently, doggedly, the tears standing in his eyes, those pale-blue, protuberant eyes that should have been nearsighted but were not, alas, too nearsighted to see silent, passive charmers sitting on park benches across Central Park West.

"Oh all right," said June Kramer, "All right, Irvin," and she abandoned her friends, her cards, her little party, to make Irvin's girl think Irvin had friends.

"That'll look respectable, Miss

Kramer, thank you," said he, and then he added—with a cunning so foreign to him that it was shocking—"She'll be impressed by you, Miss Kramer; you look so nice."

So Miss Kramer put on her coat with the rabbit's fur collar (to look nice) and they went to Irvin's boarding house, first on a bus that churned the slush in the roads, grinding and grinding; and then in a subway where the platform was puddled with melted snow—but no weather, bad or good, ever drew a comment from Irvin Rubin.

It was cold in the hallway of his boarding house, so deadly cold that you might fancy you saw the walls sweating, a kind of still, damp, petrified cold as of twenty winters back. The naked radiator in Irvin's room was cold. He took off his jacket and sat down on the ancient four-poster—the room held only that, an armchair, a dresser, and a green curtain across a sort of closet-alcove at the back—in nothing but his shirtsleeves. June Kramer shivered.

"Aren't you cold, Irvin?" she said. He said nothing. He was staring at the opposite wall. He roused himself, gave a sort of little shake, said "She'll come soon, thank you Miss Kramer" and relapsed into a stupor. It had begun to snow outside, as June saw by pushing aside the plastic curtains. She let them fall. She walked past Irvin's bed—the bedspread was faded pink—past the dresser whose top held a brush, a comb, and a toothbrush, and whose mirror (set in romantic curlicues) was spotted and peeling, so that the room itself seemed to disappear behind clouds of ghostly shapes.

"This could be quite a nice room if you fixed it up, Irvin," she said brightly. He said nothing. She saw that he had gotten a book from somewhere and was reading; so she walked about the room again, glancing at the armchair, the bookshelf under the single window, and the bridge lamp under which Irvin sat. Shoes protruded from under the green curtain. Miss Kramer sat down in the armchair, beginning to feel the cold, and noticed that Irvin had pinned a snapshot on the wall next to it, in the least accessible part of the room, a photograph apparently taken many years ago, of a boy standing with a dog under a tree. It was the only picture in the room.

"Is that you, Irvin?" said Miss Kramer and Irvin (after a pause in which his eyes stopped moving over the page of his book) nodded without looking up. Miss Kramer sat for a moment, then got up and walked over to the bookcase (it was full of Fantasy Press books), again parted the plastic curtains, again looked out into the snow (it was beginning to stick to the

cleared sidewalk and the streetlight), again contemplated the photograph, whose faded sepia seemed to have reduced the tree to a piece of painted canvas, and finally said:

"Irvin Rubin, are you *sure* this girl is coming tonight?" This question had a surprising effect on him; hastily slamming down his book, he jumped to his feet with both mouth and eyes open, his face working.

"Oh, please—" he stammered, "Oh, please—"

"Oh, I'm sure she's coming," said June, "But is she coming *tonight?* Are you sure you didn't get mixed up about the time? I don't mean to suggest—" but here he ran over to the alarm clock that stood on the floor by the other side of the bed and shook it; he listened to it; he tried to explain something to her, stuttering so that he frightened her.

"That's all right!" she cried, "That's all right!" and Irvin Rubin, his chest heaving, stood still, subsided, wiped his eyes with his hand, shuffled back to the near side of the bed where—oh, wonderful Rubin!—he recommenced reading his book. She thought of asking him to put it away, but she was afraid of him, and afraid too of the silence of the room which seemed to warn against being broken. I think she was afraid to move. It was not only the human desolation of that room, but the somehow terrifying vision it gave her of a soul that could live in such a room and not know it was desolate, the suggestion that this bleak prose might pass—by a kind of reaction—into an even more dreadful poetry. June Kramer began to wonder about Irv's girl. It occurred to her with agonizing vividness the number of evenings Irvin had come home to that awful room, had come home and pulled out a book and peopled that room with heaven knows what; and then gone to bed, and got up, and gone to work, and eaten and come home and pulled out a book again until it was time to lie in bed for eight long hours (Irvin was a punctual sleeper), dreaming dreams that however weird—and this was less disturbing—were at least more like the lives led by others in their dreams. But now he read. She almost fancied she saw a kind of cold mist rise from the page. At last (she was stiff with sitting tightly on the horsehair seat of the armchair) Miss Kramer struggled to her feet and said in a voice that sounded weak and feeble in her own ears:

"I'm afraid I have to go, Irvin, I really can't stay any longer." She saw that he had closed his book and was staring at her with his brow wrinkled. The light from the overhead fixture gave him an odd look.

"Don't go, Miss Kramer," he said in a low voice.

"I'm sure your young lady meant next week," said June desperately, "Or tomorrow. Yes, she'll come tomorrow—"

"Please! Please!" cried Irv, "Please!"

"I'm sorry, but I have to go," said June, "I have to," and quite unreasonably terrified, she turned and rattled open the latch of the door, letting in at once a draught of that cold, dead, still air from the hall. All at once she knew perfectly well what she had been comparing it to all this time, and as she dove downstairs followed by a distraught Irvin Rubin, crying breathlessly about his girl and this the first social event of his life, she saw before her only the open grave into which she had stared some forty years before, when as a small child she had been forced to attend the funeral of her youngest sister. In the street she ran away from him, clutching her purse to her side, but as she reached the corner and slowed down, something—she never knew exactly what—made her stop and turn around.

Irv's girl had come. She was standing next to him on the steps. June Kramer saw clearly the coat and hat Irvin had described. She could even make out the black leather gloves and the black stockings. Although she could hardly see Irvin himself in the light from the street lamp, she saw every feature of the girl's pale, powdered face as if it had been drawn: the thin eyebrows, the expressionless profile like a sketch on paper, and most clearly of all, those wonderful, wonderful violet eyes—"she got such *pretty* eyes," Irvin used to say. "She's here, Miss Kramer, she's here!" Irvin was shouting cheerfully, beaming down, coatless, at his pale, real lady, when a gust of wind momently froze the street. Irvin's shirt flapped, Miss Kramer's coat performed a violent dance about her calves, but the strange lady's black envelope did not stir, nor did her black scarf, but hung down in carved folds as if it had been made of stone, as still as her hands, as cold as her face and as dead as her expression, which seemed in its pale luminosity to be saying to June Kramer (with a spark of hatred) *I dare you* . . .

But here Miss Kramer, although she knew she was imagining too much, gave way to cowardice and ran, ran, ran, gasping, until she had reached the subway station and could—burying her face in her handkerchief—give way to tears.

After that Irv was not well. He missed days. He came late to work. When she spoke to him he answered her shrilly, denouncing the office, the people, the books, the world, everyone. It was impossible to talk to him. Three days before he finally disappeared he cornered June in the stock-

room and cried out to her, with an air of pride mixed with defiance:

"Miss Kramer, I'm going to get married! My girl is going to marry me!"

She said congratulations.

"We're going away, to stay at her folks' place," he said, "but don't you tell anybody, Miss Kramer; I wouldn't want any of those —those *shrimps* who work in this office to know about it! They're just cowards, they're stupid, they don't know anything. They don't know anything about literature! They don't know *anything!*"

"Irvin, please—" said Miss Kramer, alarmed and embarrassed.

"Go on!" he shouted, "Go on, all of you!" and then he turned his back on her, rubbing his eyes, mumbling, looking at one title after another on the stockroom shelves—though all of them were the same, as June Kramer told me afterwards. She thought of touching him on the shoulder, then she thought better of it, she thought of saying "congratulations" again but was afraid it would set him off, so she backed off as quietly as she could. She paused unwillingly at the door (she said) and then Irvin Rubin turned round to look at her—the last time she ever saw him. His defiance and his pride were both gone, she said, and his face looked frightened. It was as if human knowledge had settled down on him at last; he was ill and terrified and his life was empty. It was like seeing a human face on an animal. June Kramer said "I'm sure you'll be very happy, Irvin, congratulations" and hurried blindly back to her desk.

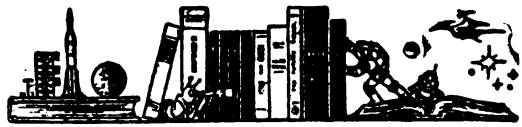
This is Irvin Rubin's story as Miss June Kramer told it to me one winter morning in the cafeteria with the windows weeping and the secretaries clattering their coffee and buns around us, but it is not his whole story. I know his whole story. I saw him enter the Park early one winter evening with a young lady—it was probably the day he left work—and although I don't know for certain what happened, I can very well imagine their walk across the Park, the young woman silent, Irvin slipping a little on the icy path, turning about perhaps to look at the apricot sky in the west—though, as June Kramer said, natural phenomenon never got much notice from him. I can guess—although I do not actually know—how Irvin's true love opened her automatic arms to him in some secluded, snowy part of the park, perhaps between a stone wall and the leafless trees. I can see her fade away against the darkening air, that black coat that holds nothing, that black scarf that adorns nothing, her iridescent hat become an indistinguishable part of the evening sky, her legs confused with the tree-trunks, and her eyes—those wild, lovely, vio-

let eyes!—kindling brighter and brighter, radiant as twin planets, brilliant as twin pole-stars, out of a face now grown to the hue of paper. I can see them melting, flattening, and diffusing into a luminous, freezing mist, a mist pouring out from sockets that are now sockets in nothing, doing God only knows what to poor Irv Rubin, who was found the next morning (as the janitor of my apartment building tells me) flat on his back in the snow and frozen to death.

A few days afterwards I saw Irv's lady-love across Central Park West, on a bright February afternoon with the traffic plowing the snow into slushy furrows within ten feet of her and the dogs of twenty blocks around being walked up and down to leave their bright pats in the snow. She was reading a book, turning the pages effortlessly with her gloved fingertips. I was even able to make out the title of the book, though I rather wish I hadn't; it was Ovid's *Art of Love,* which seemed to degrade the whole affair into a very bad joke.

But of course by the time I managed to get across the street, she was gone.

BOOKS



DAVY, **Edgar Pangborn**, St. Martin's Press, $4.95

This is only the second book by Edgar Pangborn which I've read, the other being the award-winning A MIRROR FOR OBSERVERS (1953). The books have at least two things in common, viz. they are each on a shockingly *old* SF theme—in MIRROR, the extra-terrestrial who lives concealed amongst us; in DAVY, the world way after The Bomb which destroyed, etc.—and they are both nonetheless very good books. Warning to Writers, potential and kinetic: Beware, nevertheless, the shockingly *old* SF themes . . . unless, of course, you happen to be Edgar Pangborn. A part of this book appeared in F&SF as THE GOLDEN HORN, but that doesn't mean we aren't going to review or that you won't want to read the book; and besides, he changed the ending.

The story begins in the year-to-be of 323, but whether this is 323 Anno Bombi, or 323 After Things Got Somewhat Put Together Again, I don't know. In addition to atomical destruction, large sections of the land have sunk into the ocean. The world known to Davy, son of a whore, and himself a bound servant, later King of Fools, advisor to rulers, exile, founding father, exile—his world is a clutter of small, seagirt nations (Katskil, Penn, Conicut, Nuin, etc.), beast-ridden (post-atomic giant bears and tigers), priest-ridden (the Holy Murican Church), caste-ridden . . . you name it. Davy is just about at the bottom of the scale, one cut above a slave; over-worked, underfed, ignorant, ugly, randy—He has a pretty good time, nonetheless. The book is, in a way, two books. My guess is that the author started out to write a much longer volume, and then decided to suppress or rather to compress Davy's later career, which is revealed mostly in flashbacks and such. The most effective and poignant part remains *The Golden Horn*—an Old Time French horn discovered in the possession of a pitiful and outlawed "mue" (mutant); I don't think the change in the end here is for the better. But the rest of the book is nonetheless convincing and full of interest—Davy's brush with war, his joining up with a band of "Ramblers" (minstrel/hucksters

who somehow manage to avoid being anything-ridden), his mating with royalty and what happens thereafter. What happens thereafter is that he and his lady and a lot of others who have retained or rediscovered much of the Old Time knowledge take off for parts isolated and unknown. If you think this enables them eventually to return and overthrow the ugly status quo they left behind them, you may well be mistaken. The book avoids all glib and easy writing-traps . . . except perhaps the sexual and religious ones. This book is a pretty good one for these times, and may well be next year's Hugo winner.

THE TREASURE OF THE GREAT REEF, **Arthur C. Clarke with Mike Wilson,** Harper & Row, $4.95

This is not SF, adult nor juvenile, and some may argue that it is not even S. Out upon them. When underwater archaeology becomes fully accepted as a science, credit must and will be given to such feats as the one here described, viz. the discovery off the coast of Ceylon of the wreck of an early 18th C. vessel chock-full of bronze cannons and silver rupees. Mr. Clarke, you see, not only looks Up, he looks Down, too. The last time I met him (at the occasion mentioned* on p. 70) the discovery was still new, and he could only be gotten with difficulty to tell me what hemisphere it occurred in—in the book he even provides you with maps. Personally, I wouldn't wade four feet in a fish-pond for a five-pound note, but it's a fascinating book.

THE WANDERER, **Fritz Leiber,** Ballantine, 75¢.

This is the second book which I've seen lately that deals with the subject of Saucerology, the other being Warren Miller's LOOKING FOR THE GENERAL. Aside from this the two are nothing alike. It's good news that Fritz has written a new novel—the good old names are seen too seldom. WANDERER doesn't have the impact of, say, the great Leiber CONJURE WIFE. The canvas is wide, the characters many, the charge scatters like buckshot, if you can imagine a buckshot cannon, WIFE, of course, was more of a derringer—small, but what a kick and what a hole. How did I get into these armamental metaphors? I'm getting out right now.

The time is enough in the future for there to be 51 states. The Wanderer has given warnings of its approach, but no one can read the signs, the phenomena being new. One minute it isn't there, the next it is—and you all know it, too. The story wanders along with it, with a whole caravan of charac-

* *The* occasion *is mentioned—I'm not. And the Ted Thomas who is, is the same one who writes our* Science Springboard *column.*

ters: a US cosmonaut on the moon, a lecherous New York couple, a drunken Welsh poet, a latter-day Cap'n Slocum crossing the Atlantic in a cockle-shell boat, a group of Southern California Saucerians, three kids in Harlem, a Malay treasure-hunter: and more, more, more. I didn't keep track of every one of them, but was spared the boredom often attendant on over-concentration upon a very few *personae*. All Hell breaks loose with the moon, the tides, the slippy surface of the earth, and—naturally—the people thereon. The book's blurbs don't reveal what the Wanderer really is, so neither will I, contenting myself with saying that I found the descriptions of its purple-and-gold surface fascinating — eerie—intimidating—compelling—unforgettable. None of which applies to what is underneath that surface, which is fairly conventional SF stuff.

Like many others, I wonder what became of the two-bit paperback. I'd like to think that Fritz is getting three times as much money for this one, but I doubt it. Whoever *is* getting the difference doesn't deserve it nearly as much. The cover artist doesn't seem to be mentioned anywhere (why not?), but he doesn't seem to have read the book, either (why not?).

THE WAR IN THE AIR; IN THE DAYS OF THE COMET; THE FOOD OF THE GODS, H. G. Wells, Dover, $2.00

THE WAR IN THE AIR is typical Wells in that it combines an active and interesting story with acute and trenchant social criticism. It is also, in its immediate view, very bad prophecy. In 1908, when it was first published, flying machines were an accomplished fact, but they had not been used for war. The protagonist, an English bicycle repairman named Bert Smallways (a good example, by the way, of the non-hero "hero" with which Wells was so good) literally stumbles his way into the world's first attacking air-fleet—German—witnesses the destruction of New York and then the invasion by Sino-Japanese aeronauts . . . who are anti-German as well as anti-American. America strikes back . . . everybody strikes back . . . Civilization As We Know It Crumbles . . . the world sinks into a new Dark Age. Not so dark as the Dark Ages of some other SF writers, but, then, neither was the original. All this—air war and its effects—of course, hasn't happened like that. But, although the book fails as an *immediate* prophecy, it still gives food for thought as regards the future. Here is a word-picture of some of our countrymen which is still too damned true today: *"They thought America was safe admist all this piling up*

of explosives. They cheered the flag by habit and tradition, they despised other nations, and whenever there was an international difficulty they were intensely patriotic, that is to say they were ardently against any native politician who did not threaten and do harsh and uncompromising things to the antagonist people [. . .] *For the rest, they all went about their business and pleasure as if war had died out with the megatherium.*"

In IN THE DAYS OF THE COMET, it seems that Wells lost patience with the powers of Fabian Socialism to build a Jerusalem which would make England a green and pleasant land while he could still see it; and that he never could believe in the ability of revolution to create Utopia. Therefore his intense yearnings to see the end of ". . . *a dark world . . . full of preventable disorder, preventable disease, and preventable pain, of harshness and stupid unpremeditated cruelties . . .* " found expression in a *deus ex machina* in the form of a comet whose gassy vapors liberate certain elements in our own atmosphere which enable mankind for the first time to think clearly: Utopia follows at once. Nice, but of course hardly a program into which one can sink one's teeth.

THE FOOD OF THE GODS was actually the first to be published of the three. Yet it ends on a more "modern" note than the other two. Here is a nice unsettling thought, for one: "*Just as many a stream will be at its smoothest, will look most tranquil, running deep and strong, at the very verge of a cataract, so all that is most conservative in man seemed settling into a serene ascendancy during these latter days.*" Upsetting the applecart is Professor Bensington, who discovers that growing things grow not steadily but in leaps and bounds, and thus succeeds in isolating and synthesyzing the substance causing growth. Develops then, partly by accident, partly not, giant wasps, giant rats, giant plants, and—naturally—giant people. Regular-sized people decline to distinguish, regard all giants as menaces; result: war. I do not fully understand nor fully agree with the book's almost lyrical conclusion, but am nonetheless moved therebye. Here is a giant speaking: "*This earth is no resting place . . . To grow out of these cracks and cranies, out of these shadows and darkness, into greatness and the light!* [. . .] *Growing . . . Till the earth is no more than a footstool . . . Till the spirit shall have driven fear into nothingness, and spread . . .' He swung his arm heavenward*—'There!' [. . .] *Then . . . he was no more than a great black outline against the starry sky, a great black outline that threatened with one mighty gesture the firmament of heaven and all its multitude of stars.*"

LOOKING FOR THE GENERAL, Warren Miller, Mc-Graw Hill, $4.95

This book entered my office with two strikes agains it—it had been favorably reviewed by *Time* magazine and it had been written under a grant from an institute or foundation. Neither did the book exactly seize hold of me on page one and wrap its warm, white arms around me. But I pressed on ahead, and was very soon rewarded. Billy Brown works in a Tip-Top-Secret Lab under a retired general who is bemused by a report (on organic matter from outer space) which seems to have been compiled largely from Charles Fort. The general may be a bit dippy, but it soon becomes questionable that Bill has got all his own marbles, either. He is obsessed with Them. Is convinced that They—the hyperintelligent Antlantean Lemurians from Other Planets—are all around him, waiting . . . waiting . . . waiting . . . whether They know it or not. Suddenly, suddenly, the general vanishes. Bill takes off after him. Security agents take off after Bill. Others take off after the security agents. Following a sort of Underground . . . well, not Railroad . . . Throughway . . . based on the membership lists of the Church of Christ, Astronaut, the whole crazy caravan dips back and forth across the continent to its final sublimation on the western desert where a bunch of them are either picked up by the finally arriving Them in a space ship or blow themselves to Hell and gone with an overcharge of dynamite; take your choice. The book is beautifully written and beautifully balanced. The author avoids the obvious traps, and soon has us wondering if Billy nuts may not be saner than those he's fleeing —the merchants of megadeaths and overkills . . . More, the book is very, very funny. *"There is something gross about the carbon atom,"* Bill muses. Silicons would compose us so much better—making us *"a generally cleaner animal . . . less given to flatulence, enlarged pores, rumbling innards, calluses, scaly skin, dry scale, and the stuff that forms in creases and between toes."* I don't know if I prefer the baby broker, Bancroft, who selectively breeds High IQ babies for sterile faculty couples only; or the midwestern bank teller who is vexed by the selfishness of missionaries who refuse to provide him with "a Christian, English-speaking pygmy" as a subject for hypnotic probes of racial memories as extra-terrestrial missing links. Oh, the book is just crammed with goodies! *"Have you ever been kissed by Ev Dirksen?"* Billy enquires. *"Has Hubert Humphrey ever raised anyone from the dead? Who* are *these people down in Washington that we should place our lives in their care?"* A good question. And a good book.

—AVRAM DAVIDSON

Holmes called Dr. Watson's attention to the curious incident of the dog in the night. "But the dog did nothing in the night," Watson objected. "That was the curious incident," replied Holmes. For centuries the planet called Solitaire had been doing nothing in the galactic night . . . or had it? Did its real secret consist, like that of freemasonry, of the fact that there was no real secret? That was what Horsefeld had come to find out.

POOR PLANET

by J. T. McIntosh

I NEVER WAS THE TOUGH HE-man lady-killer type of spy, even when I was a lot younger. On the very rare occasions when beautiful girls enticed me into their bedrooms on exotic worlds, the whole operation was only too obviously designed to find out what I'd found out, and the lovely ladies in question not only knew that I knew it, but knew that I knew that they knew it—which tended to remove much of the glamour from the situation, and all the sex.

And by the time I landed at Arneville, capital of the planet Solitaire, to try to solve the enigma of a world that ought to be rich but wasn't, I was still less tough, still less of a he-man, than I had been when I was a mere stripling of thirty-five or forty. By the time I reached Arneville I was 48, married, with three adolescent children. Terran Intelligence had only managed to talk me into going, and Phyllis into letting me go, because I was an historian and the job needed a genuine historian, and because intelligence agents hardly ever failed to return from Solitaire (so named because it was the only planet of its sun).

Solitaire let them come, let them sniff around for a while, and let them go, none the wiser. Occasionally, it was true, agents did not come back. Presumably they'd found out something. But the mortality rate was not high—and Phyllis is a soldier's daughter, complete with stiff upper lip.

The first thing I noticed when I emerged from Arneville space-

port was that it was a cold city. (The fact that I knew this already, having done my homework, did not prevent me from noticing it.) Although the city wasn't bitingly, grindingly cold, it was never far above freezing-point. The previous night's snow was melting as I arrived and crashing in powdery avalanches from the roofs. The overhangs were constructed so that all this soft snow cascaded into the streets, missing the sidewalks. The people hurrying about didn't even look up.

The next thing I noticed about Arneville was that it was old-fashioned. It was like a twentieth or even nineteenth century Earth city transported many light-years and four centuries to Solitaire. The buildings, vehicles and clothes I saw were all heavy and solid and stolid, with not a hint of frivolity about any of them. Things on Solitaire were made to last, and last, and last.

I had got this far in my observations as I emerged from the spaceport and looked about me when a man came up to me. "Mr. Edwin Horsefeld, from Earth?;" the stranger asked diffidently.

"Yes," I said, looking at him. He was the oldest teenager I had ever seen, with the bland innocent fresh-faced look of a kid of fourteen although he must have been thirty-five at least. He was enthusiastic, shy, intense, determined to do his job well. Naturally he must be a counter-espionage agent.

"I'm Tom Harrison," he said eagerly. "I've been asked to contact you and give you any help I can —"

"By whom?" I asked pleasantly.

"Some government department . . . F.R.S., I think it was."

My opinion of Solitaire's counter-espionage division, quaintly named Foreign Relations Security, went up several points. You had to admire a department which told you it knew you were a spy and offered to help you.

But then, Solitaire's counter-espionage division *must* be good. Every other planet in the galaxy, convinced Solitaire had a secret of some kind, had been trying for a long time to find out what it was —and Terran Intelligence would have known if any of them had succeeded, even if it didn't know exactly what they had found out.

We could all guess about Solitaire. None of us *knew*.

"Pleased to meet you, Mr. Harrison," I said, shaking hands. "Are you an historian?"

"No, why?"

"It doesn't matter. Just an idea."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Horsefeld. I guess I can't help you in your work . . . but I can tell you about libraries, hotels, stores—"

"That will be very useful. Hotels first. Where do you suggest I should go?"

Harrison hesitated. "They told me you'd probably want peace and

quiet, a room in a decent, modest hotel where nobody would bother you. Is that right?"

"Exactly right."

"Then maybe you'd like to go to Parkview. It's cheap, clean—"

"Fine. Let's go to the Parkview." I was perfectly happy to let Solitaire's counter-espionage division put me where it liked. It would do that anyway.

Harrison took me to the Parkview, a small inn just off Arne Way, the main street in the city. Then, to my surprise, Harrison seemed not only ready but apologetically anxious to leave me. I'd expected the devil's own job getting out of his sight.

"You can phone me either at Government House or at home," he said, giving me both numbers.

"Just one thing before you go, Tom—may I call you Tom? Where's the nearest music store?"

"Music?" he said vaguely, as if he had never heard the word. "Oh, I guess . . . you could try Prosser's, just round the corner in Arne Way. I think they sell music as well as books."

"Excellent," I said. "That saves me the trouble of asking you where the nearest book store is. Thanks, Tom."

"That's all I can do for you just now?"

"I think so. You've been a great help."

He colored. "It's nothing," he said self-consciously. "I'll look in this evening and see how you're making out."

Then he left. F.R.S. had informed me politely that it knew who I was, that it had its eye on me, and then left me to wander about Arneville as I pleased.

It might as well have told me in so many words that I wasn't going to find out anything.

Lunch at the Parkview was excellent. But why the Parkview, I wondered. I'd heard of Arne Park, which was about the only thing in Solitaire most people *had* heard about. The Park must, however, be at least a mile along Arne Way and was not visible even from my top-floor bedroom. Nothing in that direction was visible except the blank wall of a massive office block.

If Solitaire had nothing to hide, I reflected, which was unlikely but not completely impossible, a known Terran spy might well be treated exactly as I was being treated. An intelligent counter-espionage division in a world which had no secrets—if there was any such world—would realize that the only way to convince other nations of this was to let them find it out for themselves.

After lunch I strolled round to Prosser's. By this time most of the snow was brown slush.

It was just as well, I reflected, looking at the people in the streets, that I was forty-eight and no long-

er interested in girls. For there seemed no prospect of ever seeing a pretty girl in Arneville, at any rate a girl looking pretty. In boots, heavy coats and fur hoods, with faces pinched by the cold, women of sixteen, thirty-six and fifty-six looked much the same. None of them seemed to wear makeup, and since heating in most buildings was only moderately efficient, heavy, unattractive clothes were worn inside as well as out.

The young lady in Prosser's, who might have been attractive if she tried, didn't seem to be trying. On top of a dress which was all right in itself she wore an assortment of woolen jackets of various colors and shapes. None of the latter coincided with hers.

"Opera?" she said. "You must mean *The Arne Story*. That's the only opera I know."

"That's it," I said.

"A score? That's the words and music, isn't it? You want to buy a copy?"

"An original copy, if possible." She went away and returned, after an interminable delay, with a paper-covered score. I looked at the date. It was a new edition published only the year before.

When I tried patiently to explain that what I really wanted was a copy of this opera printed a long time ago, she stared blankly and then brought a small, bald knowledgeable man to talk to me.

"Yes, this *is* a revised edition, sir," he agreed. "Quite extensively revised. You're a foreigner, I take it? Yes, I thought so. You see, since there's only one native opera, and such a great masterpiece at that, it's constantly being revised and improved. I believe the original version of *The Arne Story* was quite different from the version that's performed now—"

"So I understand. That's why I'd like to see the original."

"You could try a library. Or—maybe there would be an old copy at Jerome's. It's a little place that keeps a lot of old j . . . musical instruments and things like that."

The little knowledgeable man gave me detailed directions, and I trudged through the snow again along streets which became narrower and shorter and dimmer. I might almost have been in Dickens's London.

At last I found Jerome's, which proved to be a tiny shop with a minute window offering a keyhole view of a startling variety of cornets, trumpets, trombones and mutes. I pushed the door open, stooping to enter, and blinked at the girl in charge.

She was the last, postively the last thing I expected in a place like Jerome's, in a city like Arneville, on a planet like Solitaire. She was very young, a nymphet, very pretty, and she was quite smartly dressed.

"Good afternoon," she said, smiling pleasantly.

"Five minutes ago," I said, "I didn't think so. But now I see it is."

She laughed, being young enough to take naive delight in a frank, sincere compliment. It could only have been a matter of months since men started to pay her compliments; it might be years yet before experience taught her to look gift horses in the mouth.

She was a small brunette with the kind of slim, flawless, twinkling legs which only nymphets possess. Above the legs was a short black skirt, and above the skirt a tight white blouse. Above the blouse was a pert, pretty little face which could have passed for the face of a beautiful child if her fully, though recently, developed contours had not been visible.

"I wonder if you have an original score of *The Arne Story?*" I asked.

"You don't want much, do you? It's over two hundred years old. What are you smiling at?"

"You said that as if I'd asked for the Ark's sailing-list in Noah's own handwriting."

She laughed again. And I thought, in italics: *If this lovely little creature really has been placed here by F.R.S., I'm going to enjoy being led up the garden path.*

"Perhaps, if not an original," I said, "you might have an early edition?"

"Well, if you'd like to stick around for about three hours while I inspect the stock," she said briskly, "I might turn up something."

"It would be a pleasure," I said courteously, "to stick around."

It was. It really did take nearly three hours—the little shop had so many things in such a small space that it was necessary to shift half the stock in order to get at the other half. I soon learned the girl's name—Terry Wood—that her father was alive and her mother dead, that she had no brothers or sisters, that she had a passion for adventure, and that she didn't think I looked very old.

We couldn't help becoming better acquainted, for I had to hold instrument cases for her and move piles of music and stack boxes which she handed down to me. Apparently there was never any rush in Arneville shops; if a purchaser wanted something and you might have it, you thought nothing of spending an hour or two over a two-dollar sale that might not materialize anyway. Certainly Terry was not exactly off her feet. During the time she was searching for the score, there was just one customer, a reedy youth who wanted a clarinet reed.

The pleasure with which I examined Terry's pretty legs clear to the hips as she climbed ladders was neither guilty nor carnal. I had a daughter just Terry's age, and I told her so.

Before Terry at last triumphant-

ly produced a fourth edition score of the opera, dated only three years after the first performance, we had arranged to go together to the opera house that night to see the contemporary *The Arne Story*.

Despite the ease with which this was arranged, I rejected for the moment the possibility that Terry had been planted in Jerome's by F.R.S. For one thing, her knowledge of the stock was remarkable, considering how much of it there was. For another, if F.R.S. had guessed that I would want an early edition of *The Arne Story* and had arranged for me to be directed to Jerome's, they must be even cleverer than I thought them.

In the early evening, before I set out for the opera house, Harrison called to see me. He glanced blankly at the yellowed score lying unopened on the bed.

"*The Arne Story*—two hundred years old!" he said. "What do you want that for?"

"As an historian," I said, "my curiosity is boundless."

Harrison looked at me uncertainly. "Oh, well. I guess you know your business. Is there any way I can help you?"

"Where," I asked, "does one take a girl after the theater?"

Harrison didn't seem to have heard of anyone taking a girl to the theater. He was, I suspected, overacting. Nobody set on me by F.R.S. could be that dim.

"I guess you could bring her back here," he said at last, with a mediocre attempt at a leer.

"That's not what I mean. When one takes a girl to a show in Arneville, isn't there anywhere to go afterwards?"

"Only the Park."

"The Park! To sit holding hands in the snow?"

Harrison blinked. "I meant Arne Park . . . oh, I guess you wouldn't know. It's covered in, heated, and it stretches for miles. It's sort of a summer playground. Night and day."

I should have done my homework better. I knew Arne Park was the showplace of the planet, but I hadn't heard that it was totally enclosed. Vaguely I had imagined a few large hothouses and vast stretches of winter wonderland.

"Thanks, Tom. Maybe we'll take a look at the Park. But not by night, the first time. By the way, have you any idea why this place is called the Parkview?"

"Well . . . I guess it might have been possible to see the Park from here before that office block was built. There are lots of hotels with names like that, you know—Park Hotel, Park Arms, Park Inn, Newpark, Highpark . . ."

"Between Park and Arne you've got all the names you need," I commented.

"Well, Henry Arne was our first Premier."

"Yes, Tom," I said gently. "I know."

Harrison tried to be helpful for a few minutes more, and then left. I'd never met anyone connected with spying as uninterested in asking questions.

Terry arrived at the opera house only a few seconds after I did. "Am I late?" she asked breathlessly.

"You're the only girl I ever knew who wasn't," I said.

"Oh, but I'm not sophisticated," she admitted.

"I'm glad you told me. Here I was thinking you were a bored, blasé, langorous woman of the world—"

"Don't pull my leg," she said fiercely. "I don't like it."

So she had a temper. It was a surprise. In the shop that afternoon nothing I had said ruffled her, and when piles of music cascaded on the floor she merely shrugged resignedly.

When she hurried away to the ladies' room I had an opportunity to ponder over the momentary flash of temper and what it meant. I was soon able to make a pretty good guess.

Agents of my type do not move in an atmosphere of blazing guns, flailing fists, exploded safes and chases in fast cars. Rarely had I been in the thick of violent action. I work by keeping my eyes and ears open and fixing on small things that don't seem to fit—like a sudden flash of irritation in a sunny-tempered girl . . .

The theater was old and dark and massive. If it had only had gas instead of electricity, it would have been a Victorian opera house. I call it a theater and an opera house indiscriminately because the locals do the same. When opera is being performed, it's the opera house. When it's drama or vaudeville, it's a theater.

The cloakrooms were far more extensive and elaborate than in Terran theaters. Since you couldn't sit in a theater and go outside clad the same way anyway, the custom was to make a complete transformation.

Terry came out hesitantly, and not without reason. She wore an ankle-length black satin gown, not particularly revealing, but of a type and cut which on all worlds tacitly proclaims the wearer's profession. If I hadn't known already that Terry's mother was dead and that she had no sisters, that dress would have told me.

As she waited for me to say something, I had an opportunity to check on my guess. In the afternoon, nothing could ruffle her. In the evening, as she arrived for a date she might be expected to enjoy, the gentlest leg-pulling made her snap back. It didn't take a genius to deduce that something had happened in between. Now, what? Row with boyfriend when Terry insisted she was going any-

way, so there? Row with Dad when she appeared in dress of which Dad did not approve? My guess was: row with Dad, but not over dress.

I didn't take the opportunity. Terry was inexperienced but intelligent. You couldn't pump her without letting her see she was being pumped.

"You look lovely," I said. And in a way she did. Even in that dress.

She blushed, pleased. I took her in, my gentle touch on her bare arm intended to remind her that I could be her grandfather, very nearly her great-grandfather. It shouldn't have been necessary . . . but then, she had no mother, and seemed to spend her time working in a shop which only had two customers in three hours. In experience she wasn't exactly as old as time.

The opera astonished me. First, it was good, which was odd: opera needs a tradition, and while one of a hundred Italian operas may be a masterpiece, you don't expect much of the only opera native to a planet. I'd expected a sort of *Beggars' Opera*, not a patriotic piece with a strong plot, good dialogue (almost unique in opera), some first-class ballet, fair music (the music was weakest) and really fervent acting.

At the first interval I told Terry how impressed I was, and she was pleased.

The second half was a slight disappointment. The patriotism started high and finished in a frenzy, too idealistic even for opera. The characterization, good at first, fell apart a little when character after character revealed not only impossible patriotism, but the *same* impossible patriotism. The hero, Henry Arne—the Arne who had been Solitaire's first Premier—first sacrificed his love of the heroine to Solitaire, and later her life.

The opera was so long, and finished so late, that there was little question of going anywhere afterwards, though we had coffee at the theater before I took Terry home.

I was surprised to find that she agreed with me completely about the opera.

"Dying for love is a beautiful idea," she said, "but dying for a country is crazy, and sacrificing the girl you love for your world is crazier, and whenever it comes to that bit I want to be sick."

"You've seen it often?

"Not often. Four or five times. They send us from school to see it."

"You don't sound particularly patriotic, Terry," I said lazily.

"I'm not," she admitted frankly. "Oh, if I'd a chance to do something wonderful and romantic and exciting for Solitaire, like . . ."

She blushed and broke off in confusion.

"Like what, Terry," I asked, smiling.

"Anyway, if I'd a chance to do anything like that, I'd do it like a shot. But dying for an ideal . . ."

She went on for quite a while, and I listened. Presently I said quietly: "And you're allowed to get away with that?"

"What do you mean?"

"In most countries and worlds where nationalism is deliberately cultivated, whipped up by propaganda and pieces like *The Arne Story,* people who talk as you've just been doing are liable to . . . disappear."

Terry laughed, at least she started to laugh. Then she looked at me, startled, doubtful, and for a moment I genuinely wished I had not pricked her to see what would happen.

"Take me home," she said suddenly, breathlessly. "I . . . I have to start early tomorrow."

I took her home.

Next morning after breakfast I went back to my room and had a quick glance through the fourth edition of *The Arne Story.*

The broad outlines of the opera had not changed. A good deal of the music was different, and my guess was that the later music was better. Presumably composers in the last two centuries had been encouraged to improve on the original settings if they could.

On the whole the opera had improved a great deal in its two centuries of existence. The early version was crude, rough, even more implausible than the contemporary version.

But the interesting thing about the comparison was that all the changes were designed to make the opera better and more effective patriotic propaganda. And it had been a propaganda piece in the first place.

I pushed the score aside and put my feet up. Later I'd compare the two versions of the opera for my own purposes. Meantime I was here to find out something, and I didn't think *The Arne Story* in versions ancient or modern could tell me much more than it already had.

The problem was simple. Solitaire had been colonized nearly three centuries earlier. It had never been a particularly attractive world, but its deposits of oil, coal, steel, diamonds, silver and platinum were at least average. Within fifty years there had been a population of nearly a hundred million. So far so good.

Now, over two hundred years later, the population was two hundred million and Solitaire was about the most backward world in the galaxy, with the lowest relative standard of living. (Terry's weekly wage, which she had mentioned when we were discussing Solitaire and Earth, would just about pay for a meal in a New York hotel. And my weekly bill at the Parkview was less than I'd pay

to stay one night at the same hotel.)

Why?

Solitaire issued no statistics, and all figures were therefore guesses. Other worlds, however, had figures showing that emigration from Solitaire was negligible.

So why was the population (estimated) so low? Why was the planet so apparently poor? Why only a trickle of exports?

What was Solitaire up to?

The question of a Solitaire *secret* arose only because agents sent to investigate the world on the spot either came back with nothing to report or didn't come back at all. Only a few failed to return —but why should there be any spy casualties on a world which had nothing to hide?

Secret wasn't the right word to apply to the affairs of Solitaire. *Uncertain* was better. Even the precise form of government was uncertain, not because of the kind of iron wall you find in an out-and-out police state, but because hardly anyone seemed to know anything for sure. Although Solitaire was known to have a Senate with a Premier at its head, less was known of the present Premier than of the first . . .

Hence the appearance on the scene of me, Edwin Horsefeld, with one or two tricks up my sleeve. These days spies needed a gimmick more than nerve or brawn.

Having thought for a while I went to the library and found out all I could there. It took me only an hour and a half, and I didn't think I'd missed much of importance.

The library contained only eight thousand books which had been written and published in the whole of Solitaire. Eight thousand in over two hundred years. The rest were reprints of standard texts obtainable anywhere in the galaxy.

Of the eight thousand, four thousand were novels. Three thousand dealt with the natural lore of the planet geography, geology, exploration, flora and fauna. That left me one thousand miscellaneous books to include all the social history, biography, poetry, essays, research, philosophy and psychology of a settlement nearly three centuries old.

It wasn't much.

In the afternoon I met Terry, by arrangement, and let her take me to the Park. It was her afternoon off.

The moment I saw her I knew that once again something had happened between our meetings.

I hoped it wasn't that both times she'd seen her boyfriend—so attractive a girl, however young, simply must have a steady boyfriend, or at least someone who imagined he was—and had now sent him packing, convinced she was in love with me. I thought

Terry was too steady and sensible for that, and yet there was no denying that everything I had told her about Earth had seemed to fascinate her and that she already seemed to consider me as something much more than just an elderly male acquaintance.

Although she was evidently going to tell me something that she considered of immense importance, she stuck to trivialities until we were inside the Park.

The dome over the Park was larger than anything on Mars, coated to reflect as little light as possible, and scarcely visible as domes go. Inside was a vast, well-planned, well-maintained garden, warm as July in the northern hemisphere of Earth, cooled and aired by soft breezes. And this is a city where it snowed all the year round.

As I waited for Terry, who was hanging up her coat in the pavilion, I thought: *Terran Intelligence should know more about Arne Park. Anything as untypical of its world as Arne Park is of Solitaire is worth a lot of attention.*

There must be a reason for the Park. Apparently other agents had merely looked at it, said "Very impressive," and taken their cloaks and daggers elsewhere. Well, maybe I was doing them an injustice. Nevertheless, the thought lingered: *On a world like this, in a city like this, there must be a reason for such a vast, expensive, man-made miracle.*

Terry joined me and I saw the reason for the Park. It was a place for her to wear her yellow playsuit, a neat little confection that fitted her as if she'd been born wearing it. After the dreadful unsuitability of her appearance the night before, it was a relief to find her looking like any pretty sun-loving teenager.

"Aren't you going to change too, Edwin?" she asked.

I sighed. "I would if I were about twenty-one. Looking at you, I wish I were."

I didn't really; no sensible man of forty-eight really wants to be twenty-one again, unless in possession of all the knowledge, experience and advantages of forty-eight. But Terry was pleased.

We strolled along the walks and lanes of the Park. Practically everyone we saw was gay, exuberant, dressed in bright, frivolous clothes. Arne Park was where the people of Arneville threw off their inhibitions. No city in the galaxy needed such a place more. Yet the Park was anything but crowded. Working hours in Arneville were long.

We must have been about a mile from the pavilion when Terry said: "I want to help you, Edwin."

"To do what?"

She took a deep breath and then said: "I know you're a spy."

"Do you?" I said softly. "Who told you?"

"Just before lunch yesterday somebody called the shop. He didn't give his name. He said you were coming and that I was to make friends with you. He said it wouldn't be dangerous, but I had a chance to prove my loyalty to Solitaire."

So Terry had not been planted. F.R.S. had simply co-opted her.

"What else were you told?" I asked quietly.

"Very little, then. I guess I was deliberately told practically nothing so I wouldn't dare do anything rash, like asking questions that would tell you what was going on."

"Your're very intelligent, Terry."

"Well, I hope so. You know what happened—the way things worked out I didn't have to do or say anything I might not have done anyway. I mean, I've always been interested in Earth, and if there had been no phone call we might still have gone to the opera last night."

I nodded.

If Terry had not been instructed to say to me what she was saying now, she'd made a terrible mistake. However, there was no going back now. I had to hear what she had to say.

"When I went home my father was waiting for me with a tall, thin man. The tall man said he was Mr. Marks and asked me to repeat everything you and I had said to each other. I told him all I could remember, because it couldn't do any harm—could it?"

"No."

"Then . . ." She hesitated. "Edwin, I think you guessed that my father and I don't get on. He's . . . it's a terrible thing to say about my own father, but he's no good. After a while the atmosphere changed. I was no longer voluntarily cooperating with the police, as I thought. Marks was telling me what to do and warning me that my father would go to jail if I didn't do exactly as I was told . . . that I might go to jail too. And my father was begging me to save him . . ."

I waited. I was very sorry for her. She was very young to be faced with such things.

"They told me you were a spy and it was my duty to report on you. I don't think I let them see I was angry, but I was. I mean—I liked you. I could tell you hadn't done anything bad, and weren't going to do anything bad."

"Yet you knew I was working for Earth," I said, "against your world."

She shrugged. "Earth's never done us any harm, as far as I knew. Maybe if Marks had treated me differently, acted as if he trusted me . . . Anyway, as it was I didn't know what to do. There was no harm in telling Marks exactly what you said and did—unless I suddenly learned something important. If I did, I

wasn't sure I wanted to tell Marks.'

I nodded. I could understand her attitude, I thought, better than she did herself. She was very young, very inexperienced, and romantic, even sentimental. She had already had to learn that she could not rely on her father. Her world, her environment, her family had never done much for her—yet being sensible and self-reliant she had made the best of everything and managed to be happy.

Then I came along. She liked me—and she was coldly instructed to act like my friend, but report all I said to F.R.S.

F.R.S. was not so clever after all. They should have known what Terry would do. Did they?

"You don't seem surprised," Terry said, a little deflated.

"I'm not. Terry, whenever I land on a strange planet the chances are that anybody who makes friends with me is working for local counter-intelligence. When I find a pretty girl being friendly, I can be practically sure of it."

"That must make you very cynical," she said in a small voice.

"No, why should it? I'm not a character in a fairy story . . . You haven't told me everything yet. That interview with Marks was before we went to the opera, wasn't it? What's happened since?"

"Oh, just more of the same. Marks was waiting when I got home, asked questions again, warned me again. He . . ." She flushed.

"Might as well tell me."

"He said it might be better if I slept with you."

I merely nodded. But I guessed that was what had really decided Terry to confide in me. She had practically no sexual experience—I hadn't lived nearly half a century without being able to discern such things. A young, imaginative girl with romantic notions might easily entertain the exciting thought of a passionate love affair with a spy. But it would have to be a *love* affair. To be coldly instructed to sell her virginity for her world was revolting.

After a pause I said gently: "Do you know the danger you're in, Terry?"

She blinked. "I'm not in any danger. I've warned you. I'll go on reporting to Marks. But I won't report anything that'll do you any harm."

I sighed. It was probably impossible to make her understand. And no good purpose would be served by trying.

"Who's your boyfriend, Terry?" I asked casually.

She flushed again and started. That was when I knew that she really was beginning to fancy herself in love with me.

To give herself time to think she dropped on the grass, stretched

out her legs and lay on her back with her arms behind her head. Then, as an afterthought, she sat up again, unzipped the middle part of her yellow playsuit, tossed it aside and lay down as before.

Between the bottom of her small though well filled halter and the top of the briefs that dipped and rose from one hip to the other, all the fascinating tracery of firm adolescent muscles rippled as she moved. She had the kind of fantastic waist measurement that actresses claim and nymphets really possess.

I sat down beside her.

By this time she was ready to answer: "I don't have a boyfriend."

"You must have, Terry."

"Well, there's Steve. But he . . . oh, he's just a kid."

"Have you seen him in the last twenty-four hours?"

"No. Anyway, there's nothing between us."

For a moment I wished I'd never come to Solitaire. Probably I wouldn't find anything out. And though I expected to leave in one piece, it was now unlikely that Terry had much longer to live.

What she didn't understand was that to F.R.S. loyalty was a deadly serious business. She wouldn't be able to fool F.R.S., either. Sooner or later, whatever I did, Solitaire's counter-espionage department would find out that Terry had (in their estimation) commmitted high treason.

So she had—unless all this was an act, something I didn't believe for a moment. The fact that Terry couldn't help me was neither here nor there. She had told a spy that she was on his side against her own world.

She sat up suddenly. "Do you think I'm cheap?" she asked bluntly.

I couldn't help looking startled at the sudden challenge.

"Showing myself like this?" she went on. "You've gone quiet. Well, I'm *not* cheap. I don't mind showing myself to you. Steve has meant nothing to me since I met you."

"Terry," I said, "I have two daughters, and one of them is about three years older than you. And I didn't marry particularly young."

"It's true," she said bleakly. "You do think I'm cheap." She reached for the discarded part of her playsuit.

There was no way I could reassure her without abruptly changing the subject. So I changed it.

"Terry," I said, taking the cover-up from her and putting it down again, "I wonder if you really can help me. Have you noticed anything, absolutely anything, about the set-up on your world that puzzles you, or surprises you?"

"What sort of thing?" She was still suspicious and hurt. Probably she felt guilty about Steve—

perhaps she'd broken a date with him that afternoon or the night before; perhaps she felt she'd thrown herself at my head and all I did was laugh at her.

"Any sort of thing."

"Well . . . there's one thing I meant to tell you. Only I haven't gotten around to it. It's only a rumor."

"Yes?"

"There may be nothing in it. It's just . . . Well, they say sometimes people disappear."

"Disappear?"

"Oh, they're not supposed to disappear. They're supposed to go somewhere else. But they only write once, or maybe twice, and then nobody ever hears of them again."

"That's very interesting, Terry," I said. But it wasn't. On a hyperpatriotic world like Solitaire there was undoubtedly a secret security service, though we knew nothing about it. Of course people disappeared. It would have been astonishing if they did not . . .

Terry not being dressed for any place in Arneville except the Park, we had a snack at an open-air restaurant inside the dome and then I took her home.

I didn't know yet what to do about her. Pretty soon I'd have to think up something she could tell Marks, something that would convince him Terry was loyal and useful, and that I was nowhere turning up anything. The second part was perfectly true.

For the moment, Terry was to tell Marks everything we'd said with one obvious exception.

Back at the hotel, Tom Harrison, the eager beaver, was waiting for me. He wanted to know if there was anything further he could do to help.

I had an idea. "No, thanks, Tom," I said. "In fact—I can manage by myself now. Thanks for your help earlier. I appreciated it. But I needn't trouble you again."

Harrison nodded awkwardly. "Okay," he said gruffly. "I guess you don't want me hanging around any more, is that it?"

"Well, not exactly. As a matter of fact, the girl I told you about has been showing me around. You're a nice guy, but you must admit you're not a pretty girl."

Harrison's face cleared. "Oh, if it's like that . . . Well, if you want me, you know how to get in touch. So long."

I went upstairs. So long as the gloves were still on, F.R.S. wouldn't crowd me. But they'd still want to keep me under observation. Forcing them to do it through Terry gave her some temporary protection, I thought.

Indeed, within an hour or so I had certain plans worked out, plans I won't bother to detail, for I never had a chance to put them into effect.

It was still fairly early when a porter came to tell me a young lady was waiting for me downstairs.

I went down at once. The visitor could only be Terry. It was a mistake her coming to see me at the Parkview, where everything I did must be under observation and where the walls undoubtedly had ears. The best I could do was act as if I'd been expecting her, and hope she had the sense to wait until we were outside before she said anything that mattered.

She had. She hadn't taken off her coat, and was waiting as if we had arranged to go out together. I thought there was something a little tense about her smile.

She waited until we were well away from the Parkview, walking along Arne Way, before she said anything about the reason for her call. It was getting dark, and a soft, fine snow was falling. It was bitterly cold; we breathed out white clouds. Terry, who had never previously shown any sign of feeling the cold, was shivering.

"Edwin," she said suddenly, "it's all gone wrong."

As we walked she told me what had happened. Whenever anyone came close she stalled until we were in effect alone again.

When I left her and she went in, she heard Marks and her father talking. She didn't go straight in to them, but went to her bedroom to change.

In her bedroom she caught one or two words which made her creep quietly into a boxroom to hear better.

Marks was telling her father that in order to be certain that she was telling the truth and the whole truth, he was going to shoot her full of drugs when she came in . . .

Terry didn't have to tell me how completely this changed the picture for her. Probably she'd had some vague idea appropriate to her years that it would be quite easy to turn awkward questions aside, and that even if later she was tortured in the not too unbearable way reserved for heroines, she'd insist bravely that she had told the truth.

She hadn't seen Marks drugging her to take her will away from her. There was nothing romantic about that. You couldn't fight it . . .

"I crept out quietly," she concluded, "and came straight to you."

"Don't you realize, Terry," I said, "that you were meant to hear exactly what you did hear, and do exactly what you have done—come running to me in a panic?"

She drew herself up sharply. "I'm not in a panic!"

"You should be. I would be, if I were you."

"Why—what do you mean?"

"I've got some protection. I haven't broken any local or international law."

"But you're a spy!"

"Please don't shout it in the middle of the street, Terry. In a sense I am, but I don't have to go outside the law to do what I want to do. Certainly F.R.S. will put me out of the way if they consider it's got to be done, but they'll know that Earth won't be at all pleased if they do, and might even take the opportunity of clamping down on Solitaire and ordering a full-scale investigation, in the course of which they'll have an excellent chance of finding out what I was sent here to find out. F.R.S. knows all that. But you—"

"What about me?" she asked defiantly.

She could no longer be allowed to deceive herself about her position.

"Well, you see, Terry, only Solitaire has any responsibility for you. No one else can possibly interfere. If your own authorities decide, without trial or any public mention of your case, that you're a traitor, there's nothing whatever to stop them—"

She stared at me in horror. "You mean I'm going to be shot—and there's nothing you can do?"

I pulled her down on a bench at a street corner. It was not a comfortable place to sit, with the snow sifting down, but we were much safer out in the open than in any place where we could be overheard.

The way Terry was shivering made me think of something.

"What are you wearing under your coat?"

"Just—what I wore in the Park. I didn't take time to change."

"That's a great help," I murmured. "That means we can't go anywhere where you'd have to take off your coat."

"Except the Park."

In the afternoon she had told me that the Park was busier by night than by day. And there was no police patrol charged with the duty of protecting public morality. The official view, a more practical one than that of some apparently better organized worlds, was that if no convenient place was provided for young lovers to do what young lovers did, innocent or not so innocent, the only real effect was to drive them into the willing arms of those who made money out of vice.

So we could go to the Park again and not be too conspicuous. F.R.S. could find us there with ease; but then, F.R.S. could find us sooner or later wherever we went.

"Meantime," I said, "is there anybody you can trust, literally with your life? Not your father, evidently."

"Certainly not my father," she said with more bitterness than I had ever heard in her voice.

"Aunts, uncles, cousins?"

"Only Steve," she said in a small voice. "And I don't like—"

"Never mind whether you like it or not. We'll go and see Steve."

First we gave the men trailing us nightmares. There might not be anyone trailing us; still, I had too much respect for F.R.S. to take any chances.

I had failed in my job on Solitaire. All I was trying to do now was to take Terry away with me in one piece, if that was possible. I didn't think it was.

We jumped on and off buses, entered buildings by one doorway and left by another, hurried through crowds, and stayed quietly in cover waiting for anyone following us to overrun us. With my experience and Terry's knowledge of the city, we were soon sure that we were clear.

Then we called at Steve's lodgings. I was fully aware that we might pick up our tail again by calling there. However, I didn't mention this to Terry. She had enough to worry about.

"Why, hello, Miss Terry," said the landlady, faintly surprised. "Didn't Steve call you before he left?"

"Left?" said Terry with foreboding.

"He's gone to Bennerwald. But he must be meaning to write. I guess we'll all be getting a letter from him tomorrow."

Terry was going to say more, a lot more. I gripped her elbow hard. With an effort she thanked the landlady and came away.

"Where's Bennerwald?" I asked.

"On the other side of the planet —ten thousand miles away. He *couldn't* have—"

"Don't talk too much."

We went through another tail-amputating operation. When I considered it safe we sat on another bench, huddled together so that we would be taken for lovers.

"He's disappeared," Terry said flatly.

The emphasis she put on the word made me repeat it interrogatively.

"Disappeared—like the ones I told you about."

"I'm afraid you're right."

She shuddered and clutched me convulsively. Yet the way she took it convinced me that she had never been in love with Steve.

"Was he a rebel?" I asked. "Against patriotism and propaganda, I mean? Did he shoot his mouth off a lot?"

Terry stared. "No. Quite the opposite."

"Really?" I said.

"Yes—we often argued. As I told you, I wouldn't mind loving my country if my country didn't work so hard trying to make me. But with Steve . . ."

She shrugged. "Remember *The Arne Story*? Well, Steve would sacrifice me for Solitaire. That wouldn't have been so bad if he didn't keep boasting about it."

I was beginning to become in-

terested. "Terry, think of all the other people you knew who might have disappeared. What were they like?"

"I told you, nobody can be sure. Maybe nobody disappeared. It may be nothing more than a rumor—"

"I know that. But you can make a guess. The people who go on long journeys, write once or twice and then stop writing—are they young or old? Men or women? Rebels or patriots?"

"Young, mostly. You don't get older people uprooting themselves. Both men and women. And usually—quite patriotic. Anyway, not rebels."

"That's very interesting," I said.

"Edwin—where can we go? Some other town?"

"No, there'll be a watch on all travel depots."

"An hotel?"

"Likewise."

"Then let's go to the Park. I'm freezing."

"All right."

Before we moved, however, a fresh-faced man came past, saluting me cheerfully as he went by.

It was Tom Harrison.

F.R.S. was so efficient that if they lost our trail they could easily pick it up again. More than that, so cocky that they wanted me to know we were being watched.

What, I wondered, were they trying to make me do?

We left our coats at the Park pavilion. Once more we had done our best to give the watchers the slip. After all, we might succeed. They might decide that the Park, which was a trap even if a very large one, was the last place we'd go.

Not that it made any real difference. F.R.S. might or might not let me leave Solitaire when I chose, might or might not let me take Terry with me—and there was nothing I could do about it.

Arne Park by night was wonderful, twice as wonderful as by day—especially to people coming straight in out of the snow.

The dome glowed with electro-actinic light matched to some reflecting index which did not interfere with the passage of sunlight the other way. I could not see the source. The light was not bright, only a little stronger than that of a full moon on Earth.

And the huge Park was alive with couples. It must be the longest, widest and busiest lovers' lane in the whole of the galaxy. Soft laughter came from behind every bush.

I was relieved to find that Terry in her yellow playsuit was not unduly conspicuous. The Park was as warm as by day, and since it was a place for the young, the clothes worn were youthful.

We kept walking because when we moved it was scarcely possible that what we said could be overheard.

"Terry," I said. "Have I got this right? The people who disappear are young, of both sexes, and highly patriotic?"

"That's my impression."

"Before they get married and have children?"

"Well, of course. You said that was interesting. Why?"

"Because in this kind of world the people you expect to disappear are the people who disapprove of the setup—the individualists, rebels, intellectuals, anarchists, agitators, reformers."

"Well—it's not like that."

"So they *disappear* . . . they don't die."

"How do you make that out?"

"How much do you know about Henry Arne, the Arne this Park and the city are named after?"

"Oh, quite a lot. I've been to school, you know. What do you want to know?"

"I don't need to ask you about him, Terry. I'm an historian, you know. Suppose he'd been an individualist himself, a fanatic believer in human freedom, he might long ago have set up a secret but all-powerful organization to weed out the conformists, the yes-men, the people who could be influenced by propaganda."

Terry stopped and grabbed my arm. "That's what happened! Of course it is!"

I shook my head. "No. Arne loved Solitaire so much he was crazy about it. In that way he was a fanatic. He had so much power he was nothing more or less than a dictator. Anything he wanted done was done. So anything he wanted set up *was* set up. Openly or secretly."

"You think he did set up some secret organization?"

"Yes, but not the kind I mentioned. Arne believed passionately that if Solitaire were fully developed it would inevitably be ruined by the predators who are drawn to a rich, successful world, or who are created by it. He believed that if Solitaire were to grow up strong and free and healthy, *it must grow up poor.*"

This time Terry didn't say anything. She was lost. After all, she knew nothing about any world but her own. She had nothing to compare it with.

"Whether Arne was right or not," I mused, "what he wanted for Solitaire has come about. Either by chance or by design, Solitaire hasn't grown strong and rich and successful. It could hardly be by chance, for reasons which I won't go into just now. So it must be by design—almost certainly Arne's design. Which means that he somehow set up a situation, a plan, which is still working two centuries after his death.

"None of this is new, Terry. Anybody who took the trouble could make guesses along these lines without coming near Solitaire. And when you said there

were rumors of disappearances, that wasn't any surprise either. The population of Solitaire should be multiplying itself by about six every century. And it's not. At a guess, with no figures to go on, it's only multiplied itself by two in two centuries."

"You can't mean that all these people have disappeared. That they were born and . . . and . . ."

"Died? Were transported? Well, what do you think, Terry? Doesn't nearly everybody get married? Doesn't the average couple have three children?"

"I guess so. But what does that mean?"

"It means," I said, "that in the last two hundred years anything from one to three thousand million people have . . . disappeared."

I expected some reaction from Terry. There was none. Looking around me, I saw why.

Men were approaching us from all directions. They were so purposeful that it was clear F.R.S. had decided to take us in—if not to shoot us on the spot.

Running was futile. Even Terry realized that. She shrank against me and I squeezed her hand.

Tom Harrison was in charge.

"So you're something quite important in F.R.S., Tom," I said conversationally.

"Quite important," he said drily, with no trace of his former diffident manner. "In fact, I'm the chief."

"I'm honored," I said.

At the gate, Harrison refused to allow us to take our coats. He was right. There was something about my coat that . . . well, anyway, it didn't really matter.

"You're not making Terry go outside like that?" I protested.

"There's a car just outside the door," said Harrison briefly.

There were quite a lot of people about, and naturally they stared as we were hustled into the car. Terry shivered violently as the snowflakes settled on her bare shoulders. But then we were in the car, and she had more to worry about than the cold.

We were taken to a room in Government House, a small room with nothing important in it—no windows, one door, a table, some chairs. Present were Harrison, Terry and I, and two other men, not in uniform.

"We won't do any pretending, shall we?" asked Harrison.

"Not if you'd rather not," I said agreeably.

"Frankly," said Harrison, "I'd rather you simply decided to go away, Horsefeld."

"Taking Terry with me?"

"She stays here, whatever happens." Casually, he looked her up and down, rather as if he were a censor and she were a dirty book.

Terry went pale.

"She never took to Solitaire's nationalism," I said easily. "I think you'd better let her come to Earth with me."

Harrison shook his head. For a moment something hard showed in his eyes: he didn't like traitors. And there was no denying that Terry was a traitor.

"Didn't you expect her to throw in her lot with me?" I asked.

"We did not. We thought either loyalty or sense would keep her from the stupid course she has taken. Not that it greatly matters. You leave Solitaire no wiser than when you came, Horsefeld."

"You're sending me away, then?"

"After you've both been questioned under drugs. You can see the girl die if you like before you go."

"In that case," I said, "I'd better talk now and save time."

"Bluffing is useless. We're using the drugs anyway."

"But questioning under drugs is extremely slow, as we both know very well. When I talk, do you want these two to hear what I say?" I indicated the two guards.

Harrison nodded to them and they went outside. That was interesting. Our chances of escape remained precisely nil, but the fact that Harrison sent them away probably meant that they were not in the secret—that very few were, in fact.

"I've found out quite a lot about the Arne plan," I said, "and guessed the rest. Enough to stop it, I think."

Harrison's reaction was slight, but there was a reaction. I was greatly encouraged. I didn't know the whole story, any more than a fortune-teller did when a client entered. Yet she was trained to make an initial good guess and go on guessing, instantly abandoning a false trail and following up anything which got a reaction.

I was surprised that Harrison let me do this. However, Harrison erroneously thought he held all the cards.

"Everybody always knew about the disappearances," I said, "but that was Solitaire's affair. We thought rebels were simply eliminated. We didn't know they were being saved up, put in the bank, so to speak. We should have done. It's exactly the kind of crazy scheme Henry Arne *would* think up. Anything to put Solitaire on top—anything."

Harrison looked back at me as blankly as Terry was doing.

Yet he was still listening. So I went on with a new surge of confidence, knowing that even if I didn't have everything, I had enough. "I admit I don't know where the Arne army is, but once I realized that it was the patriots who were put away, I knew they were in suspended animation somewhere. Probably under the

Park. You haven't really been very clever, Harrison. In fact, wasn't it rather stupid to let me know you knew Terry was on my side and that you were watching us, and do nothing until we started wandering around in the Park?"

"Horsefeld," said Harrison quietly, "what are you up to? You know I can't let you go now."

Fool of a man, I thought exultantly. He'd *told* me I was right.

"The end of the plan, I guess," I said, "is that in a few centuries from now Solitaire will gradually waken up. Exports will rise, assets will be converted into cash and machinery. Thousands of young people will be sent to Earth and other planets to attend colleges. They'll come back as trained, up-to-the-minute technicians, and they'll start turning Solitaire into a slick, high-powered, efficient world. Then the army will be awakened and trained. By that time it could be as many billion strong as you want. An army of—"

"For what?" Harrison snapped.

"An army that size consisting entirely of patriots could only be designed for one thing—to make Solitaire top dog in the galaxy. Obviously Arne was a megalomaniac. I don't know how he ensured that only other megalomaniacs should be chosen to play their part in the scheme through the centuries, but evidently he succeeded—"

Harrison's gun came up. He wasn't going to argue. He was merely executing Terry and me on the spot, to make sure there were no more mistakes.

"I wouldn't do it if I were you," I said, putting an edge in my voice. "Not long ago you asked what I was up to. You knew I must be up to something. You were quite right. I was."

"Well?" said Harrison, his gun pointed straight at my heart.

"You've let yourself get behind technologically here on Solitaire," I said steadily. "So far behind that it probably never even occurred to you that everything that was said in this room was being picked up and recorded for delivery to Earth?"

Harrison didn't try to hide his consternation. If I was bluffing, it wouldn't gain me anything but a little time. If I wasn't, neither he nor I mattered much any more.

"These buttons," I said, fingering them. "I expect you had them examined very closely, as you examined everything else—I noticed how thorough the so-called customs examination was. They're simple, ordinary plastic buttons. X-rays would show nothing—you tried all that, of course. If you sawed them up you'd still find nothing. But they happen to be of a new material that resonates with sound vibrations, and on one of the two Terran Navy ships hanging

about just clear of Solitaire's atmosphere the most powerful amplifier you ever saw is able to—"

"I don't believe it."

"You don't have to. I can prove it if you like."

"How?"

"Would you like a bomb dropped on Arne Park in ten minutes' time? Or in a more friendly spirit, some colored lights over Arneville? Let me suggest we make it a tender for Terry and me, landing in front of this building in . . . say an hour's time?"

Harrison was staring at me. Suddenly he said: "Get out of those clothes. I want every stitch you're wearing." He turned his head to Terry. "You too."

I laughed. "Shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted only prevents him getting back in."

"Quickly!" said Harrison sharply. "Or I shoot you both, here and now."

Trying hard not to show her fear of the gun waving about at us, Terry stood up straight, defiantly, and started to unfasten her playsuit. I let her go on, because I had thought of something else I'd better tell the Navy ships, although it should hardly be necessary.

"If you have any idea of chasing the ships or trying to blow them out of space," I said, "forget it. The first ship must already be building up acceleration back to Earth. She has all the information she needs. And you'll never catch her . . . Terry, hold it."

"I want those clothes," said Harrison savagely.

"Take the buttons," I said, tearing them off. "Be reasonable, Tom. If I'm lying, there's no point in destroying my clothes, as I presume you're going to do. If I'm not, it's too late—I've said enough already, and anything else that's said will hardly be worth recording."

Harrison hesitated. "All right," he said abruptly. "Tell them to send down the tender. But I'll take those buttons." He did.

Terry, who had taken off the wrap-around part of her suit and was halfway through making the penultimate sacrifice—I caught a quick glimpse of one rosy firm breast—reclaimed her modesty at the moment of surrender.

"You," said Harrison viciously, his cold gaze on Terry, "are not going."

Dropping the buttons in his pocket, he went out.

Terry said: "Edwin, is all that true?"

"All," I said. "Say what you like, Terry, so long as you remember that F.R.S. is taking careful note of everything you say."

The polite hint startled her only for a moment.

"Are they going to let us go?"

Me, yes. Terry, no. Terry had helped to break the Arne plan—for it was certainly broken now.

Harrison and F.R.S. wouldn't let her get away with it. Nearly everybody is vicious in defeat.

However, if I put my awareness of this into words, it would finish off any chance I might have of saving Terry.

She had not picked up her wrap and although she was holding her suntop together she had not fastened it. I knew that with the frightening directness of innocence she was trying even at this moment to provoke some reaction from me. Although she had never put it into words, she made no secret of her disappointment and pique that I had never treated her in a way I would not have treated my own teenage daughters.

"That crazy story can't be true, can it?"

"It's crazy but it's certainly true in essence."

"That all these people who disappeared are alive, and can be brought back? Steve too?"

"Yes. In a way it's a heroic plan, from the Solitaire angle. An army of specially selected patriots never existed before. It would fight as no army has ever fought . . ."

"I can't understand why you should be allowed to go."

"Well, I'm here as Earth's semi-official representative. And whatever Solitaire might be in a few hundred years, as of now Earth could crack her like an eggshell. If Harrison shot me, Earth could use my death as an excuse to take Solitaire apart."

Since she apparently wasn't going to do it, I gently fastened her halter by the button in the middle and put the wrap around her.

"Edwin," she pleaded, "don't you care about me at all?"

"I care *about* you very much. Care *for* you—no, not in the way you mean. Terry, there hasn't been much love in your life, that's obvious. You don't really want me as a lover, you want me as a father."

"I don't! I—"

"With me as a father, you'd soon find yourself seeing boys your own age with different eyes. A girl your age needs parents so she can grow out of them."

We talked for an hour. Terry never once mentioned her own danger. In much the same way, patients who know they are going to die make plans for the future.

At last Harrison came back. "A small ship has just landed outside," he said.

"So?"

"So you'd better get on it."

"And what are you going to do? What did the Premier say?"

Harrison hesitated, then smiled faintly. "Tell Earth, Horsefeld," he said, "that you can't do a thing to us. As of now, the Arne plan is reversed. If we must—we'll grow rich and fat. We've all the workers we need to transform Solitaire."

I grinned back. "So that's the way of it? That's your business, so long as the original Arne plan is buried. It's nothing to us. Come along, Terry."

"Terry isn't going. I told you."

"Then neither am I."

"Don't be a fool," said Harrison harshly. "Did you ever think there was one chance in a million that we'd let her live?"

Terry tried to hide behind me. As she pressed against me I could feel her heart racing.

"I can make things awkward for you, or easy," I said. "Which is it to be?"

Harrison hesitated again. "I haven't the power to let her go."

"But I'm supposed to go, isn't that so?"

I let the deadlock hang for a few more seconds. Harrison was not really a good actor. His chubby, innocent face might reveal very little; his hesitations and silences revealed a lot.

I was now certain he had been *instructed* to see me off the planet.

"Tell you what," I said at last. "Let us get to the tender, then shoot Terry—and miss. That'll clear you personally."

"Okay," said Harrison instantly.

We walked through Government House, which was silent and empty. We were accompanied not by two but by seven guards, so it was a procession of ten that strode through the empty, echoing building.

We marched out into the night. Again Terry shivered in the snow. The tender was two hundred yards away, a miniature spaceship, sleek, gleaming, and with an air of terrible efficiency.

I hung back to let Terry go first. We were almost at the ship. Terran naval officers were saluting me and eyeing Terry with startled admiration.

She could have stretched out her arms and touched the hull.

Unfortunately it was Harrison I was watching, Harrison did nothing. It was one of the guards who raised his gun suddenly and fired.

The instant before the shot, I pulled Terry's arm and she lurched toward me. Nevertheless, the shot didn't miss. She dropped in the snow with a small red hole in her back.

I swept her up in my arms and leapt inside, knowing Harrison wouldn't let me be shot. Inside the lock I saw familiar faces. "Get off, quick," I said, still holding Terry in my arms. She had not made a sound since the shot. Although I had known she was tiny, she was even lighter than I expected.

There is always a doctor on a tender, by regulation. The doctor stepped forward and led the way to a tiny cabin. I put Terry face down on the bunk.

"Now go away," said the doctor.

In the control room Commander Stimson shook my hand.

"Well, you made it, Edwin. Did you ever hear anything so crazy? Would they have gotten away with it?"

"They might," I said. "Depends on our espionage system a few centuries from now."

"I must say," Stimson protested, "I didn't expect you of all people to bring a half naked girl away with you."

I found it hard to be polite. All my thoughts were in the tiny cabin in which Terry lay still with a bullet through her lung certainly, if not through her heart.

"Funny business altogether," said Stimson, who was a good naval officer but not gifted with much imagination. "Hard to believe some of it. In fact, I don't believe it now."

"We'll leave that to Terran Intelligence," I said.

The tender shot up toward its parent ship. The battleship swallowed it neatly and immediately began to pile on acceleration for Earth.

The door in the little cabin in the tender had not yet opened.

I had to make my report to the captain. I changed my clothes before going back to the tender.

At last the doctor emerged.

"Will she live?" I asked.

"Oh, I shouldn't be surprised. She shouldn't have been moved, you know."

"Can I see her?"

The doctor shrugged.

I went into the cabin quietly. Terry looked ghastly. If I'd seen her like that before seeing the doctor I'd have been sure she was dying. But she was conscious.

"Next stop Earth," I said gently.

"Edwin . . ."

"Don't talk," I said. "And anyway, you're not to call me Edwin any more."

"What am I to call you?"

I said one word very firmly: "Dad."

Few of us have been entirely satisfied with our teachers, but we have been unfortunate indeed if we cannot look back thankfully and gratefully to at least one *teacher who was interested above the average. How much more important, then, must be the role of such a teacher in teaching the so-called "ineducable"? There are those whose mental capacities are stunted by birth, or before; and those whom social environment has warped. And sometimes not even the evil partnership of congenital and environmental affliction seems to offer the full explanation . . .*

NADA

by Thomas M. Disch

"WHAT WORD BEGINS WITH *J*?" Oveta Wohlmuth surveyed the twenty apathetic faces confronting her, the forty dull eyes that watched her only because the seats in the classroom did not comfortably allow them to focus on anything else. "Jill—"

Jill Coldfax looked down at the maple slab of her desk, stolidly silent, invincibly ignorant, resigned and resentful.

"*J*—can't you think of a word that begins with a *J*-sound? Jill?"

Three children laughed; Oveta, for the moment, ignored them. The remaining sixteen faces had sunk, weighted by shame, to contemplate the varnished surfaces of their desks, where, as in mirrors, they were confronted with their own natures: blank tablets upon which years of abuse had left a few beautiless scars as the only evidence of their passage—sixteen faces thus, except for one, which stared at Oveta with disconcerting steadiness, avoiding her glance; which had stared at her so all that day and for many days past.

"Nada—what begins with *J*?"

Nada had been gazing at the monogram on Oveta's collar. Since she had been moved, in November, to the front row (where it was harder to go to sleep) Nada Perez had learned to achieve trance state without even closing her eyes.

"Nada!"

"Kangaroo. *K* is for Kangaroo."

"We were on J, Nada." For all that, it was a kind reproach.

"I thought you asked that already. J is for Jam." Nada's eyes slipped back from the ironic twist of Oveta's lip to the soothing nothingness of the silver O.

"And what is a kangaroo?"

Nobody knew. She sketched one on the blackboard and pointed out Australia on the Repogle globe, but the forty eyes rested on these artifacts of their education with the same glazed and weighty disinterest that they had evidenced for anything that came before them in the guise of learning.

These children were the special problems in a school for the exceptional: special in the sense that all the other teachers there had despaired of them. All, that is, except Oveta Wohlmuth, who, partly because they were her job and partly because it was natural to her, was more optimistic. "I *can* teach them to learn," she had said once to a friend, once her fiancee, now only a colleague, a specialist himself in exceptional children—but exceptional for their talent rather than their lack of it.

"Why bother?" he had scoffed. "So that they can, after great labors, achieve something else than mediocrity?"

"Why ever bother, John? I bother because others won't, because someone must."

Sometimes, fortunately, it was worth her bother. Sometimes she would break through the apathy, see light dawning in eyes suddenly alive, watch the first floods of knowledge wash across the shallows of a retarded face. At such moments she could have answered her doubters more eloquently. Many years ago there had been Alfredo, who had become an Air Force officer and was occasionally mentioned in news accounts of Pentagon intrigues; and, more recently, Marion, who had married a novelist and was raising three dismayingly bright children. They, and their like, were the reasons she could not stop bothering, although she was now past fifty and, with her doctorate and years of experience with "special problems," could easily have retired to the relative ease of college teaching. That she did two evenings a week.

Now there was Nada.

A very special problem, Nada. The girl knew much that she would not admit to knowing: the alphabet, words like kangaroo. Oveta suspected that the real limits of her clandestine knowledge were far broader than her few accidental betrayals of it could lead one justly to believe. In fact, she suspected that Nada was a genius-in-hiding, and, like a hunter close on the scent, she was excited at the prospect of scaring that genius out of cover.

But Nada was a difficult quarry. She could be relentlessly, stupifyingly dull. Only once that Oveta

had seen had Nada forgotten to be dull. It had been during art period, the day the class had tried watercolors. While the other nineteen special problems wrestled unhappily with the special problems of watercolor, Nada painted. She *painted.*

A picture of the gray Brooklyn tenements outside the schoolroom, not distorted into forbidding expressionistic shapes, but quietly real: full volumes in true spaces—beautiful. It reminded Oveta somehow of a seascape: the elemental rhythms of the calligraphy, the subdued colors, its peace.

So it was that that afternoon—the Day of the Kangaroo—Oveta asked Nada to stay after class. Nada stood before the teacher's desk, a dowdy twelve-year-old, fat, sallow, her clothes in need of laundering, her black hair hanging down to her shoulders in untended, greasy curls, dark eyes staring with steady, dull fixity on Oveta's silver pin.

"How do you feel you're coming along in school, Nada?" The girl shifted her weight with lethargic uneasiness. "I mean . . . you don't seem to take an interest in classwork. Perhaps it bores you?"

"No."

"Do you like school?"

"Yes, I like school."

"What do you like about it?" Oveta asked slyly.

"I—" Nada's mouth hung open as though she were waiting for Oveta to fill it with words she could not invent herself. Then, when the words did not come, it slowly closed.

"Do you like art class? You do very nice things, you know. With a little practice you could become a good painter. Would you like that?"

"I—" Then, slowly, it closed.

"Of course, practice is important. Do you practice at home?"

"No."

"Would you like to?"

"Yes. . . ." An uncertain *yes,* but for all that, Oveta had made her say it.

"Here, then, is a set of watercolor paints, and here is some special paper. The paints belong to the school, so take good care of them."

They lay in Nada's hands, like alien artifacts demanding explication.

"You can take them home—to practice with. Now run along, darling, and show me what you've done, tomorrow."

Oveta never called a child darling.

"A spaceship?" Mrs. Butler asked.

"Well, it didn't look quite like a spaceship," Oveta went on. "It was shaped a little more like a cornucopia."

"Do you still have the picture?"

"No, Nada took it back home with her."

"How would she know the exact dimensions of a spaceship?" Butler asked in a rhetorical tone. "Or anyone else, for that matter? Especially a twelve-year-old retarded Puerto Rican girl. Or, even if she had some idea from tv or the movies, her draughtsmanship might not have been up to the job."

"Her draughtsmanship is excellent. Judge for yourself; there's an example hanging in your living room."

In the living room at that moment there was a shiver of minor-keyed music, a voice that cried: *"But don't you understand? Earth is being invaded!"*

"Turn down the volume, Billy," Butler shouted into the living room. Then, turning back to Oveta: *"She* did *that!*—and I thought at first glance it was a Marin! Mmm. Is your plan working out with her?" A tone of professional interest had crept into his voice. "Is she doing better in school?"

"Not that I can see."

"Martians!" said the voice in the next room. *"Now I've heard everything!"*

"Don't be discouraged," Mrs. Butler said with perfunctory good cheer. "Would you like another piece of pie?"

"Thank you, no."

"There they are now—coming out of the sewers!"

"Would you tell Billy to turn down the tv," Butler shouted. "You can't hear yourself think. Oveta, that girl is *talented.* She'll waste away in that slum, marry some dock worker, and never be seen again if we don't do something for her—and soon."

"Billy, turn off the tv and come and have another piece of pie."

"Oh, how horr—"

Oveta smiled. "That's why I came to see you."

"Why does she have this block against learning anything. I've heard of geniuses camouflaging as average kids—but as a sub-normal?"

"Where is it?" Billy asked, taking his place at the table. His mother handed him the pie.

"She's a very strange girl," Oveta said. "I don't understand her at all."

"A pretty girl?" Mrs. Butler asked.

"On the contrary, quite unattractive. She lives with her mother; no father is mentioned on her enrollment card. . . ."

Mrs. Butler tssked. "And the mother's on relief, I suppose."

"I suppose," Oveta grudged. "A slum background. No books in the home. She probably didn't learn English till she came to school. It's not unusual."

"She's unusual, though," Butler insisted.

"Dad, do Martians have tantacles?"

"Don't interrupt the grown-ups, Billy," Mrs. Butler scolded. "And

don't be silly—there's no such thing as Martians."

"He's only asking a question, Bridget. And we don't know there aren't any Martians. When we land a spaceship on Mars, Billy," he explained, "we'll find out whether there are Martians—and if they have tentacles."

"On tv," Billy explained patiently, "they showed one. It wasn't on Mars. It was in the sewer, and it had tentacles and big eyes. . . ."

"That was just a story. They weren't the *real* Martians," Mrs. Butler added sarcastically, for her husband's benefit.

". . . and they were going to conquer Earth," Billy concluded.

"Martians are a much-maligned people," Oveta said with mock seriousness. "Always the invaders. If I were a Martian, I think I'd settle down and take it easy."

Butler's eyes twinkled. "Like Mrs. Perez?" he suggested.

"Yes," Oveta returned, "like Mrs. Perez." Mrs. Butler's cooking was beginning to have its usual effects. She felt the first spasm of indigestion.

"If you folks will excuse me, it's time I started on my way home."

"Watch out for the Martians!" Billy shouted to her when she reached the door. Billy doubled with laughter. His father chuckled.

Outside, the air was misty—verging on rain. Oveta raised the hood of her coat.

—Is it too late to go there? she wondered. As though there were ever really a proper time for it!

Once already that week, when Nada had shown her the watercolor of the odd, cornucopean spaceship (starship, she had called it) circling above a distant, moonlit Earth and then had returned the watercolors and left the classroom with a mumbled "Thanks," Oveta had given way to an unconsidered impulse and followed the girl home. Just to see, she had told herself, what Nada's neighborhood was like. She had kept a block's distance between her and her quarry, careful of the film of ice that slicked the streets, preventing herself from thinking of anything but the mechanics of pursuit and concealment; on her right hand, an unending, undifferentiated facade of brick and brownstone, on her left, a monotonous procession of parked cars or, sometimes, banks of soot-crusted snow; and Nada always a block ahead.

She had been too ashamed of her senseless pursuit of Nada to mention it to Butler that evening. She was still ashamed—and upset—remembering Nada's face at the moment before she had gone up the brownstone steps and into the tenement building, glancing back, not even *looking*, but knowing that Oveta was there and viewing her as casually as if she had been only a part of the landscape. With neither special recognition nor sur-

prise, simply knowing Oveta was there and then turning away, while Oveta's face had crimsoned and blanched with shame.

Now, as the shame of remembering ebbed away again, Oveta climbed into her gray Renault (thinking again that her legs were really too long for a compact car), and set off in the direction of the waterfront.

It was nine forty-five. The drive, from Butler's apartment toward the waterfront, took her half an hour. She stopped the car by a candy store one block from Nada's building. It had begun to rain.

—In general, the evidence for telepathy is very slight, she thought, while, on the other side of rationality, her mind conjured up the image of a large-eyed, tentacled Martian. (If I were a Martian, she remembered saying, and then Billy's laughter, his father's chuckle: *Watch out for them!*) She pulled her cloth coat more tightly about her and set off against the wind that siphoned up the street from the East River.

By the time she reached 1324, Nada's address, she was chilled through. It was a narrow, six-floor walk-up, with a facade identical to five other buildings in the row. The half-flight of brownstone steps that projected from the doorway onto the sidewalk had been painted bilge-green, a color much-favored by Brooklyn landlords. The green shone with incandescent fervor in the light of the streetlamp overhead. Oveta hesitated at the foot of the stairs.

An old woman trundling a baby carriage passed on the sidewalk and stopped before the row of garbage cans stuffed full for the morning's collection beside the entrance way to 1324. She rummaged through the refuse, oblivious of Oveta, and fished out three nylon stockings knitted into a ball and a broken umbrella. These she put in the carriage and trundled on to the next hoard.

"Starlight, starbright, hope to see a ghost tonight!"

Across from 1324 was an asphalt lot, pretending with a few metal poles to be a playground, from which three small figures ran now, pell-mell, giggling.

"Ready or not, here I come."

It was *almost* Nada's voice. Oveta couldn't be sure. Hesitantly, she crossed the narrow ill-lit street. The girl who was *it* couldn't be seen now. Oveta thought she heard, from *somewhere,* a child's giggle.

"Nada?" she called out uncertainly.

The rain was now a steady drizzle that seemed to hang stationary in the air, haling the streetlamps with coronnas of cold, blue light. Across the street in 1324 Oveta saw the silhouette of a fat woman in a third floor window. As she watched it, it moved out of sight.

"Nada, are you here?"

"Lousy weather," a voice behind

her piped. Turning to see who had addressed her, she became aware that her coat was soaked through.

"But not so bad for January." He chuckled, as though it were the punch line of a joke, the rest of which he had forgotten or did not need to recount. A man's voice, though high-pitched, and wearing a man's clothes, but not the figure of a man. Sitting in the swing (a child's swing that adult hips could not have squeezed into), his feet dangled inches from the asphalt. A midget—or a dwarf. Oveta could not decide, for the swing lay in the shadow of the adjacent building.

"I don't recognize your face. New in the neighborhood?"

"Yes. I mean—a visitor."

"Thought so. I know most the faces on this street. I used to live over there . . ." he waved his hand in a vague arc. ". . . over there," he echoed himself. ". . . and I couldn't help overhearing you mention Nada. You know her?"

"Yes, I do."

"Nice girl. Make a good wife for some lucky fellow." He chuckled.

"Do *you* know Nada?" Oveta asked over-eagerly, for the little man made her feel uncomfortable, afraid that he might think she patronized him.

"Nice girl," he repeated.

"You've spoken with her?"

"Well, she doesn't have much to say—you know how it is. Women aren't great talkers."

"No," Oveta agreed reluctantly, for her experience had led her to the opposite conclusion.

"Men are the talkers. Men will make plans, have the big ideas, reach for the stars. Talking, all the time, like me."

She smiled, as a practical measure to keep her teeth from chattering. "Spaceships are certainly a man's idea," she volunteered.

"But it's the woman," he went on, beginning to rock back and forth in the enclosing seat of the swing, "that get things done. From day to day. Practical. A woman."

In the awkward interval of silence that ensued, broken only by the squeaking of the swing and the susurrus of the rain (which had become heavier, falling in distinct droplets on her cheeks), Oveta stood to leave.

"Nada," the little man began, and ended.

"Nada?" Oveta questioned. The momentum of the swing had died out. His head hung slumped onto his chest. "Are you all right?"

"I'm fine. It's nice weather for January. The rain. I pretend it's warm."

"Could I take you home?"

"I don't have a home."

"I'm sorry. To a hotel somewhere, then? I could loan you a little money. The rain isn't really very warm."

"My wife, you know," he con-

tinued, ignoring her offer, perhaps not even hearing it, "my wife died."

"I'm sorry."

"Well, that's the way the tide rises." He chuckled.

Slowly, Oveta retreated toward the street, stepping backward, her eyes on the man, whose hands now fell limply out of the sidebars of the swing. When she reached the sidewalk, she turned.

There was only one light on in 1324, in a third-floor window. Even in silhouette, she could recognize Nada, and she imagined her eyes, dull, impassive, and knowing, offering no recognition, as though Oveta were no more than a figure in a landscape of her own invention.

"She *knows*," Oveta whispered. She began to run.

In the car, she discovered that she had lost one of her shoes on the street, and she had to wait several minutes before her hand was steady enough to insert the ignition key.

"You mean you've *never* been in Manhattan before?"

"No," Nada repeated, "never."

"Amazing! Why, you're a pure specimen of the Brooklynite. I sometimes think that I've been parochial. . . . Do you know what parochial means?"

"It's a kind of school, but you mean narrow-minded, don't you?"

Oveta laughed. "The opposite of cosmopolitan—or international. And speaking of that—those are the United Nations buildings on your right. Are you interested in architecture?"

"No. I mean—it doesn't seem necessary. Nobody needs a building like that to live in."

"Nobody needs paintings for that matter."

"True."

Oveta was inebriated with her success. The hunt was over; her quarry had broken cover, and she would never be able to return to her pose of numbed stupidity—Oveta would see to that.

That morning, Saturday, Oveta had awaken with the beginnings of a cold and the conviction that she would never be able to speak to Nada again. For exactly that reason she had resolved to return to 1324 on the pretext of taking Nada to the Metropolitan Museum, a visit that Nada had once luke-warmly agreed to make. An unannounced visit to a student's home and then her virtual abduction were not professional tactics, but Oveta had convinced herself that, unless she openly declared herself to Nada, the girl would forever distrust her. Since Nada knew already she was being hunted, Oveta had to tell her *why*.

The plan worked smoothly. Nada had been delivered over to her abductress without the least fuss. Of Mrs. Perez, Oveta had seen only one suspicious eye when

she had opened the door and a fat-wreathed forearm thrusting Nada outside. As soon as they had gotten into the Renault, Oveta had declared: "You know, Nada, I think you are probably a very intelligent girl and I think you're trying to hide it."

And Nada had replied without hesitation: "I know. I know you thought that." And then shrugged. But, ever so slightly, she had been smiling. Her eyes had not yet been glazed with their customary dullness but had examined the car with curiosity. "I've never been in one of these before," she had said, the first time, to Oveta's knowledge, she had ever spoken without being addressed a question.

"In a Renault, you mean?"

"In a car. Does it go?" Nada was smiling.

"Yes, it goes."

"The Metropolitan Museum," Nada had said dreamily. "Well, well. . . ."

"Well, here it is, Nada: the Metropolitan Museum. How do you like it?"

"It's too big; it's ugly!"

"Don't judge a book by its cover."

"Why, Miss Wohlmuth, I don't judge books at all."

Oveta laughed, until she began to choke. Her cold was growing worse. "That must change," she brought out weakly, as they mounted the museum steps.

Nada pouted. Each new expression on the girl's face astonished Oveta, as though she were witnessing a prodigy of nature. She didn't feel entirely in control of the situation (as she had with Alfredo or Marion), but it was more exciting that way.

They hesitated in the Grank Hall, dwarfed by colossal Corinthian columns. Oveta felt awed by the sheer size of the space enclosed by the columns; unconsciously she began to breathe more deeply. Nada, on the other hand, seemed altogether unaffected.

"The paintings are on the second floor, and over to your right are the Egyptian rooms. Hieroglyphics, big basalt statues, and part of a pyramid, a small one. Even so, you'd probably find it all too oversized for your tastes."

"Oh, but I like the Egyptians. They never changed—their art, the way they lived. If it hadn't been for other people coming in, interfering, they would always have stayed the same."

"I suppose we're all like that."

"Let's see the paintings."

Nada gave one glance at the Renaissance paintings and snorted with contempt. Only once in these rooms did Nada show enthusiasm to any degree—for Crivelli's *Madonna and Child*. It was also a favorite of Oveta's.

"Look at the fly on the ledge—the shadow it casts," Oveta pointed out.

"Mmm . . . No, what *I* like is the thing hanging up at the top, by the apples. Its shape. What is it, some kind of vegetable?"

"Squash, I think," Oveta answered crestfallen. "Or maybe a cucumber. The draughtsmanship is beautiful, isn't it? Look at the Virgin's fingers, the curve of her wrist."

"Oh, but that's so *easy!*"

"You try it. You'll see how easy it is."

"What I mean is, it's already been done. Everything here has already been done. Why should I try to do something that's already been done?"

Like a witness going down the line-up at the police station, Nada was hurried past the accumulated centuries of painting. There was little that roused her interest. Bruegel's *Harvesters* inspired her to say respectfully, "It makes you feel sort of sleepy," but her response to Rosa Bonheur's *Horse Fair* reawakened Oveta's worst fears. *The Horse Fair* was a large, furious painting of horses rearing and plunging and galloping on an arc that seemed to sweep out of the picture-plane toward the spectator. One could almost hear the shouting, the stomping, the neighing of the horses, the wind of their running.

"How awful!" Nada gasped.

"Why awful?"

"Oh, it's just too—I mean everything is going somewhere. It makes me dizzy. And a *woman* painted it!"

"Rosa Bonheur, about a century ago. How did you know?" They were standing several feet back from the huge canvas, and at that distance the nameplate was illegible.

"I—" Her mouth hung open, waiting for the words to fill it. Oveta grew frightened, recognizing the characteristic expression of insensibility that was stealing over Nada's features: jaws slackened, eyes fixed on a void, the flesh of her face utterly relaxed, inert.

"Shall we get something to eat? Nada! Listen to me! Would you like to eat now? Shall we go to the restaurant I told you about?"

"Yes."

In the museum restaurant, Nada regained some degree of alertness by being forced to select a pastry from the rack. By the time she had finished eating it, she seemed fully recovered, and Oveta relaxed again. She had let her coffee go cold before her, tasted once and set aside. Her throat was sore and dry, but the coffee's steaming bitterness repelled her. It's coming along nicely, she thought: I'll be in bed with a cold tomorrow.

"Well, I'm surprised at you, Nada," she said with forced cheer. "I thought you'd find a few Old Masters, at least, who could measure up to your standards. Your tastes seem to be pretty solidly formed."

"Not at all. I've never thought about painting before. But I *do* like the Flemish painters better than the Italian ones. Their women have better shapes."

(—Like squash, Oveta thought.) She said, "That's a pretty definite taste, it seems to me. Where do you learn all the things you know? You must do a lot of reading."

"I *can't* read. You know that. Isn't it time to go home."

"It's still early, Nada. Would you like to take a walk through the park? We could see Cleopatra's Needle and get some fresh air. And it's only a short way to the Planetarium."

"To see the stars, you mean?"

"Yes. The stars."

"No, that would be . . . boring." She yawned for emphasis.

"Are you tired?"

"Yes. Let's go home."

Last night's rain had frozen to the streets, and Oveta had to divide her attention between Nada and the mechanics of driving. Twice Nada fell asleep, only to be awaken when the car skidded uncertainly to a stop at icy street corners. Oveta manufactured commonplace conversation, pointing out the buildings along Fifth Avenue: St. Patrick's ("No," Nada said, "I don't go to church."); the Library ("No, I don't have a card."); and the Empire State Building ("How awful!")

Finally Oveta blurted out the question she had meant to introduce off-handedly, at an appropriate moment, but that moment had never come. "What are you going to do when you grow up, Nada?"

"Oh—get married, I guess."

"Do you have any boyfriends yet?" Oveta asked doubtfully.

"Mmmm." Nada snuggled into the chill plastic upholstery.

"But don't you want anything *else*? Painting, or some kind of job?"

"No."

"Nothing else at all?"

"No. Nothing. It's cold in here, don't you think?"

"We're almost home now. Do you suppose I could stop in for a moment to have a cup of coffee? It is, as you say, cold in here. Something must be wrong with the heater."

"I guess so," Nada said, with grave doubt.

"If it's too much trouble . . ."

"No. You can come in."

"And in good time! Here we are . . . 1324."

Standing in the garlic-weighted hallway, while Nada negotiated with her mother to let her into the apartment, Oveta listened to the chirruping and trills of what seemed to be a whole aviary of canaries in the apartment opposite the Perez'.

Nada came to the door. "Just a minute. Mommy wants to clean up."

"Don't hurry." But Nada had already disappeared into the apartment. Down the hallway, Oveta watched a fat woman with a shopping bag full of groceries labor up the narrow stairway to the next floor, stopping at every third step for breath. Over the trilling of the canaries Oveta could hear the strained tones of Nada's mother, tugging at something and uttering Spanish imprecations. *"Vayas con diablo,"* and *"Muerto."*

"Come in." (—And in good time. Oveta thought.)

"Thank you." She offered her hand to Mrs. Perez, who regarded it as though she saw through the flesh to a particularly unwholesome tumor. "I'm so glad to meet you at last, Mrs. Perez."

"No hablo Ingles."

"She can't speak English," Nada interpreted.

Oveta repeated her lukewarm amenity in Spanish: *"Mucho gusto do concerla, Senora Perez."* Mrs. Perez turned her back on Oveta to throw a pile of unlaundered clothes from an armchair to the unswept floor. Cockroaches scuttered from the heap.

"Yeah," Mrs. Perez said, "the same to you. Have a chair."

"Why—thank you." Oveta repressed her scruples and sat in the threadbare armchair. There might be bugs, but she could take a bath later, at home.

"You wanna drink?"

"Just a cup of—a drink? Whatever you're having. Thank you."

"Nada, get some glasses."

While Nada went into the next room, her mother sat down on a mattress on the floor and stared at Oveta, who was herself staring at the room in which she found herself, like a Dowager Queen touring her dungeons, suddenly trapped. Oveta could not imagine what measures of tidying Mrs. Perez had taken with the room, for it seemed in a nearly perfect state of disorder: clothes, blankets, and what seemed no more than rags, in various conditions of dirtiness, were heaped over and stuffed under the few scant pieces of furniture. The walls were a pastiche of wall-papers (Oveta counted four distinct patterns) and green paint in various stages of discoloration. The patchwork of linoleum and bare boards on the floor presented a similar spectacle, like an uncared-for billboard in the warehouse district from which the rains had peeled the years' detritus of posters irregularly to create a ragged montage of meaninglessness. Yet, the final impression was not one of wild disarray, or even of untidiness, but rather, sedative, asleep, like a garden gone to seed.

Perhaps it was the figure of Mrs. Perez that produced that impression, for her figure certainly dominated the room. She was a gargantuan woman, of vast breasts and a stomach that hung, gothic and pendulous, over the edge of

the mattress and rested on a patch of bare, unpainted boards. It was her face that most fascinated Oveta, for it was the nightmare image of the face that Nada's could become: devoid of expression, stuporous, and vaguely, almost obscenely sensuous, like a composite allegory of the vices, the more lethargic vices.

Nada handed her mother three grease-clouded tumblers, which the woman filled brim-full with gin. (Oveta presumed it was gin; the bottle, which she replaced at the side of the mattress, was unlabelled.) One tumbler she handed to Oveta, one she kept for herself, the last was Nada's. Oveta sipped warily at her drink; it was gin. Nada drank from her glass as though it contained, at the worst, a sweetened medicine.

Outrageous! Oveta thought. But she kept the thought to herself.

"Mud in your eye!" Mrs. Perez mumbled into her glass, which she proceeded to drain in two swallows and a switch of her tongue.

"Cheers," Oveta returned.

A smile faded from Nada's lips. Her eyes began to take on the glazed, benign indifference of her mother's.

"Nada has told me so much about you," Oveta lied.

"Yeah, kids talk too much."

"Really? I've always thought her a very *quiet* girl. Until today," she added, smiling at Nada, who lowered her eyes to stare at her tumbler of gin and seemed to blush.

"Whadya say?" Mrs. Perez poured herself another tumblerfull.

"Nothing. Nothing at all."

"Mud in your eye."

"Cheers," Oveta replied gloomily, taking a sip of gin. Actually, the liquor felt good trickling down her sore throat, but she felt that she would lose any advantage she possessed in Nada's eyes by seeming to enjoy it.

"Nice apartment."

"Like hell," Mrs. Perez said.

"I beg your pardon?"

"Like hell," Nada repeated. "But I think it's a nice apartment too. Mommy's joking."

Mrs. Perez no longer made a pretense of sitting up. She lay back on the mattress, her eyes closed, and began to snore.

"Your mother seems to be quite . . . worn out."

"She's always that way."

Only a few rays of the afternoon's dying light penetrated the grime-coated windows to spend their power dimly and to no purpose upon the montage of floor and walls and heaped clothing; darkness spread over the room like a rising tide.

"Nada," Oveta whispered, "you don't want *this*." Her hands gestured awkwardly, but her tone conveyed her disgust eloquently. "You can't. Nada, let me help you get away from this."

"But, I do."

"Nada, please."

"This *is* what I want. I *like* it."

Mrs. Perez rolled over on the mattress. "Get out of here," she grunted. "Go on, get out."

When Oveta reached the door, she imagined she heard a chuckle, high-pitched and mocking, but she realized it was only the canaries trilling in the next apartment.

Oveta Wohlmuth's living room was untidy. It could never have been called untidy before, but now there was no other word for it.

Oveta had been in bed (or on the sofa) for four days with her cold. Saturday evening, after returning home in a high fever, she had had to call in a doctor. Sunday she could not remember at all, and the rest of the week until today she had spent impatiently convalescing from what threatened constantly to become pneumonia. Breathing was still slightly painful. Coughing was an agony, but holding it back was worse agony. The doctor had been strict: she could not leave her apartment.

She had contented herself with phoning the substitute teacher twice a day. Nada had not come to school on Monday, or on Tuesday, or yesterday, or today. Perhaps, Oveta thought, Nada had caught cold too, but it was a very faint *perhaps*. The school nurse had visited 1324 and claimed that she couldn't find the Perez' apartment.

Oveta had made another series of phone calls while she was confined to her apartment, breathing in the medicated fumes that steamed out of the vaporizer. She had called Butler and social workers she knew and, by force of will and patient and repeated explanations, had extorted from them the papers she would need to remove Nada temporarily from her mother. Temporarily—while that woman was tried for incompetence and a number of other charges that Oveta had not too closely inquired of. She had also persuaded the welfare agency to allow her to call for Nada, when the legal process had been completed. Now she was waiting for Butler to arrive with those papers.

To pass the time, she made a few ineffectual gestures of housecleaning, but she quickly exhausted herself and ended up on the sofa, fighting to regain her breath. Butler found her not quite recovered.

"Are you sure you're well enough to leave the house?"

"Positive. Now, help me on with my coat, will you? God, I still feel so *guilty!* It's my first legal kidnapping. Usually, I'm against meddling."

"From what you told me about Mrs. Perez. . . ."

"I know. But I still feel guilty. It's irrational."

In Butler's car, with a travelling blanket over her legs, she pulled

the hood of her coat close about her fever-reddened face. Butler could see the trembling of her hands even beneath the bulky fur mittens.

"Oveta, if you're too sick—"

"Damn the sickness! We've got a job to do. Now let's get on with it."

The car pulled away from the curb. Oveta kept glancing to Butler's face and away; several times her lips parted to speak. Then, hesitatingly, she began: "When I was sick, John, I couldn't help thinking about Nada. I couldn't read. My eyes would begin to smart, and my mind would wander. I kept thinking of Nada.

"I was sick. I'm still sick, for that matter. What I mean to say is, I don't really *believe* what I'm going to tell you. . . . No that's not true either. The commonplace, common-sense Miss Wohlmuth doesn't believe it, but I think *I* do. At least, it's *possible*—and that's bad enough."

Butler made a *moue* of impatience. "Get to the point."

"Well, then. Imagine a race, John—an alien race, telepathic, living on another planet, in another part of the galaxy. Imagine that they have spaceships—no, starships. They've travelled everywhere, seen everything—or enough to satisfy them that they've seen all they need to. Telepaths can share their knowledge. What one has known and seen, they all know and remember. Their minds are filled with it: knowledge, memories, piling up through the generations."

"A dismal picture," Butler commented.

"So dismal that they might decide just to blot it out."

"You're shivering, Oveta."

"And you're trying to humor me. Just listen for a minute. Nada is such an alien. She's telepathic. I've seen that for myself. And I've already told you about that starship she painted, drawn, probably, from a memory in her mother's mind. And her attitude, her uncanny quiesence—her background—can't be explained in any other way."

"You explained it well enough another way—gin."

"No, let me finish. Mrs. Perez is not human: she doesn't look human or act human. She's a vegetable on two feet. She has only one purpose in life: homeostasis, physiological equilibrium, Nirvhana. She eats, she drinks, she sleeps, she breeds more vegetables, and that's all she wants out of life. A Homeostat. There are thousands more like her, and God only knows how many of them are. . . ."

Butler laughed indulgently. "It's a nice theory. It fits the facts. But a simpler theory will fit the facts just as well."

"It doesn't fit the way I feel about Nada—and Nada's mother."

"Look, Oveta—you've been

sick, and that scene with Mrs. Perez upset you. We all feel uneasy about the Mrs. Perezes of this world. She a Homeostat, as you put it, and she's turning Nada into another. That doesn't mean she's an alien telepath, for God's sake."

"Women," Oveta went on dreamily, "*women* are more likely to be vegetables, you know. Squash and cucumbers. I'll tell you something else. It was explained to me by a widower of my acquaintance, but I didn't understand him at the time. They are married to little men—midgets. It was the men who built the space ships in the first place, but the women got their way in the end, when the men were ready to give up, when they'd seen all there was to see, when their minds were filled up until they couldn't hold any more."

"So they came to Earth to go on relief?" Butler asked mockingly.

"Because it was the easiest thing to do. They could leave the shell of their own civilization behind. It was too much trouble to keep it intact, and they only wanted homeostasis after all. Well, they've got it."

"Oveta, if I didn't know you better, I'd think you'd cracked under the strain."

"That's why I told you and not someone else. I know it's a theory for the casebooks, but when I lay in bed thinking of Nada, all the pieces began to lock together, by themselves. I feel like the victim of my own idea. It's not just for Nada's sake that I want to get her out of the nightmare she's living in. At the hospital, they're bound to discover any—anomalies. I hope I'm wrong, but if there are aliens. . . ." Oveta began to cough, a lung-ripping cough that brought the conversation to an abrupt end.

"1324," Butler announced, as they stood before the door of the tenement, "where two civilizations meet. Do you think you can get up the steps?"

"I'll make it." On the second floor landing, where she was attacked by another fit of coughing, she was almost proven wrong.

In the third floor hallway, the lights were dim, the air heavy with garlic, and the canaries were still to be heard. "You knock," she asked Butler. "I feel slightly *deja vu*."

The door was answered by a woman Oveta had never seen before. She was very fat; her eyes were dull. "Perez? Perez don't live here any more."

"Where have they moved? It's very important that we know."

"I dunno. They just *moved*. Away."

"But *where?*" The door was closed in Oveta's face.

Her eyes burned with an intensity: of fear; of sickness; of understanding too well. "We *won't* find her new address either. Did you see her? She was one of them.

I could tell. They knew I'd come back for Nada. I must have been thinking about it when I left them, and they read my mind."

Behind them, down the hall, there was the patter of a child's steps ascending the stairway.

"Now I'll never find out. They've won!"

"Oveta, be reasonable. Mrs. Perez didn't need telepathy to figure you'd be back. Oveta? Oveta, for God's sake, what's the matter!"

A boy edged by them in the hallway and entered what had been the Perez' apartment. He was not quite three feet tall, and he wore a moustache.

Oveta had fainted.

Then she was outside again, and the weather seemed milder than it had a minute ago. Children were playing in the asphalt lot, and down the street Oveta recognized the old woman with the baby carriage.

"Are you all right, darling?"

Oveta smiled at the unfamiliar tenderness, then, remembering what she had just seen, the smile stiffened into a rictus of terror. "That midget in the hall. Did you see him? He had a moustache."

"That was a boy—just a little boy. His moustache was probably painted on. Little boys will do that." He rested his hand on her brow.

"You've helped me so much, John. I don't know how to thank you."

"Oveta, look—in the ashcan. Isn't that an art pad?"

"Do you think—?"

Butler removed the tablet of watercolor paper from the garbage pail and shook off the coffee grounds that covered it. A drawing fell out.

"The spaceship," they said in chorus. And, indeed, it was the spaceship, poised, above the hazy globe of Earth, at the instant before its descent, like an enormous apple just caught in the grip of Newton's Laws.

"Is there anything else?" Oveta asked, hoping there was, and hoping, as well, against it.

Butler opened the pad and grew numb, as before a basilisk.

"Let me see!"

"It doesn't mean anything. A child's imagination. Nothing . . . at all. *Oh, how horr—"*

Oveta grabbed the watercolor pad. She began to scream, and then to cough.

Underneath the picture, in an almost illegible scrawl, Nada had pencilled the words: MOMMY AND DADDY.

"They aren't from Puerto Rico, are they," Butler said expressionlessly. "Farther, much farther, much farther away."

The woman was recognizably "Mrs. Perez." Nada had captured perfectly the stuporous expression, the ponderous weight of the breasts and abdomen. Of the man, only his face was visible: eyes twinkling

with an ageless wisdom and unwanted knowledge, an ironic smile on his thin lips. The rest of him—his dwarf's body—was nestled securely in Mrs. Perez's marsupial pouch.

Hannes Bok

A notice of the death of Hannes Bok is something which we wish we never had to write. He died in New York City on April 11, 1964 at the age of 50, having been ill a very short time. The beautiful cover which he painted for Roger Zelazny's A ROSE FOR ECCLESIASTES in our November, 1963 issue was probably the last example of commercial art to come from his brush. His distinctive and unmistakable illustrations had for many years prior to this been largely absent from magazines, but he never stopped drawing and painting and experimenting. At the time of his death he was working on both a collection of masks intended for museum possession and a series of illustrations in wonderful color for the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. Hannes Bok's extreme shyness, as well as his ever-deepening preoccupation with other matters, led to an increasing isolation from the rest of the world; but his never-failing boyish enthusiasm—which combined curiously with his snow-white hair—continued up to the very end. He had been a pupil of Maxfield Parrish, and was well worthy of his master. In his tiny apartment at the top of a tall tenement-house he practised not only his visual art, but (like a character from a story by Clark Ashton Smith) the arcane and archaic art of the astrologer. Our friend had turned his back on the commercial and financial success which could have been his, and on the feuds and factions of the world; he lived humbly, frugally, and contentedly with his cat and his dog and his self-created treasures. Devoid of ordinary ambition, Hannes Bok's only material goal was the purchase of a small plot of ground in the mountains of New England, where he could build himself a tiny house and continue his work free from the dirt and racket of the city. He should have had it, and we are so very sorry that he didn't.

-Avram Davidson

THE RED CELLS

by Theodore L. Thomas

ABOUT ONE-FIFTEENTH OF THE human body weight is accounted for by blood. It amounts to 4 to 6 quarts. Each cubic millimeter—a volume equal to that of the head of a small pin—contains some 5 million of the red cells known as erythrocytes. Each red cell is in the shape you would get if you squeezed a soft rubber ball between your thumb and your forefinger; it's a biconcave disk. The red cells are largely made of hemoglobin, a union of an iron-containing compound called hemin, and a protein called globin. Human blood is so loaded with hemoglobin that every 100 cc. contains about 15 grams of it.

The function of the hemoglobin is to pick up oxygen in the lung capillaries and cart it around the body, delivering it to the tissues that need it. The red cells also pick up carbon dioxide and take it back to the lungs to be expelled during breathing. So all in all, the red cells are not by any means the least important substance in the body. In fact, there is a feeling among some scientists that red cells have a great deal to do with longevity and life and death, and things like that.

Recent research has shown that red cells pass through cycles. At certain times they are more fragile than at other times. The fragility was measured by the resistance of the red cells to heat. The standard test involved finding out how many seconds were required for half the red cells to die in a sample maintained at 56 degrees C. This thermal fragility was taken as a measure of the ability of the cells to stay alive and perform their functions. An increase in the thermal resistance of the cells means an increase in the biophysical resistance of the human body.

The cells were more resistant in the winter months, apparently in response to more stringent living conditions. The cells of younger people were more resistant than those of older folk. In very old people there was a last rallying

point of improved cell fragility, which then faded and was followed by a decline that led to death.

Well, we know what should be done now. The scientists ought to find the factors that make the cells tough. Is it a chemical additive? A reaction condition? Whatever it is, duplicate it. Once the red cells in a man's body can be made less fragile, his biophysical resistance may increase indefinitely. If we can learn how the body brings about a naturally increased resistance, we may be able to improve on it. Perhaps, just perhaps, we are on the track of an increase in longevity that might in the end lead to eternal life.

EPITAPH FOR THE FUTURE

With marble and with grass would I be buried,
Whatever asteroid I travel from,
And on my stone the dates that I was hurried
Through life and time and their continuum.

I want no broken rockets on my grave,
No symbols of my conquest or defeat,
But only a Gothic headstone and a stave
Of music down some retroactive street.

A church and willows and a mound of green
Purloined from some engraving on a wall
In future so far distant I have seen
It stretched before me with no past at all.

See these sad cherubs gathered to my rest;
I want them for my mourners all in black,
They might have been my children, gently pressed
To bring me flowers, their mother hanging back.

With marble and with grass would I be married,
Beneath this sky, in this enormous room.
I see the moon beside the bride has tarried;
I want the earth to stand beside the groom.

—ETHAN AYER

Mr. Dennis Etchison, who here appears for the first time in The Magazine, is a student at L.A. State College, and forthrightly confesses that he has "never (a) worked [his] way around the Horn on a tramp steamer, (b) shoveled bat guano in the caves of the Andes, or (c) in short, ever worked a day at anything *in [his] life (the writing comes mostly post-midnight)." He calls Ray Bradbury "the greatest single influence of any kind I can trace," and has latterly been a student in Charles Beaumont's Science Fiction Workshop at UCLA; but his style and approach seem all his own. "My loves," he says, "include Ruth Price, Monica Vitti, Kenneth Patchen, Theodore Sturgeon, Lenny Bruce, and Charlie Mingus" —but surely this story of chilling mystery in the California mountains comes from none of them . . . and, this being so, from what dire and haunted post-midnight hour, then?*

A NICE, SHADY PLACE

by Dennis Etchison

"AW, WHAT D'YOU *mean* YOU PUT 'em in the glove compartment?"

She rummaged through squashed Kleenex box, pad and pencils, miniature wrench set, green and blue savings stamps.

"Darnit," she muttered under her breath. "If we left 'em home—" She ran a quick hand over her short, sunwarmed red hair and peered in deeper.

"Take it easy, Care. They're probably in your p—"

"I *looked* in my purse."

"Well." The boy at the wheel took his eyes from the road long enough to push in the lighter. "I think you'll live," he added quietly, fingering an unfiltered cigaret from his shirt pocket, "without shades this once."

Grudgingly she rearranged the glove compartment. "Forget it, Tad." She extended a hand sideways and he dropped the pack in her palm.

"Hey," she crooned around the cigaret in her orange lips, "what's the time?" disregarding the dash clock's perpetual 8:54.

He reached for the heated lighter as it popped back, and when he was finished she caught his arm for her own light. He reinserted it and she turned his wrist to read his watch.

"Oh, 's early. Not even one yet. We should make it to the camp before dark, shouldn't we?" Her arm came to rest on the metal of the convertible's door, and she snatched it away with a sharp intake of breath and placed her hands in her lap, over the lightly freckled golden tan of her thighs.

"I figure early this evening."

The highway had been heading up gradually for the last hour, and now it seemed steeper with every turn. The blue-black mountains were chiseled deceptively far. Tad pulled the car over to the gravel margin of the road. He pressed a button that raised the convertible top.

The girl parted her lips to speak; instead she adjusted a pearl button at the front of her blouse with the almost childlike fingers of her right hand. When she saw him removing his short-sleeved shirt, she reached without deliberation to pull his t-shirt down over his belly, as if long accustomed to making such minor adjustments.

She stretched to align herself with the rear-view mirror, fingering the sides of her nose. "Am I *peel*ing again?" she grimaced. She produced a comb and pulled it reflexly through her coarse red hair, chanting, "Oh Carrie, you're such a *beauty*." Taking advantage of the stop, she twisted over the back of the seat for a tube of cream, a white dab of which she stroked over her straight and lightly but not unbecomingly freckled nose.

"I just hope we make it by dark. I can't stand it out here at night." She shivered.

The boy smiled a wide, flat, peculiar kind of smile.

"Well," she challenged. Recapping the tube, she leaned over the seat to toss it back, but stopped suspended in mid-turn when her eye caught a strip of white plastic protruding from under an edge of the Indian blanket.

"Well joy to the world," she exclaimed, and put on the glasses.

By three o'clock the sun had moved to slant less severely through the trees; the highway became an endless series of snaking turns, walled along the left by stiff thrusting redwood arms that clutched great fistfulls of dark greenery. And around each swerve a breeze ran like a forest stream through the open car, fluttering the girl's hair again and again, mothlike, over her forehead; fluffed the ends of her strawberry-blonde lashes.

Her hand slipped like a pink fish between his arm and body.

Eyes unblinking on the road, he kissed her forehead.

"Mmm. H'many more miles?"

The sun splashed like silverfish through the trees.

"There's a sign pretty soon. Thirty or so." He shifted. "Why?"

"Oh." She blinked. "B-but I thought this would be an adventure for you, too."

"?"

"I mean I guess that wasn't all bull, then, what you fed Mother about how sure you were it'd be a safe weekend for me and all." A quick break in the trees and she caught a glimpse of the valley left far below.

"I just mean," she sighed, "I wish you'd let me know you'd been here before. I mean that's the deal, isn't it, sharing something new every weekend?"

"What do you think we're doing?" He wet his lips.

She scratched the crook of her arm with short, clear-polished nails. "Uh, you mean t' tell me —" She studied Tad's sun-reddened ears. "Well, all I can say is, you're doing a good job, for a *first time,* without a roadmap or anything."

"Hey, I thought we swore off arguments."

They drove.

Tad cleared his throat. "Look, may I ask what made you pick your brother's camp today?"

"Oh nothin'," she chimed, suddenly gay. I just thought it'd make a nice trip for us, and—"

His hand tightened on the wheel. "And?"

"Nothin'."

The flesh of his arms tightened.

"Aw, you'd think it's silly."

He measured each syllable. "Carrie, I'm asking. What is it about the camp?"

"Crap. Promise not t' laugh?"

He stared unblinking past the gold coin pattern washing over the hood of the car.

"Well. There's something about the mountains I always—" She spread her hands in her lap, noticing the very light scattering of freckles on the backs. "All right, I'll cop out. . . . I remember a couple of weeks ago, Dickie started telling me in his letters about this—this *place* he discovered. An old mill, you know, out in the woods somewhere? He followed the river one afternoon, he had to cross a creaky wooden bridge—

"Anyway, there inside this old waterwheel — mill — he discovered zillions of these little wet lizards, whadaya call 'em?"

"Salamanders."

"Mmm-hmm. So he brought a couple of 'em back in his pocket, you know—to show the counselor. But get this: when the guy saw 'em, well, Dick said he flew off his nut, made up some oddball punishment, I can't remember . . ."

A sport car swished by, stirring warm air that smelled of matted leaves into their faces.

"Carrie—"

"Wait, that's not all. We were about to call up long distance to

get the whole story, when—" The glove compartment popped open again and she fished out an envelope and shook it open like a dustrag. In the corner was embossed the piney 'GREENWORTH for BOYS' emblem.

"—when this came. 'Dear Parent,' " she read satirically. " 'It is with a genuine sense of gratification that we report that your son Richard is both relishing his summer stay here at Greenworth and establishing a sense of values . . .' blah, 'A deep and abiding sense of oneness with nature,' blah blah . . ."

"So where's the mystery?" He wet his lips.

"Wait, the last part: '. . . and so, during these final weeks, I am afraid we can expect that the area's many natural wonders will command the boys' full energies and attentions. Consequently, we trust you will not be distressed if your son, in the pursuit of these final golden weeks,' *wow,* 'is forced to neglect concerns of the outside world (letter writing, etc.). Soon he will be re-entering your home with a new sense of purpose . . .' etc., signed 'Ray Newtson, Head Counselor.' "

"So?"

"So isn't that the nuttiest thing you ever—"

"I'll agree it sounds pretentious."

"But Tad, have you ever *heard* of a summer camp encouraging kids *not* to write home? Why on earth would they want to do that?"

Tad stared over the wheel, unblinking.

"Unless—oh, I warned you this is crazy—unless this Newtson character is punishing Dickie in some way by preventing him from writing home."

"But it's a formality. Every parent probably gets the same letter."

"Is it? Then why is this typed personally instead of mimeographed? Aw, anyway, here's the rest.

"Mother called Dick's best buddy's mom, here—" She unsnapped her wallet to a color photo of two boys, the one with fixed black eyes snaking an arm about the smaller's shoulders. "Honey, Mrs. McCoid got no such letter about *her* son. Why, her Andy's the one who softsoaped Mother into finally letting Dick go this time; and the way Mrs. McCoid swore her son was a different person after last summer. . . ."

Tad chuckled. He wet his lips.

"Aw, you're just like Mother. She couldn't see that they're pieces to a jigsaw, either. Can't you just *feel* something strange going on?"

Tad drove.

"Well, it must've helped pursuade Mother to let me go, anyway. I gotta admit I can't make the connections yet. But it adds so much, having a real live mystery on your hands." She fingered her lobster nose. "Not that it isn't enough," she climbed his arm,

"getting to spend a whole weekend stranded in a cabin with my fiancé."

CAMP GREENWORTH 25 mi.
U.S. GOV'T ATOMIC
POWER PLANT 17 mi.

"My gosh, I didn't realize Dick was so close to the turbines—must be on the same river and everything. Got your geiger counter? Hey, d'you know a nice shady place along here where we can stop for lunch?"

Tad wet his lips. "I told you I've never been here before."

"All right, all right, forget it." She took the picnic basket into her lap. "I thought we swore off arguments!"

Walking in the water, she heard the sound of singing.

Rings spread from her ankles to sweep the width of this shallow, quiet part of the river, and each miniature wave launched a host of hair-legged insects that settled again to send out circles of their own. She tossed back her bright hair, turning around and around, squinting into the glimmer of moving branches.

A million tiny suns winked brilliantly in the trees.

She drew up her knees on a large rock and unwrapped a Heath bar from her blouse pocket. As she chewed she counted the smooth speckled stones breaking the surface like clusters of heads. She counted as far as the bend, tasting chocolate from three of her fingers, the orange nearly vanished from her lips.

Again, a sound of singing.

Wiping her hands on her shorts, the girl pulled a path through the aspens on the bank.

A sound like a bird drifted through the close foliage. On the other side of a wall of moss-heavy branches, she found him.

He perched, legs folded, on the spider skeleton of an ancient automobile. The small boy sat where once had been a motor, while around him grass shoots poked flakes of rust through bolt holes. He seemed to be improvising the odd, worthless little tune.

"Hi," she ventured.

Perhaps he sang to the trees, or perhaps, like a bird, just to please himself; but he made no attempt to please the intruder.

She wandered closer, sat on part of a fender. She squirmed, confronted with how, he seemed to fit, like an animal in its burrow.

"Look."

He faced her, tanned and rust-streaked. Her eyes moved from the swatch of cornsilk over his alert black eyes, to the tennis shoe kicking at a bucket in the grass. The small boy stretched with a thumb and two fingers and brought up a wet creature that writhed slowly between them, dipping its brown stalks in the air.

"Oh—" She sprang from the frame, scattering rusty flakes.

"Won't bite if ya hold him right. Been fishin'." The small boy extended the thing. "You can have him. I got lots more. Keep 'em in water so they don't dry out on ya."

"No-no thanks. Really."

"I got me a bucketful." His eyes moved unselfconsciously along her firm, tanned legs and young woman's body. "Are you a girl or a lady?"

Not waiting for an answer, he opened a knife from the pocket of his jeans with his teeth, began absently to scrape it over the rubber toe of his tennis shoe.

"Oh, I don't know. I never thought about it, I guess." The girl studied him like a new friend. "Are you seven?"

The small boy shook his head. "Nope. Don't know. Never thought much about it," he grinned, toothless in front, "I guess."

"But do you always hunt these —these things?"

"Crawdads." He watched the moving fingers of the trees. "Don't feel any age. What's it matter out here? D'you feel like you're a girl or a lady or anything?"

She smiled and sat again.

"D'you always take so long?" asked the small boy.

The girl toyed uneasily with a shattered headlight. "What?"

"It was gettin' t'be like nobody was comin'." The creature stirred in his hand. The plates of its segmented body swished, glistening.

"It was getting to be . . ." Her forehead wrinkled and she looked quickly down, at the chipped pink paint on her toes. "W-what do you mean?"

"I mean I sell 'em. Catch all kinds a crazy things in the river this summer. Science guys started comin' through here, give me two bits apiece."

"Well, I guess I'm not your customer for the day. I can catch all I need, thank you."

"But," he chuckled, "these ain't ordinary, see. The funny ones, they're hard t' catch. You can have this one anyway."

As she reached for it, the crustacean flexed its pincers crazily. Her eyes flicked to the small boy's other hand stirring the bucket with a twig, to the sky above the dark trees at the edge of the clearing, to the dead insect automobile, to the lobsterlike thing dripping in their fingers.

As her fingers closed around it he let go, revealing what he had meant; with a start she slapped it to the ground.

"It's only a extra head, 'stead of a tail. Go on."

The girl touched it gingerly once, twice, and then she was holding it. Pushing herself up with a rust-imprinted palm, she began backing off.

"Treat it careful. That 'un's yours, ya know, saved special!" He cackled and sprang from the skeleton like Rumplestiltskin.

The girl backed a path through the aspens. Her head shook, her lips moved incoherently and she literally fell down the bank and then hustled along the river, splashing one foot from stone to stone in the water as she went.

In the clearing at the edge of the forest, the small boy resumed his peculiar song.

She found Tad wobbling on the flat stones. Sunlight filtered golden on his back.

"Hey, whadaya-think-this-is?" She caught at her breath, "A nature camp?"

Tad had been studying the black minnows shooting near his wide, flat feet. At her voice his face puzzled up with the expression of a man stirred from a chess game.

"Mm. Ah." He pulled a shirt sticking over wet shoulders, dragged on shorts, trousers as Carrie giggled. The creature in her hand flexed feebly, drying, its bulbous eye stalk tips gone dull. The feelers, like the five pairs of pincers curled safely into the underside, quieted their probing for her fingers. Now she handled it simply as a drying and hardening thing that she might poke and pry at like an empty hermit crab's shell whose owner has left it in search of new residence. She shuddered, forcing a smile.

"Taddy, I brought you somethin'. A thing, what do you call 'em? not lobster—"

The boy's lips were a tight pencil-line as he wiped his hands on his jeans, cupping it gently.

"My gosh," she smirked, remembering a blush to match her hair. "Way to shake a girl up! Are we always going to be, uh, this immodest?"

He scrutinized it like a jeweler through an invisible loupe. "Where?"

"Tad," she taunted, "it isn't like you to be so uninhibited—"

He seemed not to hear. He bent and swished the creature purposefully in the creek. "Where?"

"Hey did you ever see a thing like that? One time in a sideshow when I was a little girl they had this goat with two heads . . . Tad?"

Quickly he drew a keyring from his pocket and inserted a key between the teeth of the large right claw; he spread the clamp, squeezed it together three times, repeated the action on the other pincer. He left it in two inches of water. *Where?* his black eyes demanded.

"Oh, found him in the river. Hey, but did you ever see—" But it was obvious he had handled the creature with a kind of unconscious, native familiarity. "Oh," she blinked. "Well, *I* never saw a freak running loose before. And he said there were more." She lowered her head from a frown of disapproval that failed to materialize on his face. "Uh, the *boy* back there, that helped me catch it."

But Tad was on his knees. Both of the thing's heads bobbed at his stroking finger as it scuttled appendages in two directions. "I'm afraid his foreclaws are crippled."

For the first time all day, a chilling breeze rustled like countless birds in the tops of the trees.

"Hey, what's wro-ong?" Her voice rose and fell as she grinned incredulously at him.

"Why did you do it, Care?"

"B-but it's only a *thing*. Crawfish. So?" She looked at him as if for the first time. "For God's sake. What are you, lecturing me on a 'blah blah sense of oneness with nature' and that?"

She stripped bark from an aspen. "I mean you don't even—what is wrong with you? you didn't even *care* where I went just now. I mean I could've gotten lost or something, people do, y'know. You hardly talked to me the whole trip." She messaged goose flesh from her arms. "Something's happening an-and I don't understand it. But I know we—just—stopped—communicating," she wavered. "Say it, why don't you? That you don't . . ."

He got up slowly and examined her with eyes glazed as if to cover observation, hypothesis, sensing all that was to be sensed about this time, this place, this girl. He drew a heavy breath, reading an answer that might placate from her hair, her moving shoulders.

He dunked his hand in the river, shook the fingers and blotted it dry on his shirt front; crunched over the leafy mulch to slip the cooled hand around the girl's neck and the right side of her face, and immediately she flew pressing against him, whimpering. After a while her words grew distinct: ". . . I'm sorry . . . if . . . whatever . . . I didn't mean . . . sorry . . ." And when her cry was finished they led each other past the peeling picnic tables to the car, the girl watching all the while the rotting twigs and leaves clicking under their bare feet.

While Tad lifted his head, listening after something, sniffing the air.

Carrie blinked awake.

The smell of pine and putrefaction lingered, somewhere water swished, a cacophony of birds swarmed the trees. She might very well have been still at the picnic site, except that instead of starting up, the car was now thumping to a halt in the grass.

"Ah." The man with the too-large eyes and thin neck rubbed his hands in the manner of a headwaiter.

"Oh, you must be—" She waited for Tad to slide out and open her door. "—Mr. N-Newton."

He smiled widely. "Newtson," he corrected. "Ah, welcome to Greenworth, young lady, welcome. But then you must be anxious to rest inside, wash up?"

"T-to tell the truth, Mr. . . ." She frowned as Tad ignored her and carried the suitcase off down the long plank porch fronting the cabins. "We're here to, uh, visit my brother, Dickie Carlisle? We're —we understand you don't mind putting up overnight visitors and, well, we're willing to pay, naturally. We brought our own blankets. You see I'm with my fiancé—"

"Yes, yes, indeed." Mr. Newtson swallowed thickly, moistened his lips. "And now if you'll follow me."

"—and we just thought, you know, why not drive up for the weekend, it's such a beautiful trip."

"Of course, of course. This way." Mr. Newtson guided her out of the car and toward a line of pinefront bungalows that were glazed with incongruously fresh paint, new enough for a 'wet paint' warning.

Swish.

"What we really came for is to see my brother. I was afraid we wouldn't make it by dark." Carrie tested the bed, flaring her nostrils at the sharp paint smell. "Uh, by the way, it'll be separate rooms, naturally."

"Yes, yes." The man in the doorway washed his hands in the air. "We are so glad you could make it."

"Where is that guy of mine? Gosh, he didn't even introduce himself, did he? I'm sure he'll, uh, settle the arrangements if you'll just talk to him."

Newtson licked his lips. "Ah, we understand. But it was just that we had begun to wonder whether or not you were coming."

The girl's face contracted to a paper-maché mask. "Oh," she regained her poise, "Mother must have written you after all, huh?"

She was caught, reflected in miniature in Newtson's black camera-lens eyes. "Not at all, my dear."

"Oh then, Tad, he must've called ahead."

The man slid his large, wide feet a step closer. The room dimmed as the sky purpled outside.

Swish.

"Or you two must know each other already. Yes, that's it, he must've kidded me into thinking this trip was my idea when really —the big brat." She edged to the door, clutching her purse. "Uh, he's *coming right back,* you know."

He smiled, close enough to breathe on her, his eyes lumps of midnight coal.

"Uh, well, I'll get my bag from my boyfriend while you hunt up my brother. Hey, what are we, the first people to use these cabins or something?" She pushed past him. "Where is that guy when I need him? *Tad?*"

She tapped along the wooden planks.

"Tad?"

She came to the dirt clearing, where she turned around and around, hands on her hips.

The man loomed dark in the bluing doorway; and tall, as the cabins that rose above his head with an almost imperceptible tilt, like false-front movie sets.

The bungalows reverberated emptily with her voice and with the rushing of water. And as dusk thickened like velvet around the trees' pointed fingers, gooseflesh gloved her arms; she rubbed them but the pimples would not go away. "Ooh, where *is* he when I need him? Tad? Will you please come here? God darn it . . . where is everybody in this place?"

Swish.

"Tad?" The girl's eyes watered suddenly. "Honey, please! Come here to me now i-if you care about . . ."

The girl looked very small in the dirt clearing. The man Newtson began scraping steps down the porch.

"TAD!" she wailed, looking at that instant like an infant who has been left to herself again and again to be, conditioned, abandoned altogether in the end.

Swish.

Crickets sprang up in a dark thrush. She turned, ran.

There amid the foliage and pallid aspens was a bridge, built of brown oldwood and logging and rope.

She tripped halfway across and, swaying, saw the ever-aging crayfish water swirling below the gaping boards.

Newtson started across the bridge.

As night fell the riverbed housed suddenly an amphitheater of frog-thrum, insect-chatter, mosquito-din and cricket-screech.

Swish.

And then she saw it. She came upon the scene like a child at dusk to a haunted house:

An old mill.

The giant wheel creaked, drawing a blue-silver sheet of parturient water up and over around and down like a ribbon turning a dank ferris.

Swish whispered the great waterwheel and then again, as a pared-apple moon rolled in the treetops, *swish.*

"No," she squeaked, but Newtson was on the bridge. She shuddered at a choice between the black bushes or the old mill house.

The small boy huddled like a wet puppy among the seeping timbers; he made no move as she entered, because he could not have heard her over the scythe-like *swish* of the groaning wheel. Blocked by jagged beams, she mazed her way to the thrusting centerpost that was geared by splintery notches to the wheel outside, a ship's mast smeared with snail-scum.

To which the small boy was lashed.

The face turned and grinned toothlessly as water dripped into the cornsilk hair on its forehead.

Swish.

She fluttered her eyes shut.

"Whatsa matter, Sis, dontcha know me?" he giggled.

She began groping blindly for the swollen ropes. "Baby, oh baby, is this what they . . ."

Her fingers stopped combing his hair, drew back trembling and slapped her wide-eyed awake, barring her lips. "W-who are you?"

Swish.

She saw his protruding, overripe eyes, his wide flat smile. And she saw his child's tongue dart to his lips as he swallowed over a premature Adam's apple in a sequence that was familiar, familiar. And she saw the floor around him spring to life suddenly, like a blanket of earthworm ground after a rain, saw a million tiny dewdrop eyes sparkle jewel-like at her feet.

Then she saw a salamander crawl out of the boy's grinning mouth, and she vomited softly.

"It's all right now—I'm used t' my friends. Anyway I knew you'd come lookin' for me, Sis."

& like the time five-and-a-half years old & Dutchy coughing blood on the lawn more blood & four feet of tapeworm still more blood from her doggie's throat & sick wondering what it was like to have another living being inside & could it make you walk make you talk the way it

"So she finally found her way." In the shadows, Tad cleared his throat.

"Tad!" she shrieked, bruising against the walls. "Tell me what this is all about! T-tell me how to help him—but no, wait, that can't be my brother! Oh Taddy, I need you to hold me, slap me, tell me I'm all confused, because it can't be, you know, not us, here, this afternoon. Tell me I'm losing my mind but say something, DO SOMETHING! Oh Taddy, please!" Her head lolled wildly on the timber and she screamed, snarling her hair.

Swish.

The two men faced her, and as the moon slipped through a cloud over the open roof their round-chameleon faces turned from silverfish-pale to dark to light again . . . .

Swish.

She fell to her knees in the mud. "Help me, help . . ."

& next day all the other kids daring each other to swallow guppies out of the bowl & Carrie the last holdout & tying her down forcing it into her crying & sick in the night is it swimming

"No, no, Carrie, now it's your turn to help one of us." And as they nodded and moved to the cringing girl, tiny eyes wriggled up their legs and bodies, eyes that glistened wet in the moonlight like the peculiar tongues that flashed again and again in the men's

mouths. And with their crenated hands they pressed something into her distorted mouth.

Which screamed.

Swish.

And screamed.

Swish swish.

The noon sun fried in the sky. The road was an endless downward spiral.

Carrie sat with her hands settled like leaves in her lap. Without looking at the boy beside her she cleared her throat.

He geared the car to the gravel shoulder.

"How much farther, Tad?"

He nodded to the roadsign they were stopped by: U.S. GOV'T ATOMIC POWER PLANT 5 mi. MARBER 25 mi./ SCOTSTOWN 53 mi.

He pressed a button on the dash and the canvas top hummed up over their heads. "Better?"

"Ah." Carrie passed a freckled hand over her shaded, tawny hair.

"I'll look for a nice, shady place to stop," he breathed drily.

He started the car again.

"Tad," she said after a few miles. "Do you suppose anybody's suspicious yet, down there? The others are probably all home already. Wouldn't you know *this* one," she twisted to the back seat, "would be the holdout, a Carlisle to the end."

"Now why," and Tad flexed his hands on the wheel, "would they pay any attention to a few more mutations one way or the other? You don't think that would make them stop what they're doing to areas like this, do you?"

The highway became an endless snaking turn, walled along the right by stiff thrusting redwoods.

"Yes but look at Dickie. He didn't just let them—I mean, what if some got back to tell the story?"

"Thank God they weren't all stubborn redheads."

The small boy uncoiled on the back seat, pillowing his head on

the 'Camp Greenworth' sticker on his zipper-bag, and giggled. "Hey, it was just wakin' up in the middle of the night an' seein' what was happening to the other kids—got scared an' ran. Ha!"

"In any event," and Tad shot a glance at the girl beside him with his black obsidian eyes, "just like the rest, when he gets 'home' all Dick has to do is open his suitcase in the back yard, by a hedge, under a tree, behind the garage, anywhere where they can live and multiply; and then all they need is a crack in the floor, a space under the bedroom door, and they come like vampire bats in the night. Think of it, by this time next summer the Newtsons all over the state can board up their Greenworths and share it with us!"

She watched the road, unblinking.

"Mmm," she mused.

"?"

"Oh I was just . . . I don't know. Isn't it strange the way the names, expressions stay with us? And I seem to have inherited something from a long time, or maybe not so long ago, after all. A memory about someone who was nice . . . and who was, how would she say it? very, very, mm, *needed*. Funny kind of memory. . . ."

Tad licked his lips.

"I know what," she said. "Don't stop. Drive straight through to Mother's—her mother's. It should be cool and shady there, inside the house." She swallowed thickly over a newly prominent Adam's apple.

He cleared his throat. "I guess that will have to be the first thing we change: houses, buildings, everywhere."

"Yes." She smiled a wide, flat, peculiar kind of smile.

Dickie rose up and smiled behind them. "Yes!" And together they stared down the mountainside at the highway that was unwinding before them to a waiting world of nice, shady places.

Hour after flickering hour, round the slow-rolling earth, the television set displays its pre-fabricated drama, all parties thereto having seemingly taken an oath in blood (or, likelier, ketchup) to avoid freshness and originality. Now and then, though, and admittedly seldom, something gets through the co-axial curtain which violates both taboos. Ever wondered why? how? who? Prepare to learn. Fearless tearers-away-of-the-veil are two top-ranking nonfiction writers, one of whom: Robert M. Lipsyte, is currently assisting comedian Dick Gregory with the latter's autobiography.

REDMAN

by Robert M. Lipsyte and Thomas Rogers

ANY DAY, I AM AFRAID, IT COULD start all over again, with a telephone call from my friend J. Edgar Hoover. Person-to-person collect. From Washington. He will be even nicer than usual, which means trouble.

"How have you been, Charles?" he will say in that boy-we-got-something-cooking-here voice of his.

"Just fine, Mr.Edgarhoover," I will say.

"Charles, I saw your last picture, 'Blood Lust at Twin Buttes'. You were excellent."

"I did kill a lot of Indians," I will say, modestly.

"You certainly did," he will chuckle. "And how I love to see red men bite the dust." Then his voice will get chilly.

"We will talk about it tomorrow morning. In Washington. The long trail is almost over."

Just thinking about it I break into a cold sweat. And its not as if I can talk about it to anybody either, because nobody here in Hollywood knows I am living the Big Lie, and that I am all tied up with Mr. Edgarhoover and National Security, and that I am the only man who can identify that slippery monster of evil, that enemy from within, that master of deceit—Redman. Even the name makes me shiver.

It all started three years ago, when I was just another Holly-

wood extra, getting shot by Joel McCrea and pistol-whipped by Randolph Scott until I thought I'd die. I was very unhappy, getting knocked off all the time without a credit line. But like everybody else in America those days, I used to get my kicks from television, especially on Monday nights at 9 o'clock when the tired blood drained off the screen and a Medicine Man in headdress grunted: "T. P. Redman presents . . .*Massacre.*"

Boy, was that a show. For ten weeks, *Massacre* was the hottest thing on TV. Walter Winchell said, "It's trendexing adult westerns into galloping senesence." The Indians always won. Like it always started when the white man came into an Indian territory and raped the squaws and cheated the chief and beat up all the braves. And then, bloody, bowed and with a lot of talk about heavy heart, but very proud and determined, the Indians struck back. Did they get theirs. Heads and arms and legs tumbled all over the screen like clothes in a laundromat, and the blood bubbled and boiled all over. Massacre. What realism. By the time the Indians rode off into the sunset, there was nothing but pieces of white men all over the plains.

Well, as you remember, the Daughters of the American Revolution held a special meeting to denounce the show as prejudicial to history, and the Legion of Decency tried to black it out in Oklahoma. And the A.M.A. called it a leading cause of cardiac arrest. And everybody watched it.

Nobody knew anything about this Redman, the producer. All the magazines tried to interview him on location, but since he was always moving they never caught up with him. *Time* did this cover story on him (they *admitted* it was all hearsay) that said Redman had gone to Dartmouth on an Indian scholarship and that the show was secretly sponsored by Navajo oil interests. Since I'm part Indian myself (I've never told *this* to Mr. Edgarhoover) I was very interested and I kept bothering my agent to get me on the show. After the ninth episode, I got a call to pick up the bus to location the next morning.

There were fifty other Hollywood hardrocks out there that morning, being checked off by a squat, dark man in a gray suit.

"Charles Hennessey," I said briskly when it was my turn.

The squat man looked me over. The deep lines in his leathery face flattened out into a smile. "Hennessey? You're part Zuni, aren't you?"

"Yes, sir," I said. I was flattered that he had taken the trouble to find out, but a little worried. My agent always told me that it was hard for Indians to get Indian parts.

The squat man checked my name and said: "How come you never pistol-whip Randolph Scott right back?"

What could I say? "White man have stronger medicine," I said.

He curled his lip. "You'll do just fine, Hennessey."

I climbed into the bus, waved to a guy who had died with me in "Scalp Lock," and went to sleep. For twelve hours I kept dreaming about *Massacre* and my big chance, about the wagon trains burning up in Cheyenne country, about the explorers sinking into Seminole quicksand, about all those Sioux and Apache and Comanche ambushes. When I woke up the bus was lurching up a terribly familiar beer-can littered road outside Gallup, New Mexico. It was the Zuni reservation. I was going home.

While the rest of the extras were herded roughly into an abandoned trading post by a bunch of armed Indians, I slipped away for a look around the old reservation. I must have wandered quite a while because it got dark and suddenly I was at the edge of a huge clearing. The whole tribe was gathered around a bonfire, looking up at a man sitting on a pinto pony. He was squat and dark and wearing a gray flannel suit, a full-headdress and moccasins. It was the guy who had checked off my name at the bus.

"I have come, O Braves of Zuni," he said, raising his arms, "From across the cruel desert and over the high mountain to bring your hour of triumph and revenge. Too long have you listened to the forked tongue of the Great White Father in Washington, too long have you suffered under his yoke. He has taken your lands and your horses, he has broken your lances and arrows. He has made you squaws."

There was a lot of yelling then and waving of tomahawks.

The man on the pinto raised his arms for silence. "The Indian is laughed at in this land where palefaces sit in dark rooms and watch the red man die for sport on the flickering boxes of bad medicine called television. Are you squaws?"

"No, no," yelled the braves and some of the squaws.

"Do you want to drive the paleface from your ancestral lands?"

"Yes, yes," they shrieked.

Suddenly the man stopped, and he twisted around in his saddle. "There is a spy for the long knife bluecoats in our midst."

Right on cue, a young guy wearing an 1880 cavalry uniform was hurled into the center of the clearing by a couple of husky braves. I recognized him as an extra who had been with me in "Fort Fury," and I had seen him on the bus.

"He must die, he must die," shrieked the man on the pony.

It was the most horrible thing I had ever seen. The poor guy just stood there with this silly stage smile as arrows and tomahawks and lances flew out of the crowd. He fell to his knees, a bloody, dying pin-cushion. He was really dead before the man on the pinto began speaking again.

"Tomorrow, O Braves of Zuni, you shall drive the white man from your land, you shall count many coup and the wet scalps of your foe shall hang from your belts." He paused dramatically. "I, T. P. Redman, have spoken truth."

So that was Redman, I thought, as the braves began painting their faces and dancing around the fire and screaming just like in the movies. I was trying to slip away when somone hit me on the head with a tomahawk.

When I regained consciousness, I was tied up with rawhide thongs in the corner of the biggest split-level tepee in the world. The tent was filled with cables and wires and lights and television cameras. T. P. Redman was standing in the center of the tepee, surrounded by six squatting white men I had never seen before.

"You were fab, T. P., you really killed them," someone said.

Redman smiled. "I zinged 'em pretty good. They'll be up for the game."

"Oh, you got 'em where they live, chief. They're screaming for blood. Don't know if we can keep them in camp tonight."

Redman nodded. "That's what I like to hear, Irving. Break out the firewater and spread it around. Keep 'em busy until tomorrow. How about the extras, Sid?;"

A skinny little guy flashed Redman the OK sign. "They don't know what's going on, chief. They all think they're getting their big chance. Got 'em in the trading post for costumes. Some good heads in there. You got a good eye for heads all right, chief."

Redman chuckled. "You're a cutie pie, Sid baby." He paced up and down the tepee and rubbed his hands together. "If this comes off the way I want it, we'll ring the bell, win the cigar, our ARB will hit 60 for low." He pulled a bloodstained copy of Variety out of his pocket. "We pulled 51.5 last week. No top for us."

"You know it, chief," they chanted.

Redman kicked off his moccasins and threw his headdress into a corner. It almost hit me. "Now what's the layout, Lennie? Were my suggestions any help to you?"

Lennie scrambled to his feet. "Just what the doctor ordered, chief. We're all blocked out, ready to roll."

Redman pulled a small canvas chair from the scramble of equipment and sat down. The chair had

the word CHIEF lettered on the back. "Lennie and I see the massacre scene by the river bed. We'll stage the charge over the little hill to the left. We'll have the number one on the right hill. Dig?"

"Dig," they chanted.

"Dug," said Redman. He jumped up. "Number two on the jeep for flank shots and number three for close-ups. We'll have two—no, three—hand jobs moving around. Never can tell where good footage comes up. Dig?"

"Dig," they chanted.

"Dug," said Redman. He closed his eyes and squeezed the bridge of his nose. "Script, lets see. These Zunis are a little too impatient for red ants or burning at the stake, so we'll use the cavalry charge script we used for the Nez Percés. Skirmish, skirmish, skirmish, all morning. After lunch, massacre. Dig?"

"Dig," they chanted.

"I don't dig," I said.

Redman whirled around and glared at me. "How did he get in here?"

Sid got up slowly and said in a very small voice: "We couldn't help it, chief. We caught him wandering around. Lennie clipped him."

Redman looked at me sadly and shook his head. "You botched it, Hennessey. You were going to get the chance of your lifetime, a chance to die with dignity. Leading a cavalry charge. Now we'll have to let an Indian pistol-whip you."

There was a soft knock at the door then. "Take off, boys, and keep the braves on the reservation," said Redman. "I've got to brainbust with the front office." Redman quickly slipped back into his moccasins and headdress and five old men, the Council of Elder Chiefs, padded quietly into the room.

"I speak with you for yours are the wise heads," said Redman. The old men nodded and smiled toothlessly.

"It is with heavy hearts, my sage brothers," he continued, "that first I must speak of money. There has been gold from the Navajo and gold from the Ague Caliente. I know the Zuni would not be thought poor in the Brotherhood of Redmen."

"You shall have gold," said the oldest elder.

"Of something else we must speak," said Redman. "Tomorrow there will be many cold pale faces upon Zuni soil and they must be buried."

"We dig," chanted the elders.

"One thing more, my brothers," said Redman. He pointed at me. "This renegade has wandered into our camp. He must die."

"We shall burn out his eyes, he shall see no more," chanted the elders. "We shall cut out his tongue he shall tell no tales."

"Wait." A wizened Elder rose

to his feet. "He is no renegade. He is the son of sweet and sour Burdened Horse, the grandson of stern and strong Laughing Horse, who sat on the Council before he was summoned to the Happy Hunting Grounds. There is Zuni blood in this man."

Redman squeezed the bridge of his nose. "And what of this man's father?"

"Sticky-fingered Hennessey," they chanted. "The paleface trader who gave us short weight in silver and rotteness in oranges."

"He is evil. He must die. Redman has spoken."

"He shall die," chanted the elders. On a signal from Redman they padded out of the tepee. Indian file.

Redman kicked off his moccasins and pulled off his headdress. "When in Zuni," he said as they hit the tent wall.

He started pacing around again, rubbing his hands. "It's going to strictly SRO from here on in, pal, strictly SRO. The big boys said the public would never buy aboriginal sin, did they?"

"You'll never get away with it, they'll hunt you down like a dog," I snarled, borrowing Jeff Chandler's big speech in "Tomahawk Ridge."

Redman just smiled pityingly at me. "They'll hunt me down all right, sweetie, they'll beat a path to my door. Realism is the thing these days, and old Redman is way ahead of all of them."

He curled his lip at me. "I've known about realism since I was a punk kid on the lower East Side who couldn't get his foot in the door, a patsy who pressed his nose against the bakery window. I invented realism, buddy boy, and now I'm ready to grab the brass ring."

"You're a nobody," I said, playing for time.

Redman smiled. "Twenty-five years ago, I started being somebody, but nobody knew it. Twenty-five years ago I got myself a second-hand speed graphic and took a bus to Lakehurst, New Jersey. Remember the Hindenburg? Thought it was just an accident, huh?"

Redman closed his eyes, and his voice had a strange, prayer-like quality. "J. J. Gasman presents . . . *CONFLAGRATION.*"

His voice rose and fell like a Gregorian chant. "Oh, what credits I've had, what shows I've produced. 1947, Texas City, Texas. Had a 16 mm rig then. W. W. Fireman presents . . . *EXPLOSION.*

"And my finest hour until now, July 25, 1956, shooting from the back of a fishing schooner off Nantucket. The Andrea Doria and the Stockholm. Wham. S. S. Waterman presents . . . *COLLISION.*"

I spat out my words like George Montgomery. "You filthy rat."

Redman ignored me. "Now I've got the old Indian sign on network, baby. When I'm ready they'll come crawling to me. 'Any night you want, chief, its all yours,' they'll say. 'Just clear out the bowling alleys and bring them back to the living room.'"

Then I had this sudden inspiration, stolen from John Wayne in "Blood Feather." I said: "Its too bad, chief, that nobody except you and me know the whole story. If anything happens to you, who's going to sell your story to the movies. They'd probably have J. Carroll Naish play the lead. J. Arthur Rank presents . . . *The T. P. Redman Story.*"

I must have hit him where he lives. Redman was muttering to himself as he strode out of the tepee.

Some of what happened that day was on television. The Zuni show hit 63 on the American Research Bureau ratings and the massacre scene was so bloody that Mutual of Omaha raised its term insurance premiums for people who watched the program. But the audience didn't know that the blood was real and that when an Indian lance went through a cavalryman it wasn't any trick photography. And the audience didn't see the grisly scalping scene after the show was in the can, or the great burial scene for fifty Hollywood extras, or Redman waving from his chartered plane as it buzzed the reservation and headed north to Little Big Horn.

The braves were having their big victory dance that night and forgot about me. I was thinking of all the ways Jimmy Stewart ever got out of rawhide thongs when someone padded into the tepee. She was lithe and supple and her raven hair was bluer than sky. Her breasts heaved under her deerskin dress as she cut me loose.

"Why do you defy your people for me?" I asked.

"White man have stronger medicine," she said.

Then I ran all the way back to Gallup and called Washington. Person-to-person collect. For J. Edgar Hoover.

The rest is all locked up in secret drawers. Mr. Edgarhoover flew out to Little Big Horn with some of his men. There was a big fight. The Indians lost. But according to reports, Redman threw away his headdress and moccasins and pretended to be an FBI man. He made six arrests before he disappeared.

Then there was a three-day meeting in Washington with Mr. Edgarhoover, the head of the Federal Communications Commission, some television executives, the Secretary for Indian Affairs, and me.

Mr. Edgarhoover wanted to arrest every Indian in the country and send them back where they came from. The Secretary wanted

to hush things up because he said there would be a national panic if people found out what had happened. The television executives wanted to hush things up because if the people couldn't disbelieve in television, what could they disbelieve in?

So Mr. Edgarhoover hushed things up. He arrested the Secretary and the television executives. He let me go, but as the only man who could identify Redman, he put me on 24-hour security alert. Just to make sure he would always know where I was he called up some friends of his in Hollywood. They changed my name and made me a big star.

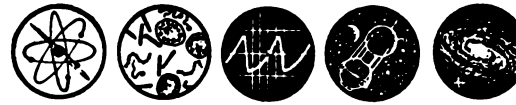
"Just remember, Charles," Mr. Edgarhoover said then. "Until we've caught that slippery devil, that subversive fiend, no one is safe. He is a master of deceit."

That was three years ago and I've only talked to Mr. Edgarhoover once since then. For a while, people wrote letters demanding that *Massacre* be returned, but then all those cops and robbers shows came on television and people forgot about Indians. I called Mr. Edgarhoover and suggested that he look into those new programs because they were very realistic, especially that one where the federal agents shoot down all those gangsters. He got very angry and hung up on me.

Every so often, a man from the Hollywood office of the FBI drops in for free movie passes and he gives me the latest Redman rumors. Like about the documentary director named R. R. Lavaman who was doing a short on natural phenomena in Morocco in 1960 during the worst earthquake in twenty years, and about the television producer named K. K. Whiteman who was doing a public service show about campus life in September, 1962, in Oxford, Mississippi.

But as far as I'm concerned, I'd rather not think about it. Redman and J. Edgar Hoover are out of my life and I'm trying to pretend they were never there in the first place. And I'm trying to get out of this horse opera rut I'm in, too. I just signed to do this big television spectacular on Civil Defense.

There's this producer, J. C. Everyman, who nobody ever heard of, who is doing this live show on what would happen if anyone ever dropped THE BOMB. He's signed up most of the big stars like me to play bit roles, you know, as ordinary everyday types destroyed by The Big Blast. He says its going to be very realistic, the kind of thing millions of people will watch. I haven't met J. C. Everyman yet, but I've talked to him on the phone and he is very confident. He says it'll be the greatest show on earth, the very last word in entertainment. ◄



THE DAYS OF OUR YEARS

by Isaac Asimov

A GROUP OF US MEET FOR AN OCCASIONAL evening of talk and nonsense, followed by coffee and doughnuts, and one of the group scored a coup by persuading a well-known entertainer to attend the session. The well-known entertainer made one condition, however. He was not to entertain, or even be asked to entertain. This was agreed to.

Now there arose a problem. If the meeting were left to its own devices, someone was sure to begin badgering the entertainer. Consequently, other entertainment had to be supplied, so one of the boys turned to me and said, "Say, you know what?"

I knew what and I objected at once. I said, "How can I stand up there and talk with everyone staring at this other fellow in the audience and wishing *he* were up there instead? You'd be throwing me to the wolves!"

But they all smiled very toothily and told me about the wonderful talks I give. (It seems everyone quickly discovers the fact that I soften into putty as soon as the flattery is turned on, no matter how cleverly I try to disguise this little weakness of mine.) In no time at all, I agreed to be thrown to the wolves.

As it happened, the meeting was held on Leap Day and so my topic of conversation was ready-made. Somehow I managed to allow the entertainer to remain in the audience and at peace. Having succeeded to that extent, I became bound (as you have already guessed) to try my luck with a larger audience. Won't you gather round please?

I suppose there's no question but that the earliest unit of time-telling was the day. It forces itself upon the awareness of even the most primitive of men. But it is inconvenient. Even in thirty years, a man

would live some 11,000 days and it is easy to lose track among all those days.

Since the Sun governs the day-unit, it seems natural to turn to the next most prominent heavenly body, the Moon, for another unit. One offers itself at once, ready-made—the period of the phases. The Moon waxes from nothing to a full Moon and back to nothing in a definite period of time. This period of time is called the "month" in English (clearly from the word "moon") or, more specifically, the "lunar month" since we have other months, representing periods of time slightly shorter or slightly longer than the one that is strictly tied to the phases of the moon.

The lunar month is roughly equal to 29½ days. More exactly, it is equal to 29 days 12 hours 44 minutes 2.8 seconds, or 29.5306 days.

In pre-agricultural times, it may well have been that no special significance attached itself to the month, which remained only a convenient device for measuring moderately-long periods of time. The life expectancy of primitive man was probably something like 350 months, which is a much more convenient figure than that of 11,000 days.

In fact, there has been speculation that the extended life-times of the patriarchs reported in the fifth chapter of the Book of Genesis may have arisen out of a confusion of years with lunar months. For instance, suppose Methusaleh had lived 987 lunar months. This would be just about 80 years, a very reasonable figure. However, once that got twisted to 987 years by later tradition, we gained the "old as Methusaleh" bit.

However, I mention this only in passing for this idea is not really taken seriously by any Biblical scholars. It is much more likely that these lifetimes are a hangover from Babylonian traditions about the times before the Flood.—But I am off the subject.

It is my feeling that the month gained a new and enhanced importance with the introduction of agriculture. An agricultural society was much more closely and precariously tied to the seasons than a hunting or herding society was. Nomads could wander in search of grain or grass but farmers had to stay where they were and hope for rain. To increase their chances, farmers had to be certain to sow at a proper time to take advantage of seasonal rains and seasonal warmth; and a mistake in the sowing period might easily spell disaster. What's more, the development of agriculture made possible a denser population and that intensified the scope of the possible disaster.

Men had to pay attention, then, to the cycle of seasons, and while he was still in the prehistoric stage, he must have noted that those seasons came full cycle in roughly twelve months. In other words, if crops were

planted at a particular time of the year and all went well; then, if twelve months were counted from the first planting and crops were planted again, all would again go well.

Counting the months can be tricky in a primitive society, especially when a miscount can be ruinous, so it isn't surprising that the count was usually left in the hands of a specialized caste, the priesthood. The priests could not only devote their time to accurate counting, but could also use their experience and skill to propitiate the gods. After all, the cycle of the seasons was by no means as rigid and unvarying as was the cycle of day and night or the cycle of the phases of the moon. A late frost or a failure of rain could blast that season's crops and since such flaws in weather were bound to follow any little mistake in ritual, the priestly functions were of importance indeed.

It is not surprising then, that the lunar month grew to have enormous religious significance. There were new Moon festivals and special priestly proclamations of each one of them, so that the lunar month came to be called the "synodic month" (see ROUND AND ROUND AND— F&SF, January 1964.)

The cycle of seasons is called the "year" and twelve lunar months therefore make up a "lunar year." The use of lunar years in measuring time is referred to as the use of a "lunar calendar." The only important group of people in modern times, using a strict lunar calendar, are the Mohammedans. Each of the Mohammedan years is made up of 12 months which are, in turn, usually made up of 29 and 30 days in alternation.

Such months average 29.5 days in length but the length of the true lunar month is, as I've pointed out, 29.5306 days in length. The lunar year built up out of twelve 29.5-day months is 354 days long, whereas twelve lunar months are actually 354.37 days long.

You may say "So what?" but don't. A true lunar year should always start on the day of the new Moon. If, however, you start one lunar year on the day of the new Moon and then simply alternate 29-day months and 30-day months, the third year will start the day before the new Moon, and the sixth year will start two days before the new Moon. To properly religious people, this would be unthinkable.

Now it so happens that thirty true lunar years come out to be almost exactly an even number of days—10,631.016 days. Thirty years built up out of 29.5-day months come to 10,620 days—just 11 days short of keeping time with the moon. For that reason, the Mohammedans scatter 11 days through the 30 years in some fixed pattern which prevents

any individual year from starting as much as a full day ahead or behind the new Moon In each 30-year cycle, there are nineteen 354-day years and eleven 355-day years, and the calendar remains even with the Moon.

An extra day, inserted in this way to keep the calendar even with the movements of a heavenly body is called an "intercalary day"; a day inserted "between the calendar" so to speak.

The lunar year, whether it is 354 days or 355 days in length, does not, however, match the cycle of the seasons. By the dawn of historic times, the Babylonian astronomers had noted that the Sun moved against the background of stars (see THE HEAVENLY ZOO, F&SF, June 1964.) This passage was followed with absorption because it grew apparent that a complete circle of the sky by the sun matched the complete cycle of the seasons closely. (This apparent influence of the stars on the seasons probably started the Babylonian fad of astrology—which is still with us today.

The Sun makes its complete cycle about the zodiac in roughly 365 days, so that the lunar year is about 11 days shorter than the season-cycle, or "solar year." Three lunar years fall 33 days, or a little more than a full month behind the season-cycle.

This is important. If you use a lunar calendar and start it so that the first day of the year is planting time, then three years later you are planting a month too soon and by the time a decade has passed you are planting in mid-winter. After 33 years, the first day of the year is back where it is supposed to be, having traveled through the entire solar year.

This is exactly what happens in the Mohammedan years.

The ninth month of the Mohammedan year is named Ramadan and it is especially holy because it was the month in which Mohammed began to receive the revelation of the Koran. In Ramadan, therefore, Moslems abstain from food and water during the daylight hours. But each year, Ramadan falls a bit earlier in the cycle of the seasons and at 33-year intervals it is to be found in the hot season of the year at which time, abstaining from drink is particularly wearing, and Moslem tempers grow particularly short.

The Mohammedan years are numbered from the Hegira; that is, from the date when Mohammed fled from Mecca to Medina. That event took place in 622 A.D. Ordinarily, you might suppose, therefore, that to find the number of the Mohammedan year, one need only subtract 622 from the number of the Christian year. This is not quite so, since the Mohammedan year is shorter than ours. I write this article in 1964 A.D. and it is now 1342 solar years since the Hegira. However, it is 1384 lunar years

since the Hegira, so that, as I write, the Mohammedan year is 1384 A.H.

I've calculated that the Mohammedan year will catch up to the Christian year in about nineteen millennia. The year 20,874 A.D. will also be 20,874 A.H. and the Moslems will then be able to switch to our year with a minimum of trouble.

But what can we do about the lunar year in order to make it keep even with the seasons and the solar year? We can't just add eleven days at the end, for then the next year would not start with the new Moon and to the ancient Babylonians, for instance, a new Moon start was essential.

However, if we start a solar year with the new Moon and wait, we will find that the twentieth solar year thereafter starts once again on the day of the new Moon. You see, 19 solar years contain just about exactly 235 lunar months.

Concentrate on those 235 lunar months. That is equivalent to 19 lunar years (made up of 12 lunar months each) plus 7 lunar months left over. We could, then, if we wanted to, let the lunar years progress as the Mohammedans do, until 19 such years had passed. At this time, the calendar would be exactly 7 months behind the seasons and by adding 7 months to the 19th year (a 19th year of 19 months—very neat) we could start a new 19-year cycle, exactly even with both the Moon and the seasons.

The Babylonians were unwilling, however, to let themselves fall 7 months behind the seasons. Instead, they added that 7-month discrepancy through the 19-year cycle, one month at a time and as nearly evenly as possible. Each cycle had twelve 12-month years and seven 13-month years. The "intercalary month" was added in the 3rd, 6th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 17th, and 19th year of each cycle, so that the year was never more than about 20 days behind or ahead of the Sun.

Such a calendar, based on the lunar months, but gimmicked so as to keep up with the Sun, is a "lunar-solar calendar."

The Babylonian lunar-solar calendar was popular in ancient times since it adjusted the seasons while preserving the sanctity of the Moon. The Hebrews and Greeks both adopted this calendar and, in fact, it is still the basis for the Jewish calendar today. The individual dates in the Jewish calendar are allowed to fall slightly behind the Sun until the intercalary month is added when they suddenly shoot slightly ahead of the Sun. That is why holidays like Passover and Yom Kippur occur on different days of the civil calendar (kept strictly even with the Sun) each year. These holidays occur on the same day of the year each year in the Jewish calendar.

The early Christians continued to use the Jewish calendar for three centuries, and established the day of Easter on that basis. As the centuries passed, matters grew somewhat complicated, for the Romans (who were becoming Christian in swelling numbers) were not used to a lunar-solar calendar and were puzzled at the erratic jumping about of Easter. Some formula had to be found by which the correct date for Easter could be calculated in advance, using the Roman calendar.

It was decided at the Council of Nicaea, in 325 A.D. (by which time Rome had become officially Christian) that Easter was to fall on the Sunday after the first full Moon after the vernal equinox, the date of the vernal equinox being established as March 21. However, the full Moon referred to is not the actual full Moon, but a fictitious one called the "Paschal Full Moon" ("Paschal" being derived from "Pesach" which is the Hebrew word for Passover). The date of the Paschal Full Moon is calculated according to a formula involving Golden Numbers and Dominical Letters, which I won't go into.

The result is that Easter still jumps about the days of the civil year and can fall as early as March 22 and as late as April 25. Many other church holidays are tied to Easter and likewise jump about from year to year.

Moreover, all Christians have not always agreed on the exact formula by which the date of Easter was to be calculated. Disagreements on this detail was one of the reasons for the schism between the Catholic Church of the West and the Orthodox Church of the East. In the early Middle Ages, there was also a strong Celtic Church which had still a third formula.

Our own calendar is inherited from Egypt. In Egypt, seasons were unimportant. The one great event of the year was the Nile flood and this took place (on the average) every 365 days. From a very early date, certainly as early as 2781 B.C., the Moon was abandoned and a "solar calendar", adapted to a constant-length 365-day year, was adopted. It kept to the tradition of 12 months, however.

As the year was of constant length, the months were of constant length, too—30 days each. This meant that the new Moon could fall on any day of the month, but the Egyptians didn't care. (A month not based on the Moon is a "calendar month.")

Of course 12 months of 30 days each add up only to 360 days, so at the end of each 12-month cycle, 5 additional days were added and treated as holidays.

The solar year, however, is not exactly 365 days long. There are sev-

eral kinds of solar years, differing slightly in length, but the one upon which the seasons depend is the "tropical year" and this is about 365 ¼ days long.

This means that each year, the Egyptian 365-day years falls ¼ day behind the Sun. As time went on the Nile flood occurred later and later in the year, until finally, it had made a complete circuit of the year. In 1460 tropical years, in other words, there would be 1461 Egyptian years.

This period of 1461 Egyptian years was called the "Sothic cycle" from "Sothis" the Egyptian name for the star, Sirius. If, at the beginning of one Sothic cycle, Sirius rose with the Sun on the first day of the Egyptian year, it would rise later and later during each succeeding year until finally, 1461 Egyptian years later, a new cycle would begin as Sothis rose with the Sun on New Years Day once more.

The Greeks had learned about that extra quarter-day as early as 380 B.C., when Eudoxus of Cnidus made the discovery. In 239 B.C., Ptolemy Euergetes, the Macedonian king of Egypt, tried to adjust the Egyptian calendar to take that quarter-day into account, but the ultra-conservative Egyptians would have none of such a radical innovation.

Meanwhile, the Roman Republic had a lunar-solar calendar, one in which an intercalary month was added every once in a while. The priestly officials in charge were elected politicians, however, and were by no means as conscientious as those in the East. The Roman priests added a month or not according to whether they wanted a long year (when the other annually-elected officials in power were of their own party) or a short one (when they were not). By 46 B.C., the Roman calendar was 80 days behind the Sun.

Julius Caesar was in power, then, and he decided to put an end to this nonsense. He had just returned from Egypt where he had observed the convenience and simplicity of a solar year and he imported an Egyptian astronomer, Sosigenes, to help him. Together, they let 46 B.C. continue for 445 days so that it was later known as "The Year of Confusion." However, this brought the calendar even with the Sun so that 46 B.C. was the *last* year of confusion.

With 45 B.C. the Romans adopted a modified Egyptian calendar in which the five extra days at the end of the year were distributed throughout the year, giving us our months of uneven length. Ideally, we should have seven 30-day months and five 31-day months. Unfortunately, the Romans considered February an unlucky month and shortened it, so that we ended with a silly arrangement of seven 31-day months, four 30-day months and one 28-day month.

In order to take care of that extra ¼ day, Caesar and Sosigenes established every fourth year with a length of 366 days. (Under the numbering of the years of the Christian era, every year divisible by 4 has the intercalary day—set as February 29. Since 1964 divided by 4 is 491, without a remainder, there is a February 29 in 1964.)

This is the "Julian year", after Julius Caesar. At the Council of Nicaea, the Christian Church adopted the Julian Calendar. Christmas was finally accepted as a Church holiday after the Council of Nicaea and was given a date in the Julian year. It does not, therefore, bounce about from year to year as Easter does.

The 365-day year is just 52 weeks and 1 day long. This means that if February 6, for instance, is on a Sunday in one year, it is on a Monday the next year, on a Tuesday the year after and so on. If there were only 365-day years, then any given date would move through the days of the week in steady progression. If a 366-day year is involved, however, that year is 52 weeks and 2 days long and if February 6 is on Tuesday that year, it is on Thursday the year after. The day has leaped over Wednesday. It is for that reason that the 366-day year is called "leap year" and February 29 is "leap day."

All would have been well, if the tropical year had really been exactly 365.25 days long; but it isn't. The tropical year is 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, 46 seconds, or 365.24220 days long. The Julian year is, on the average, 11 minutes 14 seconds, or 0.0078 days, too long.

This may not seem much, but it means that the Julian year gains a full day on the tropical year in 128 years. As the Julian year gains, the vernal equinox, falling behind, comes earlier and earlier in the year. At the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D., the vernal equinox was on March 21. By 453 A.D. it was on March 20, by 581 A.D. on March 19, and so on. By 1263 A D., in the lifetime of Roger Bacon, the Julian year had gained eight days on the Sun and the vernal equinox was on March 13.

Still not fatal, but the Church looked forward to an indefinite future and Easter was tied to a vernal equinox at March 21. If this were allowed to go on, Easter would come to be celebrated in mid-summer, while Christmas would edge into the spring. In 1623, therefore, Roger Bacon wrote a letter to Pope Urban IV explaining the situation. However, the Church took over three centuries to consider the matter.

By 1582, the Julian calendar had gained two more days and the vernal equinox was falling on March 11. Pope Gregory XIII finally took action. First, he dropped ten days, changing October 5, 1582 to October 15, 1583. That brought the calendar even with the Sun and the

vernal equinox in 1583 fell on March 21 as the Council of Nicaea had decided it should.

The next step was to prevent the calendar from getting out of step again. Since the Julian year gains a full day every 128 years, it gains three full days in 384 years or, to approximate slightly, three full days in four centuries That means that every 400 years, three leap years (according to the Julian system) ought to be omitted.

Consider the century-years—1500, 1600, 1700, and so on. In the Julian Year, all century years are divisible by 4 and are therefore leap years. Every 400 years there are 4 such century years, so why not keep 3 of them ordinary years, and allow only one of them (the one that is divisible by 400) to be a leap year. This arrangement will match the year more closely to the Sun and gives us the "Gregorian calendar."

To summarize: Every 400 years, the Julian calendar allows 100 leap years for a total of 146,100 days. In that same 400 years, the Gregorian calendar allows only 97 leap years for a total of 146,097 days. Compare these lengths with that of 400 tropical years, which comes to 146,096.-88. Whereas, in that stretch of time, the Julian year had gained 3.12 days on the Sun, the Gregorian year had gained only 0.12 days.

Still, 0.12 days is nearly 3 hours and this means that in 3400 years, the Gregorian calendar will have gained a full day on the Sun. Around 5000 A.D. we will have to consider dropping out one extra leap year.

But the Church had waited a little too long to take action. Had it done the job a century earlier, all western Europe would have changed calendars without trouble. By 1582 A.D., however, much of northern Europe had turned Protestant. These nations would far sooner remain out of step with the Sun in accordance with the dictates of the pagan Caesar, than consent to be corrected by the Pope. They kept the Julian year, therefore.

The year 1600 introduced no crisis. It was a century year but one that was divisible by 400. Therefore, it was a leap year by both the Julian and Gregorian calendar. However 1700 was a different matter. The Julian Calendar had it as a leap year and the Gregorian did not. By March 1, 1700, the Julian Calendar was going to be an additional day ahead of the Sun (eleven days altogether.) Denmark, the Netherlands, and Protestant Germany gave in and adopted the Gregorian calendar.

Great Britain and the American colonies held out until 1752 before giving in. They had to drop eleven days and changed September 2, 1752 to September 13, 1752. There were riots all over England as a result, for many people came quickly to the conclusion that they had suddenly been made eleven days older by legislation.

"Give us back our eleven days!" they cried in despair.

(A more rational objection was the fact that although the third quarter of 1752 was short eleven days, landlords calmly charged a full quarter's rent.)

As a result of this, it turns out that Washington was not born on Washington's birthday. He was born on February 22, 1732 on the Gregorian calendar, to be sure, but the date recorded in the family Bible had to be the Julian date, February 11, 1732. When the changeover took place, Washington—a remarkably sensible man—changed the date of his birthday and thus preserved the actual day.

The Eastern Orthodox nations of Europe were more stubborn than the Protestant nations. The year 1800 and 1900 went by. Both were leap years by the Julian calendar, but not by the Gregorian calendar. By 1900, then, the Julian vernal equinox was on March 8 and the Julian calendar was 13 days ahead of the Sun. It was not until after World War I that the Soviet Union, for instance, adopted the Gregorian calendar. (In doing so, the Soviets made a slight modification of the leap year pattern which made matters even more accurate. The Soviet calendar will not gain a day on the Sun until fully 35,000 years pass.)

The Orthodox churches themselves, however, *still* cling to the Julian year, which is why the Orthodox Christmas falls on January 6 on our calendar. It is still December 25 by their calendar.

In fact, a horrible thought occurs to me—

I was myself born at a time when the Julian Calendar was still in force in the—ahem—old country.* Unlike George Washington, I never changed the birthdate and, as a result, each year I celebrate my birthday 13 days earlier than I should, making myself 13 days older than I have to be.

And this 13-day older me is in all the records and I can't ever change it back.

Give me back my 13 days! Give me back my 13 days! Give me back—

**Well, the Soviet Union, if you must know. I came here at the age of 3.*

Santa Barabara, California, a city rich in more ways than one, is now the richer for the presence of Fritz Leiber—who, thence, sends us this month's cover story about the future and the past, a seer and that which was seen; poignant and evocative.

WHEN THE CHANGE-WINDS BLOW

by Fritz Leiber

I WAS HALFWAY BETWEEN ARcadia and Utopia, flying a long archeologic scout, looking for coleopt hives, lepidopteroid stiltcities, and ruined villas of the Old Ones.

On Mars they've stuck to the fanciful names the old astronomers dreamed onto their charts. They've got an Elysium and an Ophir too.

I judged I was somewhere near the Acid Sea, which by a rare coincidence does become a poisonous shallow marsh, rich in hydrogen ions, when the northern icecap melts.

But I saw no sign of it below me, nor any archeologic features either. Only the endless dull rosy plain of felsite dust and iron-oxide powder slipping steadily west under my flier, with here and there a shallow canyon or low hill, looking for all the world (Earth? Mars?) like parts of the Mojave.

The sun was behind me, its low light flooding the cabin. A few stars glittered in the dark blue sky. I recognized the constellations of Sagittarius and Scorpio, the red pinpoint of Antares.

I was wearing my pilot's red spacesuit. They've enough air on Mars for flying now, but not for breathing if you fly even a few hundred yards above the surface.

Beside me sat my copilot's green spacesuit, which would have had someone in it if I were more sociable or merely mindful of flying regulations. From time to time it swayed and jogged just a little.

And things were feeling eerie, which isn't how they ought to feel to someone who loves solitude as much as I do, or pretend to myself I do. But the Martian landscape is even more spectral than that of Arabia or the American Southwest —lonely and beautiful and obsessed with death and immensity

and sometimes it strikes through.

From some old poem the words came, ". . . and strange thoughts grow, with a certain humming in my ears, about the life before I lived this life."

I had to stop myself from leaning forward and looking around into the faceplate of the green spacesuit to see if there weren't someone there now. A thin man. Or a tall slim woman. Or a black crab-jointed Martian coleopteroid, who needs a spacesuit about as much as a spacesuit does. Or . . . who knows?

It was very still in the cabin. The silence did almost hum. I had been listening to Deimos Station, but now the outer moonlet had dropped below the southern horizon. They'd been broadcasting a suggestions program about dragging Mercury away from the sun to make it the moon of Venus—and giving both planets rotation too—so as to stir up the thick smoggy furnace-hot atmosphere of Venus and make it habitable.

Better finish fixing up Mars first, I'd thought.

But then almost immediately the rider to that thought had come: *No, I want Mars to stay lonely. That's why I came here. Earth got crowded and look what happened.*

Yet there are times on Mars when it would be pleasant, even to an old solitary like me, to have a companion. That is if you could be sure of picking your companion.

Once again I felt the compulsion to peer inside the green spacesuit.

Instead I scanned around. Still only the dust-desert drawing toward sunset; almost featureless, yet darkly rosy as an old peach. "True peach, rosy and flawless . . . Peach-blossom marble all, the rare, the ripe as fresh-poured wine of a mighty pulse. . . ." *What* was *that poem?*—my mind nagged.

On the seat beside me, almost under the thigh of the green spacesuit, vibrating with it a little, was a tape: *Vanished Churches and Cathedrals of Terra.* Old buildings are an abiding interest with me, of course, and then some of the hills or hives of the black coleopts are remarkably suggestive of Earth towers and spires, even to details like lancet windows and flying buttresses, so much so that it's been suggested there is an imitative element, perhaps telepathic, in the architecture of those strange beings who despite their humanoid intelligence are very like social insects. I'd been scanning the book at my last stop, hunting out coleopt-hill resemblances, but then a cathedral interior had reminded me of the Rockefeller Chapel at the University of Chicago and I'd slipped the tape out of the projector. That chapel was where Monica had been, getting her Ph. D. in physics on a bright June morning, when the fusion blast licked the southern end of Lake Michigan, and I didn't

want to think about Monica. Or rather I wanted too much to think about her.

"What's done is done, and she is dead beside, dead long ago. . . ." Now I recognized the poem!—Browning's *The Bishop Orders His Tomb at St. Praxed's Church.* That was a distant cry!—Had there been a view of St. Praxed's on the tape?—The 16th Century . . . and the dying bishop pleading with his sons for a grotesquely grand tomb—a frieze of satyrs, nymphs, the Savior, Moses, lynxes—while he thinks of their mother, his mistress. . . .

"Your tall pale mother with her talking eyes. . . .Old Gandolf envied me, so fair she was!"

Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett and their great love. . . .

Monica and myself and our love that never got started. . . .

Monica's eyes talked. She was tall and slim and proud. . . .

Maybe if I had more character, or only energy, I'd find myself someone else to love—a new planet, a new girl!—I wouldn't stay uselessly faithful to that old romance, I wouldn't go courting loneliness, locked in a dreaming life-in-death on Mars. . . .

"Hours and long hours in the dead night, I ask, 'Do I live, am I dead?' "

But for me the loss of Monica is tied up, in a way I can't untangle, with the failure of Earth, with my loathing of what Terra did to herself in her pride of money and power and success (communist and capitalist alike), with that unnecessary atomic war that came just when they thought they had everything safe and solved, like they felt before the one in 1914. It didn't wipe out all Earth by any means, only about a third, but it wiped out my trust in human nature—and the divine too, I'm afraid—and it wiped out Monica. . . .

"And as she died so must we die ourselves, and thence ye may perceive the world's a dream."

A dream? Maybe we lack a Browning to make real those moments of modern history gone over the Niagara of the past, to find them again needle-in-haystack, atom-in-whirlpool, and etch them perfectly, the moments of starflight and planet-landing etched as he had etched the moments of the Renaissance.

Yet—the world (Mars? Terra?) only a dream? Well, maybe. A bad dream sometimes, that's for sure! I told myself as I jerked my wandering thoughts back to the flier and the unchanging rosy desert under the small sun.

Apparently I hadn't missed anything—my second mind had been faithfully watching and instrument-tending while my first mind rambled in imaginings and memories.

But things were feeling eerier than ever. The silence did hum now, brassily, as if a great peal of

bells had just clanged, or were about to. There was menace now in the small sun about to set behind me, bringing the Martian night and what Martian werethings there may be that they don't know of yet. The rosy plain had turned sinister. And for a moment I was sure that if I looked into the green spacesuit, I would see a dark wraith thinner than any coleopt, or else a bone-brown visage fleshlessly grinning—the King of Terrors.

"Swift as a weaver's shuttle fleet our years: Man goeth to the grave, and where is he?"

You know, the weird and the supernatural didn't just evaporate when the world got crowded and smart and technical. They moved outward—to Luna, to Mars, to the Jovian satellites, to the black tangled forest of space and the astronomic marches and the unimaginably distant bull's-eye windows of the stars. Out to the realms of the unknown, where the unexpected still happens every other hour and the impossible every other day—

And right at that moment I saw the impossible standing 400 feet tall and cloaked in lacy gray in the desert ahead of me.

And while my first mind froze for seconds that stretched toward minutes and my central vision stayed blankly fixed on that upwardly bifurcated incredibility with its dark hint of rainbow caught in the gray lace, my second mind and my periferal vision brought my flier down to a swift, dream-smooth, skimming landing on its long skis in the rosy dust. I brushed a control and the cabin walls swung silently downward to either side of the pilots' seat, and I stepped down through the dream-easy Martian gravity to the peach-dark pillowy floor, and I stood looking at the wonder, and my first mind began to move at last.

There could be no doubt about the name of this, for I'd been looking at a taped view of it not five hours before—this was the West Front of Chartres Cathedral, that Gothic masterpiece, with its plain 12th Century spire, the *Clocher Vieux,* to the south and its crocketed 16th Century spire, the *Clocher Neuf,* to the north and between them the great rose window fifty feet across and below that the icon-crowded triple-arched West Porch.

Swiftly now my first mind moved to one theory after another of this grotesque miracle and rebounded from them almost as swiftly as if they were like magnetic poles.

I was hallucinating from the taped pictures. Yes, maybe the world's a dream. That's always a theory and never a useful one.

A transparency of Chartres had got pasted against my faceplate. Shake my helmet. No.

I was seeing a mirage that had traveled across fifty million miles of space . . . and some years of time too, for Chartres had vanished

with the Paris Bomb that near-missed toward Le Mans, just as Rockefeller Chapel had gone with the Michigan Bomb and St. Praxed's with the Rome.

The thing was a mimic-structure built by the coleopteroids to a plan telepathized from a memory picture of Chartres in some man's mind. But most memory pictures don't have anywhere near such precision and I never heard of the coleopts mimicking stained glass, though they do build spired nests a half thousand feet high.

It was all one of those great hypnotism-traps the Arean jingoists are forever claiming the coleopts are setting us. Yes, and the whole universe was built by demons to deceive only me—and possibly Adolf Hitler—as Descartes once hypothesized. *Stop it.*

They'd moved Hollywood to Mars as they'd earlier moved it to Mexico and Spain and Egypt and the Congo to cut expenses, and they'd just finished an epic of the Middle Ages—*The Hunchback of Notre Dame,* no doubt, with some witless producer substituting Notre Dame of Chartres for Notre Dame of Paris because his leading mistress liked its looks better and the public wouldn't know the difference. Yes, and probably hired hordes of black coleopts at next to nothing to play monks, wearing robes and humanoid masks. And why not a coleopt to play Quasimodo?—improve race relations. *Don't hunt for comedy in the incredible.*

Or they'd been giving the Martian tour to the last mad president of La Belle France to quiet his nerves and they'd propped up a fake cathedral of Chartres, all west facade, to humor him, just like the Russians had put up papier-mache villages to impress Peter III's German wife. The Fourth Republic on the fourth planet! *No, don't get hysterical. This thing is here.*

Or maybe—and here my first mind lingered—past and future forever exist somehow, somewhere (the Mind of God? the fourth dimension?) in a sort of suspended animation, with little trails of somnambulant change running through the future as our willed present actions change it and perhaps, who knows, other little trails running through the past too?—for there may be professional time-travelers. And maybe, once in a million millennia, an amateur accidentally finds a Door.

A Door to Chartres. But when?

As I lingered on those thoughts, staring at the gray prodigy— "Do I live, am I dead?"—there came a moaning and a rustling behind me and I turned to see the green spacesuit diving out of the flier toward me, but with its head ducked so I still couldn't see inside the faceplate. I could no more move than in a nightmare. But before the suit reached me, I saw that

there was with it, perhaps carrying it, a wind that shook the flier and swept up the feather-soft rose dust in great plumes and waves. And then the wind bowled me over—one hasn't much anchorage in Mars gravity—and I was rolling away from the flier with the billowing dust and the green spacesuit that went somersaulting faster and higher than I, as if it were empty, but then wraiths are light.

The wind was stronger than any wind on Mars should be, certainly than any unheralded gust, and as I went tumbling deliriously on, cushioned by my suit and the low gravity, clutching futilely toward the small low rocky outcrops through whose long shadows I was rolling, I found myself thinking with the serenity of fever that this wind wasn't blowing across Mars-space only but through time too.

A mixture of space-wind and time-wind—what a puzzle for the physicist and drawer of vectors! It seemed unfair—I thought as I tumbled—like giving a psychiatrist a patient with psychosis overlaid by alcoholism. But reality's always mixed and I knew from experience that only a few minutes in an anechoic, lightness, null-G chamber will set the most normal mind veering uncontrollably into fantasy—or is it always fantasy?

One of the smaller rocky outcrops took for an instant the twisted shape of Monica's dog Brush as he died—not in the blast with her, but of fallout, three weeks later, hairless and swollen and oozing. I winced.

Then the wind died and the West Front of Chartres was shooting vertically up above me and I found myself crouched on the dust-drifted steps of the south bay with the great sculpture of the Virgin looking severely out from above the high doorway at the Martian desert, and the figures of the four liberal arts ranged below her—Grammar, Rhetoric, Music, and Dialectic—and Aristotle with frowning forehead dipping a stone pen into stone ink.

The figure of Music hammering her little stone bells made me think of Monica and how she'd studied piano and Brush had barked when she practiced. Next I remembered from the tape that Chartres is the legendary resting place of St. Modesta, a beautiful girl tortured to death for her faith by her father Quirinus in the Emperor Diocletian's day. Modesta—Music—Monica.

The double door was open a little and the green spacesuit was sprawled on its belly there, helmet lifted, as if peering inside at floor level.

I pushed to my feet and walked up the rose-mounded steps. *Dust blowing through time? Grotesque. Yet was I more than dust? "Do I live, am I dead?"*

I hurried faster and faster, kicking up the fine powder in

peach-red swirls, and almost hurled myself down on the green spacesuit to turn it over and peer into the faceplate. But before I could quite do that I had looked into the doorway and what I saw stopped me. Slowly I got to my feet again and took a step beyond the prone green spacesuit and then another step.

Instead of the great Gothic nave of Chartres, long as a football field, high as a sequois, alive with stained light, there was a smaller, darker interior—churchly too, but Romanesque, even Latin, with burly granite columns and rich red marble steps leading up toward an altar where mosaics glittered in the gloom. One thin stream of flat light, coming through another open door like a theatrical spot in the wings, struck on the wall opposite me and revealed a gloriously ornate tomb where a sculptured mortuary figure—a bishop by his miter and crook—lay above a crowded bronze frieze on a bright green jasper slab with a blue lapis-lazuli globe of Earth between his stone knees and nine thin columns of peach-blossom marble rising around him to the canopy. . . .

But of course: this was the bishop's tomb of Browning's poem. This was St. Praxed's church, powdered by the Rome Bomb, the church sacred to the martyred Praxed, daughter of Pudens, pupil of St. Peter, tucked even further into the past than Chartres' martyred Modesta. Napoleon had planned to liberate those red marble steps and take them to Paris. But with this realization came almost instantly the companion memory: that although St. Praxed's church had been real, the tomb of Browning's bishop had existed only in Browning's imagination and the minds of his readers.

Can it be, I thought, that not only do the past and future exist forever, but also all the possibilities that were never and will never be realized . . . somehow, somewhere (the fifth dimension? the Imagination of God?) as if in a dream within a dream. . . . Crawling with change too, as artists or anyone thinks of them. . . . Change-winds mixed with time-winds mixed with space-winds. . . .

In that moment I became aware of two dark-clad figures in the aisle beside the tomb and studying it—a pale man with dark beard covering his cheeks and a pale woman with dark straight hair covering hers under a filmy veil. There was movement near their feet and a fat dark sluglike beast, almost hairless, crawled away from them into the shadows.

I didn't like it. I didn't like that beast. I didn't like it disappearing. For the first time I felt actively frightened.

And then the woman moved too, so that her dark wide floor-brushing skirt jogged, and in a very

British voice she called, "Flush! Come here, Flush!" and I remembered that was the name of the dog Elizabeth Barrett had taken with her from Wimpole Street when she ran off with Browning.

Then the voice called again, anxiously, but the British had gone out of it now, in fact it was a voice I knew, a voice that froze me inside, and the dog's name had changed to Brush, and I looked up, and the gaudy tomb was gone and the walls had grayed and receded, but not so far as those of Chartres, only so far as those of the Rockefeller Chapel, and there coming toward me down the center aisle, tall and slim in a black academic robe with the three velvet doctor's bars on the sleeves, with the brown of science edging the hood, was Monica.

I think she saw me, I think she recognized me through my faceplate, I think she smiled at me fearfully, wonderingly.

Then there was a rosy glow behind her, making a hazily-gleaming nimbus of her hair, like the glory of a saint. But then the glow became too bright, intolerably so, and something struck at me, driving me back through the doorway, whirling me over and over, so that all I saw was swirls of rose dust and star-pricked sky.

I think what struck at me was the ghost of the front of an atomic blast.

In my mind was the thought: St. Praxed, St. Modesta, and Monica the atheist saint martyred by the bomb.

Then all winds were gone and I was picking myself up from the dust by the flier.

I scanned around through ebbing dust-swirls. The cathedral was gone. No hill or structure anywhere relieved the flatness of the Martian horizon.

Leaning against the flier, as if lodged there by the wind yet on its feet, was the green spacesuit, its back toward me, its head and shoulders sunk in an attitude mimicking profound dejection.

I moved toward it quickly. I had the thought that it might have gone with me to bring someone back.

It seemed to shrink from me a little as I turned it around. The faceplate was empty. There on the inside, below the transparency, distorted by my angle of view, was the little complex console of dials and levers, but no face above them.

I took the suit up very gently in my arms, carrying it as if it were a person, and I started toward the door of the cabin.

It's in the things we've lost that we exist most fully.

There was a faint green flash from the sun as its last silver vanished on the horizon.

All the stars came out.

Gleaming green among them and brightest of all, low in the sky where the sun had gone, was the Evening Star—Earth. ◀

The list of physicians-turned-writers is a long and honored one: Smollet, O. W. Holmes the elder, Doyle, Maugham, to name some few—in SF, David Keller and Allan Nourse among others. Dr. William Carlos Williams, in Patterson, N. J. long practiced both poetry and medicine. Dr. Leonard Tushnet, in Irvington, N. J. is a general practitioner of many years standing, and author of such articles as "Murder By Disease," "Diabetes Mellitus and Sexual Impotence," and "Health Conditions in the Ghetto of Lodz." For the past few years he has turned his pen to fiction and has had short stories printed in various literary and general magazines, and his history of the Jewish resistance movement in Warsaw will be published by Citadel Press. He writes: "[I am] at present seeking a publisher for a medical historical work . . . on starvation in the Warsaw Ghetto." Poland, peasants, and politics—this is the background for Dr. Tushnet's story of a favorite fantasy theme, to which he gives a new—and unexpected—turn.

IN THE CALENDAR OF SAINTS

by Leonard Tushnet

JANUSZ PIONTEK MET THE Devil early one cold November morning near the Brubrow Co-operative pig-sty. He greeted the black-coated gentleman in the stylishly creased homburg courteously, "Good morning, Your Worship. Would you kindly step into the rest-house? It is warmer there."

The rude shack set against the wall of the pig-sty was merely an enlarged out-house, its essential purpose hidden by a curtain. The visible remainder was white-washed and had several low stools scattered about. "You see, Your Worship," Janusz smirked, wiping off a stool with his sleeve, "we Poles have always been a cultured people, so the Village Co-operative made a place where a working peasant could shelter himself when his necessities occurred."

The Devil twitched his nose and sat down gingerly. He said, "Well, Janusz, I've heard a lot about you and I want to do business with you."

"With me, Your Worship?" Janusz snatched off his fur-lined

cap and held it stiffly at his side. "Excuse me. I forgot. These new democratic customs—. Your Worship wants to do business with me? I am only Janusz Piontek, the Chairman of the Grubrow Co-operative."

The Devil waved a black-gloved hand. "I know all about you. This morning, for instance, you were going to take the speckled pig to sell in Nowy Brzecz."

Janusz blanched beneath his leathery tan. He rubbed a hand over the grayish-blond stubble on his scalp, then bowed low. "Indeed, Your Worship, it was not for me that the money would be intended. The Co-operative could use a little cash for the luxuries that the working class enjoys as well as the decadent bourgeoisie —."

"Enough!" the Devil interrupted. "I've heard that speech, with variations, dozens of times before. I've got something you want and you've got something I want. So—on to business!"

So this is the Devil, Janusz thought. This remnant of ancient superstition, this straw man set up by the priests to frighten the credulous, is nothing but an ordinary businessman, an obsolete carry-over in a modern People's Republic! He said, "Your Worship, I need very little. I was born here before the First War in a poor farm-laborer's family, and now I am the Chairman of the Co-operative. I have no idea what you can offer me." The Devil looked straight at Janusz. "Well, Your Worship, there are indeed some things I want, but I do without them as any good citizen should in the interest of building Socialism for a bright and golden future."

"Spare me the speeches!" the Devil shouted. "In other times you kept quiet about your humble origin, but now you boast you were so poor your father boiled herring barrels to get salt. Your family died of typhus in 1921, so you went as an unpaid orphan servant to the landlord's house. You ran away to join the army, from which you were kicked out for stealing from your comrades. You came back and became the toady of the gentry. You were the bully-boy for the Nationalists in the town. You raided the Jews' stores and beat up the visiting Deputy from the Sejm—."

"Please, Your Worship," Janusz broke in, "speak a little more softly. What you have said is true, but please remember that a poor young fellow has a hard job to make his way in this life. The rulers of the world like others to do their dirty work for them and they pay—who else can pay? Don't forget that while the drunken gentry were clapping their hands at my patriotism I managed to hide away for myself some of the Jews' merchandise."

The Devil went on more quietly, "You hounded the refugee Ukrainian Orthodox priest, a harmless old man with a sickly wife, from the village to curry favor with the Catholic Party. When the Second War started, you were taken for the army—."

"And when the Germans won, I came home unhurt. God and the Holy Virgin of Czenstochowa watched over me," Janusz remarked, automatically crossing himself. He started, realizing his *faux-pas*.

The Devil went on, "You came home unhurt because you hid out during the fighting. During the retreat you managed to commandeer two horses for yourself in the name of the Partisans. By the way, you're a professed unbeliever, so that Sign means nothing. You denounced the Kowalskis to the Nazis as members of the underground Catholic Rescue Society. And when the Nazis were gone and the Russians came, you offered the priest to hide the gold altar chalice and the ciborium and the silver censers in your cellar and then you accused the priest of appropriating the people's property for counter-revolutionary purposes."

"Yes, so I did." Janusz shrugged. "What good would valuable sacred objects be to the godless Russians?" He stopped being on the defensive. Why excuse himself to this relic of a dark past? "Let me tell you something, my lord. I know how to pour the milk so that I don't get flies in the bowl. What was, was. There is a new life here for workers and peasants. So if you've got something for me, don't hide it behind your back. Open the sack and let me see the hen."

The Devil spread his hands, deprecatingly. "Now, Janusz, calm down. I can give you whatever your heart desires. Just name it and it's yours—anything, that is, except immortality."

Janusz's eyes narrowed. "I'll tell you," he said at last, "just give me success in everything I put my mind or hand to."

The Devil chuckled. "You're a genius, Janusz! Most men ask for money or for women or for power, but you—you ask for everything all at once! And you're even willing to work a little for it! Agreed—you shall have what you want—success! How long do you want? Twenty years? Fifty? A hundred?"

Janusz blew his nose to hide his satisfaction. "A successful old man is still an old man. Let me stay the same age I am now."

"Agreed! But for how long?" the Devil demanded.

"I am not a pig," Janusz replied. "To be successful even for a short time is worth much. Just to St. Mlotekisierp's Day is enough for me."

"St. Mlotekisierp? I'm not familiar with that one." The Devil

regarded Janusz quizzically. "It almost sounds as though you said St. Hammer-and-Sickle in your country-Polish. No matter—I will give you success in everything you put your mind or hand to at the same age you are now until that—that Whatever-his-name-is' Saint's Day. And now—you are willing to give me your immortal soul on that day?"

Janusz quickly assented. No wonder the Devil never won over God! No wonder even ignorant priests could exorcise him!

The Devil walked toward the door, turned to say, "Until St.—St.—St. Whoever-it-is's Day, then," and vanished.

Going home, Janusz saw a hare nibbling at stubble near his garden. With an oath, he flung a stone in its general direction. It fell short but then, to his amazement, rebounded from the dark earth, flew toward the animal, and struck it squarely on the head. "Ha! That Devil was an honest man!" Janusz exclaimed, as he picked up the dead hare.

His wife was standing at the stove when he came in. He threw the hare at her feet and ordered, "Make stew tonight." He went to the cupboard, took out a bottle of vodka, and drained the ounce or two in it. The easy victory over the Devil, the prospect of the evening stew, the warmth of the vodka and the breakfast of buckwheat groats with hot milk and black bread and butter filled him with a sense of power. Why, there was nothing he couldn't do! With sudden resolve, he said, "I'm going to town."

He hitched up the wagon and drove the six miles over the rutted, frozen roads to Nowy Brzecz, right up to the inn. There, he challenged Kawalek, the innkeeper, a burly ex-blacksmith who had lost his left arm in the war, "I'll handwrestle you for a bottle of vodka."

Kawalek grinned. "Better get out your money now. Double—if you lose. Remember, I'm the champion." Janusz and he rested their elbows on the table, clasped hands, and started the game. It was over in five seconds. The innkeeper was astounded. "You've the strength of an ox!" With a grand manner, Janusz told him to get glasses and they drank together.

They had finished off half the bottle when the innkeeper's brother-in-law came in with a large, sealed package. Tadeusz Rybacki had been the mayor of Nowy Brzecz before the People's Republic had removed him from office because of his suspected collaboration during the German occupation. He was now unemployed, living on funds sent him by relatives in Cincinnati in response to his tearful letters about how his non-existent six children were dying of hunger. He had a sideline—selling the clothing he got in the packages from America.

He made a mock bow to Janusz.

"Honored we are by your presence, *Pan*. Could I perhaps favor you with a dress for your wife?"

"Sure," Janusz answered, "if you have one fit to wear in that bundle of yours."

"And what will you pay me with, Mr. Chairman?" Rybacki twitted him. "You know, honest merchants are part of the fabric of our Socialist society and cannot be exploited by peasants."

"I'll make you a bet," Janusz replied. "If you have a blue silk dress with little white flowers in that pack, you'll give it to me. If there is no such dress, I'll pay you double what you ask for any other one."

Rybacki stared at him. What a stupid peasant to make such a silly bet! "Done!" he cried, and unwrapped the big pasteboard box. Neatly folded pinafores, girls' blouses and skirts, and several pairs of blue jeans lay on top of a blue-and-white silk print dress. Rybacki's jaw dropped. Open-mouthed, he could only point to the dress.

Janusz pulled it from the pile and draped it over his arm after stowing the bottle in a jacket pocket. He left and, outside the inn, examined the dress. In one of the little slanting side-pockets he felt paper crinkle. He pulled out an envelope with ten United States dollar bills and a note saying the mother should have something nice to wear and the ten dollars extra was to buy whatever else she needed.

He drove to the State Bank Branch Office, where he changed the dollars for zlotys. From there he went across the street to the Bierut Tobacco Store for a dozen packs of Troikas. Then he went next door to the Dombrowski Provision Bazaar where he bought coffee, tea, strawberry preserves, Romanian black olives and juicy Crimean lemons.

On the way home he fortified himself with a few more swigs from the bottle. He began to feel sorry for himself. What was he? —a nothing at the head of a bunch of less-than-nothings! Co-operative!—a fancy name for forty families settled on the poorest part of the ex-landlord's estate! Chairman!—because no one else wanted the job! As the village came into view, he raised the bottle to his lips once more. The wagon lurched against a deep rut, spilling the vodka over him. He cursed —why couldn't his village have smooth roads, at least, like the town's?

Filled with the hot fury of alcohol and anger, he whipped the horse from his neighbor's barn into his own yard. He took a log twice the length of a man and hitched the two horses to it, one at each end, then drove them before him into the village square, using the log as a roller.

Grugrow consisted of a cluster

of houses in an irregular oval with the unused church at the upper end and Janusz's house, off to one side, at the lower end. Next to the church was the former overseer's house, now the Co-operative office and meeting hall. The late autumn rains and then the freezing weather had waved and pitted the central area like a damaged washboard.

Shouting and beating the horses, Janusz ran after them, every now and then giving the log a kick to straighten it. The villagers came running. Janusz must have gone mad! Imagine trying to roll out the ruts with a log! The log bumped and bounced, but as it passed on the space behind it became smooth as a paved road. Janusz drove the horses around the entire area, then back toward his house and down the road for half a mile.

Home again, while he ate the steaming cabbage soup his wife put before him, he decided to take full advantage of the Devil's bargain. He was going to make the village a showplace that would put out the eyes of the townspeople.

He told his wife to unload the wagon while he went down cellar. He came up with two crusted brushes and a can half-full of thick white paint. A few bold women were in the kitchen exclaiming at the delicacies his wife was putting away. Paying no attention to them, he pushed his way through the men standing at the door. They looked at the brushes and the paint and roared. Janusz was really crazy—to start painting in the afternoon of a cold day with dried out brushes and a cupful of paint! "Hey, Janusz!" Antoni Zukowski called out, "should I help?"

"Why not?" Janusz answered. He thrust a brush into his hand. "Here, we'll start at this side. Get ladders and boards, you loafers!" he shouted at the others. "Do something if you're too lazy to work!" Ladders and boards were quickly brought. The villagers were ready for sport. This would be something to tell about all the long winter, a good joke on the drunkard Chairman.

The painting went like magic. The paint gleamed fresh and bright; the can seemed as empty, or as full, as before. Antoni slapped his brush vigorously on the wall and cried out, "The Devil must be in this! Look, the paint just flows on!" All the villagers, even the women, ran for brushes. They wanted to see for themselves what this wonderful paint was like. They discovered that as soon as they dipped their brushes into the can they were seized with a strange energy. The paint was unlike any other they had used; it spread smoothly and covered well. Before the sun set, the whole house shone in brilliant whiteness.

Janusz clapped his hands and

shouted over the chattering of the crowd, "Go home now! Special meeting tonight! Everybody must attend!"

The hall was filled. Janusz sat at the table on the platform, beneath the red and white flag flanked by portraits of Marx and Engels. Taking notes at his right hand was Stephan Borkowski, the local head of the Union of Rural Youth; at his left was Marek, the village Communist, an ex-Partisan.

Janusz banged his gavel and shouted for order above the hubbub. "Act like cultured citizens, brothers! Shut up! I have a proposal to bring before you. Why do we live like animals in stables? Are we not as tood as the townspeople? Without us, the peasants, there would be no towns, no Warsaw, no Poland! Then why do we live as we do? I propose that we paint every house in the village and clean up this filthy meeting hall and fix up the church—."

"Aha!" Marek jumped up. "That's what it is! So that's your scheme, you—you—provocateur! You make a grand speech about how we should work to make a beautiful village and all of a sudden—bang! The priest is here!"

"Sh—sh!" Angry voices silenced him. One-eyed Andrzej called out, "Shame on you, Marek! Going against the Constitution! If we're so stupid as to want a priest, we deserve to have one!" He could not finish because of the laughter.

Stephen Borkowski got up and glowered at Janusz. "Maybe Marek's right! Nobody but a provocateur would make such an idiotic proposal! Who can paint in the dead of winter?"

"Janusz can paint!" "And a good job he made of it, too!" "And what about the smooth square?" Yells of approval called for the Chairman to continue. He said, "I promise you the supplies, I will help you, and whatever I do will be successful, I promise you that, too. I want to be proud to be the Chairman of the Grubrow Co-operative." The proposal was put to a vote and carried unanimously.

By the middle of December, his promise was fulfilled. With his help, every house in Grubrow was re-painted, every roof re-done, every yard cleaned up. Only the church was the same as before, out of deference, Janusz said, to the non-religious majority, but actually because he didn't want to antagonize the Devil unnecessarily. Peasants came from miles around to see the model village. Eventually, even the Rural District Commission heard of what was going on and sent Comrade Sophia Swiatek to investigate.

Comrade Swiatek, a vigorous, well-proportioned woman, came unannounced. She drove her jeep right up to the Co-operative office, recognizable by its flag and its freshly painted and incorrectly

spelled sign. She looked back over the square. It was as she had heard —the whole village looked like a picture in a propaganda magazine. The square was smooth with flat-packed, spotless snow; paper cut-outs adorned the windows of the houses; the sleighs were shiny with varnish and gay decorations. The church disturbed her; it stood out in its deterioration.

She went into the office, showed her credentials to the book-keeper, and asked to see the Chairman. Poor Bartlomiej, who was book-keeper because he was too weak for farm work and not because he could keep books, was terrified. He stammered that he'd get the Chairman, and off he ran to Janusz's house.

Janusz came and offered to show her around. As they walked through the village, he looked sidewise out of the corners of his eyes at her. He felt a stirring in him, something that had not happened in years. Ah, if he were only younger, he mourned, he'd— and the Devil's promise came back to him. Why not?

Comrade Swietek was impressed and puzzled by what she saw. It was inconceivable that this doltish Chairman who made eyes at her could have engineered the renovation of the village. She asked him to call a meeting that night. He agreed, and invited her to stay for supper and to sleep overnight at his house.

The crowded meeting hall was different from its past squalor. The fly-specks had been scrubbed off the pictures of Marx and Engels. From the left wall portraits of Mieckiewicz, Madame Curie, and Lenin gazed across at the red-and-white banner on the right, "Grubrow—Pride of Poland."

Comrade Swiatek introduced herself and took a sheaf of papers from her brief-case. She began, "Comrades, fellow workers and peasants, what I saw here today would gladden the heart of every Polish patriot. Your village is indeed the 'Pride of Poland'—on the surface. Your houses shine, this hall is a wonder to behold, you deserve much credit for putting on a good show. But all this improvement is on the outside. Look at this model village the way our enemies would, those dark elements who want a return to the days of oppression and ignorance. See—they say—how clean and bright the houses are and what a dingy and weather-beaten hulk the church is? Are not these peasants ground down by godless rulers who forbid them to paint the church? And then they say—all this is fakery, because the peasants hate the government so much they do not support it. Their evidence? Here—the reports of your deliveries to the State—only fifty percent of the potatoes delivered and half of them cut and rotten, only sixty percent of the grain deliv-

ered, and only twenty percent of the hogs. Sure, you make a fine show for fools, but what good is a painted house when your city brothers need food and you hold back?" She was going to continue her speech, a combination of exhortation and threat, but she felt the eyes of the Chairman on her. She finished lamely, "I propose to stay here a few days and investigate."

Janusz took advantage of the heavy quiet in the hall to rise and say, "Comrade, you are right. In our selfishness we have forgotten we have duties. I pledge myself to see to it that our quotas are fulfilled. I admit that I have not turned over all that I should have and I know others have been as thoughtless. Comrade Swiatek may think that I advised the painting out of an evil desire to bring shame on our country, but that is not so. I just didn't think first things come first. I take full responsibility."

Comrade Swiatek looked at the Chairman with frank admiration. Marek had to nudge her to get up and reply. She was no longer the forbidding political representative. She was just a woman, blushing as she tried to find words and then coming out with, "Grubrow should be congratulated on having such a fine Chairman." The meeting was evidently over. The women poked each other on the way out. "He's bewitched her, that's what! That Janusz! What a man!"

At home, Janusz showed his visitor the room she was to sleep in, next to the kitchen. His wife had made up their own bed for her with an extra feather-filled cover. He and his wife lay down on blankets spread on the floor near the stove. After about an hour, when he thought his wife was asleep, Janusz got up quietly and opened the door to the bedroom. The moonlight shone on his guest, waiting for him. He got into bed with her. Janusz's wife was not asleep. She turned her face to the pillow and wept, then pulled the coverlet over her ears to shut out the creakings from the other room.

Comrade Swiatek stayed a whole week. During that time, she and Janusz were inseparable at night as well as during the day, when they went from house to house gathering the potatoes from the villagers. A special convoy of trucks was sent up from the town to cart away the potatoes, and then the oats and barley, and then the hogs. Somehow Janusz's neighbors were unable to resist his persuasion or the presence of the District representative. In a week the Co-operative's quota was overfulfilled. There was no longer any reason for Comrade Swiatek to stay. She kissed Janusz in full view of the villagers and wept openly as she drove away in her jeep.

A little scared by his easy successes, Janusz felt that it wouldn't hurt to have a few friends in court on the other side. Single-handedly, he nailed up the loose beams of the church, re-painted it, replaced the rotting steps and re-plastered the walls and ceiling. He went secretly to the Provincial Bishop.

Word came to Grubrow ten days later that a priest had been assigned by the diocese, with the consent of the government, to take over the cure of the village. There was a flurry of activity. Altar cloths were made, curtains hung, the pews and railings re-varnished, gilt paint used lavishly, the bare church quickly re-furnished and re-furbished.

On February twelfth, the Bishop's limousine and the car of the Chairman of the Provincial Board on Religious Affairs were met by almost the entire village at the entrance to the square. Janusz was not present, under pretext of illness. Why provoke the Devil too much? The Bishop blessed the kneeling crowd and proceeded to the church, where he presided over a Solemn Mass of re-consecration, naming the church in honor of St. Isidore the Laborer. He had brought along a large canvas showing St. Isidore in Heaven, holding a golden sickle and gazing upwards to the Sacred Heart. The Bishop stressed in his sermon that, although St. Isidore had been a Spaniard, farm work was as universal as the church and he exhorted his hearers to follow the example of the Saint, "whose hand in life was ever on the plough, his heart ever blessed with the thought of God.". .

At the end of the services, there was a feast in the Co-operative hall. After the women had set out the babka and poured the tea, they sat down with the men. The Bishop expressed his regret that the worthy Chairman was not present and suggested to Father Stanislas that he visit him the next day. Marek made a speech noting that religious worship was free in a free society and that Church and State could work together under Socialism. He added that he would join the new priest in visiting Janusz.

There was no need for the visit. Next morning, Janusz was up early, breaking up the ice in the well, where he was joined by a group of young fellows whose idol he now was. No one could excell Janusz in hunting. He had only to point the gun at a crow and the crow was down. Janusz walked cockily about, told dirty stories for the amusement of his followers, and was generally "king of the dung-hill," as Borkowski bitterly remarked, seeing his influence wane before the wiles of this corrupt old man.

Corrupt he was, there was no doubt about that. As the weeks wore on, he became more shame-

less in his misdeeds. More than one woman was beaten by her husband after coming out of Janusz's barn, straightening her skirts. Every night the kitchen of the Piontek house was filled with men getting drunk on Janusz's seemingly unlimited supply of vodka, singing ribald songs, and then ending up fighting each other. No one ever attacked Janusz himself after they saw the way he laid out Big Maciej with one punch.

The whole winter passed by in this manner. Grubrow became known throughout the District for its debauchery and again the Rural District Commission felt it necessary to investigate. This time, however, they sent out a man, Comrade Witold.

Forewarned by his ex-mistress, Janusz stole a march on Comrade Witold. The day he arrived the village was almost deserted. Informed that Janusz had organized a peat-cutting expedition, Witold exploded. "Peat cutting! In the middle of March! The ground is frozen yet! The tools will be broken!" He examined the Co-operative's books, saw they were in hopeless disorder, inspected the communal milk-collecting station, saw it was filthy, looked in at the church, saw its gleaming decorations with disapproval, walked around the yards, noted the carelessly-piled mounds of manure. The stories of the scandalous goings on under Piontek's maleficent guidance were confirmed by the old women and the priest. It was still early afternoon when he heard singing in the distance. A dozen broad-tired wagons drove through the square, laden with neatly cut blocks of peat. Janusz marched behind the last wagon, surrounded by his sweating, exhausted neighbors.

Comrade Witold, the wind taken out of his sails, was polite to the Chairman. His failings had to be winked at; obviously a lifetime of vices learned under capitalism could not be wiped out in a few years. He congratulated him on an early start, diffidently made a few recommendations, and left.

Janusz had no fondness for inspections. He became more circumspect. The carousing went on, but so did the farm work. The April plowing and fertilizing was finished, the seeding was done, long before the time limit set by the Agricultural Board. No other Co-operative in the District, no private farmer, no State farm, could equal the record set by Grubrow. Nor could they equal the amount of vodka and plum brandy consumed there, either.

Janusz was troubled, nevertheless. Things were going a little too good to be true. He thought over the contract with the Devil and could find no flaw in it, but—the Devil couldn't have lasted so long if he were always such a ninny in bargaining. Maybe there *was* a

stone mixed in with the basket of eggs.

Janusz never went to church, but on May tenth, the feast day of St. Isidore the Laborer, he accompanied his wife. Father Stanislas hastily added a few words to his prepared talk, mentioning in generalities the glories in Heaven awaiting the secular leaders of the people when they led Christian lives. Father Stanislas thought that he had made an impression on the Chairman, his gaze was so intent. It was, however, fixed rather on the picture of St. Isidore, now in a great gilded frame directly over the lectern.

The very next day, Janusz visited the priest. Father Stanislas hurried to greet him, almost tripping over his cassock in his haste. He invited him into the study, gave him a comfortable chair, and brought out a decanter of Hungarian wine. Janusz took a fistful of zlotys from his pocket and said, "Here, Father." The priest started to thank him, but Janusz interrupted, "I've come to ask you about that picture of St. Isidore in the church. Why is he holding a sickle?"

Father Stanislas told him the story of the sainted farm laborer of Madrid and how the sickle was chosen as his emblem. Janusz heard him through and then asked, "Is the hammer one of his emblems, too?" The priest looked at him wonderingly. "No, it isn't." Janusz asked, "Is there by any chance a saint with a hammer and sickle for his emblem?" Father Stanislas' face reddened. Was the Chairman trying to bait him? His reply was stiff. "I don't think so." "Make sure, Father. This is a very important matter."

Father Stanislas recognized that the Chairman was in earnest. Maybe there was some political matter here that the Church might be concerned with. He took out a volume on hagiology. No, no saint had both hammer and sickle as his emblem. St. Marinus had a hammer, but no sickle. Janusz urged him, "Look again, Father. Is there perhaps a St. Mlotekisierp?" No, there was no St. Hammer-and-Sickle. There were two saints named Meletius and a St. Miltiades—that was the closest.

Janusz looked relieved. He took a deep breath, drank down the wine in his glass, and stood up. "Thank you, Father. You've been a big help to me."

Father Stanislas hoped that St. Isidore would lead Janusz back to the church. Already there was an improvement in his personal life. There were no more drunken parties at his house, less obvious lechery, and Janusz was beginning to act like a sober citizen. Alas! The reform was part of Janusz's new plans. Assured now he had nothing to fear from the Devil, he was no longer satisfied to be run after by Rybacki and civilly sa-

luted by the town officials. With the Devil's help, there was no reason why he could not become Rural Commissioner, and then Deputy, and then—why, there was no limit.

He knew that he could not rely on the Devil alone, however. He had to start the ball rolling himself. He began to dress more neatly, as befitted a potential Rural Commissioner. He scraped all the dung from his boots before he entered a house. He bought handkerchiefs to use instead of his fingers for blowing his nose. He said "please" instead of cursing while directing the weeding in the fields. He told the young men horrendous tales of the hard life of a landless peasant under the old regime. He called meetings of the Co-operative Executive Committee to discuss the work quotas instead of setting them up himself.

The Devil did his share also, Janusz agreed. That year there was a great drought all over Eastern Europe. The government tried cloud-seeding devices and the peasants paraded in the fields with sacred images, to no avail. Only over Grubrow and its immediate vicinity did it rain. The Meteorologic Group from the University of Krakow came to study the phenomenon. They sent up weather balloons, took geological specimens and interviewed the farmers. In due time, long after most of the crops in the rest of Poland had been burned out, it reported that the rains came because certain local peculiarities of the terrain, as yet undetermined, caused precipitation.

The crop yield in Grubrow was fantastically high. There was enough corn for fodder for the entire District. The oats and barley quotas were over-fulfilled. The watermelons and cucumbers, the potatoes, turnips, onions and beets were the boast of the Province. The cabbages were enormous and in such quantity that truckloads were taken to other areas.

Throughout the harvesting, Janusz was indefatigable. Borkowski became his right hand man. Marek approached him with a request to join the Communist Party. The villagers praised him for his efficient labor-saving organization of the work. The women forgot his past transgressions when they saw how he helped with the chopping of the cabbages for sauerkraut and how he wangled extra crocks from the town supply house for the pickles. The District Rural Commission sent a team of carpenters and masons to build a large new smoke-house. In return, Janusz pledged to triple the amount of ham and sausage produced for the urban population.

The last move led to a visit from Comrade Wladislaw Michalski, the political leader of the Province, who let drop a few hints that the Rural District Commis-

sion to be elected in November could benefit by the presence of Janusz Piontek. Janusz received the news quietly. He enjoyed his new role as he had never enjoyed anything before. Pushed into the background were the short-lived pleasures of drunkenness and fornication. Better it was to have power, to be honored by men. The secondary enjoyments followed as a matter of course, he calculated, all in due time.

The hay was all in and the September plowing finished two weeks before the first frost. Janusz started his electioneering. He made journeys to the nearby villages, to the state farms, and to the private farmers in the area. Everywhere he was humble but dignified, gave a few suggestions and asked for support for his nomination to the Rural District Commission. Needless to say, his visits aroused enthusiasm—here was no college professor, no mechanic, no school teacher, but a plain, hard-working peasant who liked a drink or two now and then and who was a little too fond of women, but who knew, too, where the horse was going and how to keep from stepping on the droppings.

The peak of the campaign came on October twenty-seventh. The local Communist Party of Nowy Brzecz joined with the Peasant Party in placing the name of Janusz Piontek at the head of the United List of candidates. There was a gala meeting in the Town Council Hall that night, with the candidates sitting at the table of honor. The Town Magistrate read off the list of candidates and asked for objections. Several of the nominees were criticized, but not Janusz. Then Comrade Michalski asked for the floor.

"Fellow workers," he began, "I come here tonight as an official representative of the Provincial Bureau to honor the man who heads your list, Janusz Piontek. (*Loud applause.*) We in the Bureau have followed the career of Comrade Piontek with great interest this past year. Janusz Piontek was slow in starting his brilliant work as Chairman of the Grubrow Co-operative. (*Murmurs.*) But his slowness was not stupidity! It was the slow natural fermentation of ideas. When the fermentation was over and the ideas matured in his mind, the dull mash, distilled by our democratic society, became the sparkling spirits that invigorate and freshen us all. (*Laughter.*) Look at what he has done this past year! He has made the broken-down village of Grubrow the Pride of Poland! He has succeeded in everything he has put his mind and hand to! Why? Because he is no bureaucrat sitting in an office issuing directives—he is right out in the field, working. (*Applause.*) And now, my fellow workers, I have an announcement. (*Stirrings.*) The Provincial Political

Bureau, to show its appreciation of Comrade Piontek's efforts on behalf of the building of a Socialist Poland, has given him—a jeep! (*Exclamations.*) It is a symbol of the New Poland to come when every farm Co-operative will have a score of jeeps, yes, and pleasure cars!" (*Loud applause. Stamping of feet. General Commotion.*)

The Political Bureau provided a chauffeur until Janusz learned to drive himself. In one day he became as accomplished as his teacher. The next few days he spent driving around from village to village, showing off, praising the government, and lapping up the semi-envious congratulations. He stopped on the evening of the thirty-first at the Nowy Brzecz inn for a drink.

The innkeeper, exceptionally respectful, asked for a favor. "My brother-in-law, Rybacki, has been arrested on a charge of smuggling foreign currency and failing to pay duty on goods imported for sale. It's true he's nothing but a lowdown crook, but my wife is crying her eyes out. You are a man of influence—" Janusz's chest expanded—"and if you would drop a word in the right quarter, I'm sure his sentence would be lightened."

"Nonsense!" Janusz tossed his head. "I will do more. I will have Rybacki freed and I will make him my secretary."

He drove home, sure now that, with Rybacki's help, he would avoid the errors his poor education might lead to. He drove into the yard, lovingly covered the radiator with an old blanket, and relieved himself at the side of the house. As he turned around, he saw the Devil. A spasm of fear shook him for just a moment. He demanded wrathfully, "What are you doing here?"

The Devil raised his eyebrows in surprise. "Why, Janusz, it's October thirty-first."

"And yesterday was October thirtieth and tomorrow is the first of November," Janusz retorted. "What have the days of the year to do with me? Get out of here—and don't come around again! A bargain is a bargain and if you're a fool, you pay the consequences."

"So?" The Devil was very calm. "You are right. I shall return at the proper time." He vanished.

Janusz went into the house, sat down by the stove, and thought over the encounter with the Devil. Resentment rose in him. What, did that Devil think he was a booby who could be frightened into cancelling the contract? He had another think coming. Janusz would hold him to the very letter of the agreement as long as he pleased—and that was forever, he smiled to himself.

"Good, Janusz, you're smiling. That's better." The Devil stood before him. "How have things been

this past year? Everything went as you wished, didn't it?"

Janutz jumped from his chair. "Yes, it went well. If that's all you want to know, clear out!"

"Now, now, Janusz," the Devil's voice was teasing. "A bargain's a bargain, and I've come to collect. It is now November first."

Janusz peered at him in disbelief. What the devil was the Devil talking about? "Collect? You don't know yet?" He began to laugh out loud. "You fool, you thick-skulled Devil, there is no St. Mlotekisierp, no St. Hammer-and-Sickle, and you must live up to your part of the deal until there is one, which is not likely ever to be!"

The Devil shook his head. "Ai, Janusz, Janusz! Trying to cheat an old-timer like me. Today is St. Hammer-and-Sickle's Day, St. Nobody's Day, St. Bread-and-Sausage's Day. It is All Saints' Day. It is the day dedicated to every saint, known or unknown, past or present or future, no matter by what name he goes. This is the day for payment. This is the day I collect."

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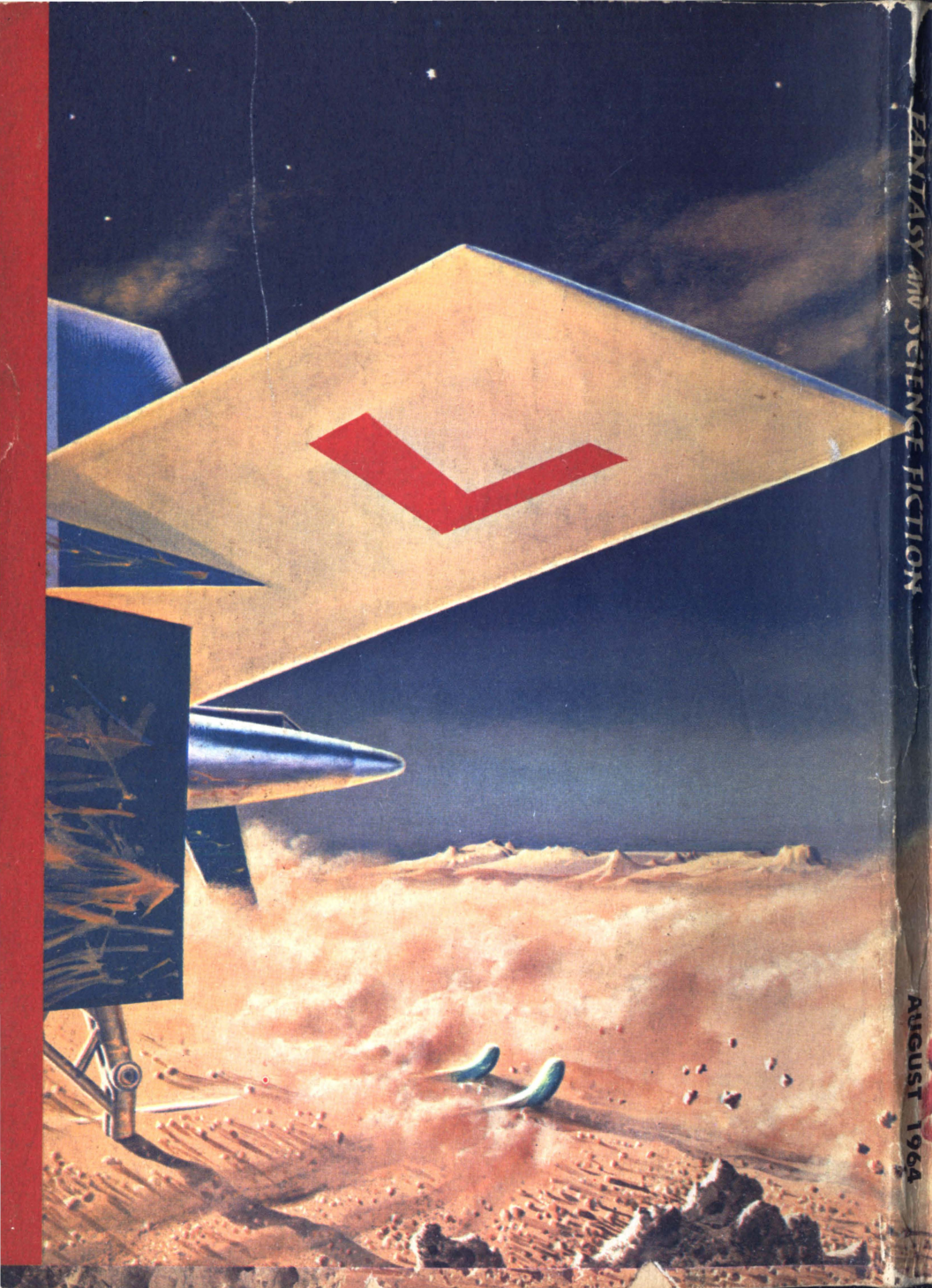

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