

new worlds

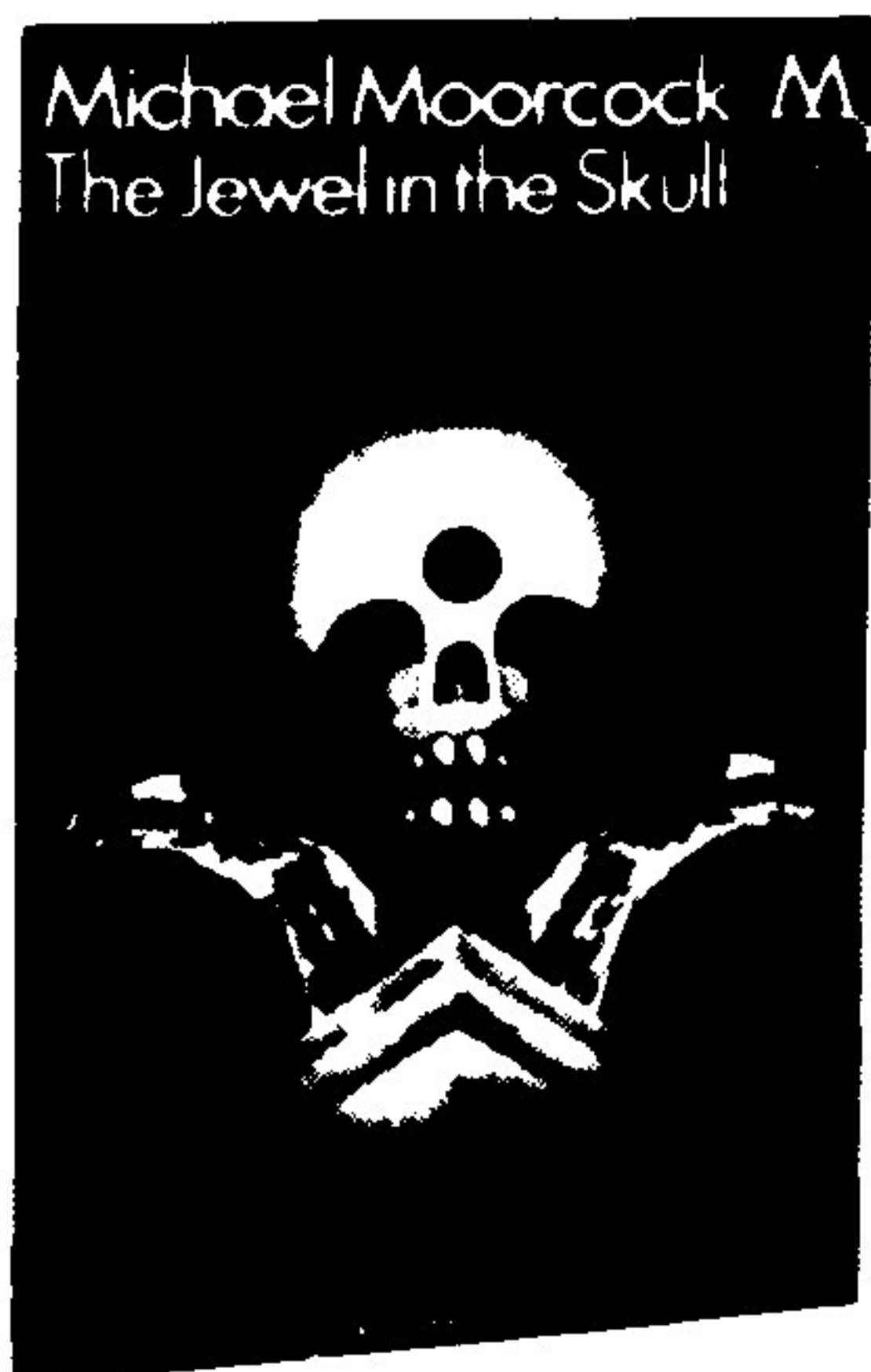
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his Dog ■ **J. G. BALLARD:** The
Beach Murders ■ **M. JOHN
HARRISON:** The Ash Circus

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Number 189

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Harlan Ellison

HARLAN ELLISON MAKES his first appearance in *NEW WORLDS* with *A Boy and His Dog*. A prolific writer of many talents, he has won a number of major sf awards, including the Hugo and the Nebula, as well as the Hollywood Screen Writers' Guild Awards for 1964/65 and 1966/67. He has feuded with Frank Sinatra and the feud was immortalised in *ESQUIRE*; he has been described as one of Hollywood's most eligible bachelors and at one time ran with a New York teenage gang in order to write his novels and short stories of New York slum life (*Rumble*, *The Deadly Streets*, *Gentleman Junkie*, etc.). He is thirty-four and sold his first novel when he was twenty-one.

He currently lives in Hollywood.

His most recently published book was *Love Ain't Nothing But Sex Misspelled*, a collection of short stories (some of them sf) published by Trident Press in the U.S., but he has had surprisingly little work published in England so far. Dorothy Parker said of him, "Mr Ellison is a good, honest, clean writer, putting down what he has seen and knows, and no sensationalism about it. I cannot recommend him too vehemently." Of his own work, Ellison has written:

"The world you were born into is going nuts. Just check around if you think I'm wrong. People stand and watch while women are knifed to death in the streets, church-going boys

from good homes take down rifles and butcher pedestrians *en masse*; kids call their parents square and they're right; parents call their kids dope fiends, and *they're* right; wild-eyed bigots run for public office; the book-burners are back with us; suddenly, getting high on something that twists your chromosomes seems like the only way to make it through the night; cops beat up pregnant women because they plead for peace; the black man hates the white man and the white man hates the black man and the grey man is caught between, riddled from both sides; fear rises up into the air like ugly smoke, permeated with the stench of paranoia and alienation.

"All the things I've mentioned are

in my stories; they are based on experiences I've had and places I've been . . . Also in these stories are ogres, soldiers, grassheads, movie stars, hookers, sick comedians, minotaurs, derelicts, teenagers, divorcees, fashion models, trolls, hillbillies, convicts, writers, lesbians, junkies, gamblers, beach bums and a hopping, crawling, slithering, striding, perambulating assortment of poor damned souls who want love, can't get love, are petrified at the thought of love, wouldn't know love if it bit them on the thigh, plead for love, and in one or two cases even find love. . . ."

A Boy and his Dog is, among other things, a science fiction story about love.

Ellison has recently been invigorating the American science fiction scene with his iconoclastic speeches at conventions and his anthology of original stories called *Dangerous Visions* which has proved to be one of the best-selling sf anthologies for some time. He is currently compiling a second book, with original contributions by writers like James Sallis, M. John Harrison and

Graham M. Hall, among others, to be called *Again, Dangerous Visions*. We hope that more of his work will be published in this country soon.

M. John Harrison, whose second story appears in *NEW WORLDS* (his first was *Baa Baa Blocksheep* in NW 184), is our Books Editor and has been largely responsible for increasing the scope and improving the quality of our books pages. His first novel *The Committed Men* will be published by Hutchinson next year and he has sold a number of short stories to *New Writings in SF*, *THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION* and other magazines and anthologies. He is currently writing more episodes in the life of Block (the central character in *Baa Baa Blocksheep*), which he hopes will eventually make a book. His present story, *The Ash Circus*, is, he says, "of course apocryphal".

Brian Aldiss is the Literary Editor of the *Oxford Mail*, and regularly writes criticism for that newspaper. His longer criticism is always a pleasure to read and we are pleased to

publish his review of *The Edwardian Turn of Mind* in this issue. *The Hand Reared Boy* is his latest novel and will be published soon by Hutchinson; it describes an adolescent's sexual awakening. His Charteris series, originally published here, will be appearing in book form from Faber as *Barefoot in the Head*. His new short story, *The Moment of Eclipse*, will be published in *NEW WORLDS* next month.

Also next month, part three of *A Cure for Cancer* (the novel is in four parts) and contributions from a variety of new writers. We regret, too, that some work announced for forthcoming issues recently has had to be held back, but will eventually appear, as will the second part of **James Sallis's** article, *Orthographies*. Mr Sallis has had to retire temporarily from active editorial work in *NEW WORLDS* due to pressure of other commitments in the United States, and this has resulted in a certain amount of unavoidable confusion concerning work scheduled for particular issues, for which all involved apologise. ■



M. John Harrison



Brian Aldiss

A Boy and His Dog

**by
Harlan
Ellison**



I WAS OUT with Blood, my dog. It was his week for annoying me; he kept calling me Albert. He thought that was pretty damned funny. Payson Terhune: ha ha. I'd caught a couple of water rats for him, the big green and ochre ones, and someone's manicured poodle, lost off a leash in one of the downunders; he'd eaten pretty good, but he was cranky. "Come on, son of a bitch," I demanded, "find me a piece of ass." Blood just chuckled, deep in his dog-throat. "You're funny when you get horny," he said.

Maybe funny enough to kick him upside his sphincter asshole, that refugee from a dingo-heap.

"Find! I'm not kidding!"

He knew I'd reached the edge of my patience. Sullenly, he started casting. He sat down on the crumbled remains of the curb, and his eyelids flickered and closed, and his hairy body tensed. After a while he settled forward on his front paws, and scraped them forward till he was lying flat, his shaggy head on the outstretched paws. The tenseness left him and he began trembling, almost the way he trembled just preparatory to scratching a flea. It went on that way for almost a quarter of an hour, and finally he rolled over and lay on his back, his naked belly towards the night sky, his front paws folded mantis-like, his hind legs extended and open. "I'm sorry," he said. "There's nothing."

I could have gotten mad and booted him, but I knew he had tried. I wasn't happy about it, I really wanted to get laid, but what could I do? "Okay," I said, with resignation, "forget it."

He kicked himself onto his side and quickly got up.

"What do you want to do?" he asked.

"Not much we *can* do, is there?" I was more than a little sarcastic. He sat down again, at my feet, insolently humble.

I leaned against the melted stub of a lamppost, and thought about girls. It was painful. "We can always go to a show," I said. Blood looked around the street, at the pools of shadow lying in the weed-overgrown craters, and didn't say anything. The whelp was waiting for me to say okay, let's go. He liked movies as much as I did.

"Okay, let's go."

He got up and followed me, his tongue hanging, panting with happiness. Go ahead and laugh, you eggsucker. No popcorn for *you*!

Our Gang was a roverpak that had never been able to cut it simply foraging, so they'd opted for comfort and gone a smart way to getting it. They were movie-orientated kids, and they'd taken over the turf where the Metropole Theatre was located. No one tried to bust their turf, because we all needed the movies, and as long as Our Gang had access to films, and did a better job of keeping the films going, they provided a service, even for solos like me and Blood. *Especially* for solos like us.

They made me check my .45 and the Browning .22 long at the door. There was a little alcove right beside the ticket booth. I bought my tickets first; it cost me a can of Oscar Meyer Philadelphia Scrapple for me, and a tin of sardines for Blood. Then the Our Gang guards with the bren guns motioned me over to the alcove and I checked my heat. I saw water leaking from a broken pipe in the ceiling and I told the checker, a kid with big leathery warts all over his face and lips, to move my weapons where it was dry. He ignored me. "Hey, you! Motherfuckin' toad, move my stuff over the other side . . . it goes to rust fast . . . an' it picks up any spots, man, I'll break your bones!"

He started to give me jaw about it, looked at the guards with the brens, knew if they tossed me out I'd lose my

price of admission whether I went in or not, but they weren't looking for any action, probably understrength, and gave him the nod to let it pass, to do what I said. So the toad moved my Browning to the other end of the gun rack, and pegged my .45 under it.

Blood and me went into the theater.

"I want popcorn."

"Forget it."

"Come on, Albert. Buy me popcorn."

"You're just being a shit." I shrugged: sue me.

We went in. The place was jammed. I was glad the guards hadn't tried to take anything but guns. My spike and knife felt reassuring, lying-up in their oiled sheaths at the back of my neck. Blood found two together, and we moved into the row, stepping on feet. Someone cursed and I ignored him. A Doberman growled. Blood's fur stirred, but he let it pass. There was always *some* hardcase on the muscle, even in neutral ground like the Metropole.

(I heard once about a get-it-on they'd had at the old Loew's Granada, on the South Side. Wound up with ten or twelve rovers and their mutts dead, the theater burned down and a couple of good Cagney films lost in the fire. After that was when the roverpaks had got up the agreement that movie houses were sanctuaries. It was better now, but there was always somebody too messed in the mind to come soft.)

It was a triple feature. "Raw Deal" with Dennis O'Keefe, Claire Trevor, Raymond Burr and Marsha Hunt was the oldest of the three. It'd been made in 1948, seventy-six years ago, god only knows how the damn thing'd hung together all that time; it slipped sprockets and they had to stop the movie all the time to re-thread it. But it was a good movie. About this solo who'd been japped by his roverpak and was out to get revenge. Gangsters, mobs, a lot of punching and fighting. Real good.

The middle flick was a thing made during the Third War, in '07, two years before I was even born, thing called "Smell of a Chink". It was mostly gut-spilling and some nice hand-to-hand. Beautiful scene of skirmisher greyhounds equipped with napalm throwers, jellyburning a Chink town. Blood dug it, even though we'd seen this flick before. He had some kind of phony shuck going that these were ancestors of his, and *he* knew / knew he was making it up.

"Wanna burn a baby, hero?" I whispered to him. He got the barb and just shifted in his seat, didn't say a thing, kept looking pleased as the dogs worked their way through the town. I was bored stiff.

I was waiting for the main feature.

Finally it came on. It was a beauty, a beaver flick made in the late 1970s. It was called "Big Black Leather Splits". Started right out very good. These two blondes in black leather corsets and boots laced all the way up to their crotches, with whips and masks, got this skinny guy down and one of the chicks sat on his face while the other went down on him. It got really hairy after that.

All around me there were solos playing with themselves. I was about to jog it a little myself when Blood leaned across and said, real soft, the way he does when he's onto something unusually smelly, "There's a chick in here."

"You're nuts," I said.

"I tell you I smell her. She's in here, man."

Without being conspicuous, I looked around. Almost every seat in the theater was taken with solos or their dogs. If a chick had slipped in there'd have been a riot. She'd have been ripped to pieces before any single guy could have

gotten into her. "Where?" I asked, softly. All around me, the solos were beating-off, moaning as the blondes took off their masks and one of them worked the skinny guy with a big wooden ram strapped around her hips.

"Give me a minute," Blood said. He was really concentrating. His body was tense as a wire. His eyes were closed, his muzzle quivering. I let him work.

It was possible. Just maybe possible. I knew that they made really dumb flicks in the downunders, the kind of crap they'd made back in the 1930s and '40s, real clean stuff with even married people sleeping in twin beds. Myrna Loy and George Brent kind of flicks. And I knew that once in a while a chick from one of the really strict middle-class downunders would cumup, to see what a hairy flick was like. I'd heard about it, but it'd never happened in any Theater I'd ever been in.

And if she *was* here, why couldn't any of the other dogs smell her . . . ?

"Third row in front of us," Blood said. "Aisle seat. Dressed like a solo."

"How's come *you* can whiff her and no other dog's caught her?"

"You forget who I am, Albert."

"I didn't forget, I just don't believe it."

Over 50 years ago, in Los Angeles, before the Third War even got going completely, there was a man named Buesing who lived in Cerritos. He raised dogs as watchmen and sentries and attackers. Dobermans, Danes, Schnauzers and Japanese akitas. He had one four-year-old German shepherd bitch named Ginger. She worked for the Los Angeles Police Department's narcotics division. She could smell out marijuana. No matter how well it was hidden. They ran a test on her: there were 25,000 boxes in an auto parts warehouse. Five of them had been planted with marijuana that had been sealed in cellophane, wrapped in tin foil and heavy brown paper, and finally hidden in three separate sealed cartons. Within seven minutes Ginger found all five packages. At the same time that Ginger was working, 92 miles further north, in Santa Barbara cetologists had drawn and amplified dolphin spinal fluid and injected it into Chacma baboons and dogs. Altering surgery and grafting had been done. The first successful product of this cetacean experimentation had been a two-year-old male Puli named Ahbhu, who had communicated sense-impressions telepathically. Cross-breeding and continued experimentation had produced the first skirmisher dogs, just in time for the Third War. Telepathic over short distances, easily trained, able to track gasoline or troops or poison gas or radiation when linked with their human controllers, they had become the shock commandos of a new kind of war. The selective traits had bred true. Dobermans, greyhounds, akitas, pulis and schnauzers had become steadily more telepathic.

He had told me so, a thousand times. Had told me the story just that way, in just these words, a thousand times, as it had been told to him. I'd never believed him till now.

Maybe the little bastard *was* special.

I checked out the solo scrunched down in the aisle seat three rows ahead of me. I couldn't tell a damned thing. The solo had his (her?) cap pulled way down, fleece jacket pulled way up.

"Are you sure?"

"As sure as I can be. It's a girl."

"If it is, she's playing with herself just like a guy." Blood snickered. "Surprise," he said sarcastically.

The mystery solo sat through "Raw Deal" again. It

made sense, if that was a girl. Most of the solos and all of the members of roverpaks left after the beaver flick. The theater didn't fill up much more, it gave the streets time to empty, he/she could make his/her way back to wherever he/she had come from. I sat through "Raw Deal" again myself. Blood went to sleep.

When the mystery solo got up, I gave him/her time to get weapons if any'd been checked, and start away. Then I pulled Blood's big shaggy ear and said, "Let's do it." He slouched after me, up the aisle.

I got my guns and checked the street. Empty.

"Okay, nose," I said, "where'd he go?"

"Her. To the right."

I started off, loading the Browning from my bandolier. I still didn't see anyone moving among the bombed-out shells of the buildings. This section of the city was crummy, really bad shape. But then, with Our Gang running the Metropole, they didn't have to repair anything else to get their livelihood. It was ironic; the Dragons had to keep an entire power plant going to get tribute from the other roverpaks; Ted's Bunch had to mind the reservoir, the Bastinados worked like field-hands in the marijuana gardens, the Barbados Blacks lost a couple of dozen members every year cleaning out the radiation pits all over the city; and Our Gang only had to run that movie house.

Whoever their leader had been, however many years ago it had been that the roverpaks had started forming out of foraging solos, I had to give it to him: he'd been a flinty sharp mother. He knew what services to deal in.

"She turned off here," Blood said.

I followed him as he began loping, towards the edge of the city and the bluish-green radiation that still flickered from the hills. I knew he was right, then. The only thing out here was the access dropshaft to the downunder. It was a girl, all right.

The cheeks of my ass tightened as I thought about it. I was going to get laid. It had been almost a month, since Blood had whiffed that solo chick in the basement of the Market Basket. She'd been filthy, and I'd gotten the crabs from her, but she'd been a woman, all right, and once I'd tied her down and clubbed her a couple of times she'd been pretty good. She'd liked it, too, even if she did spit on me and tell me she'd kill me if she ever got loose. I left her tied up, just to be sure. She wasn't there when I went back to look, week before last.

"Watch out," Blood said, dodging around a crater almost invisible against the surrounding shadows. Something stirred in the crater.

Trekking across the nomansland I realised why it was that all but a handful of solos or members of roverpaks were guys. The War had killed off most of the girls, and that was the way it always was in wars . . . at least that's what Blood told me. The things getting born were seldom males *or* female, and had to be smashed against a wall as soon as they were pulled out of the mother.

The few chicks who hadn't gone downunder with the middle-classers were hard, solitary bitches like the one in the Market Basket; tough and stringy and just as likely to cut off your meat with a razor blade once they let you get in. Scuffling for a piece of ass had gotten harder and harder, the older I'd gotten.

But every once in a while a chick got tired of being roverpak property, or a raid was got-up by five or six roverpaks and some unsuspecting downunder was taken, or—like this time, yeah—some middle-class chick from a downunder got hot pants to find out what a beaver flick

looked like, and cumup.

I was going to get laid. Oh boy, I couldn't wait!

OUT HERE IT was nothing but empty corpses of blasted buildings. One entire block had been stomped flat, like a steel press had come down from Heaven and given one solid wham! and everything was powder under it. The chick was scared and skittish, I could see that. She moved erratically, looking back over her shoulder and to either side. She knew she was in dangerous country. Man, if she'd only known *how* dangerous.

There was one building standing all alone at the end of the smash-flat block, like it had been missed and chance let it stay. She ducked inside, and a minute later I saw a bobbing light. Flashlight? Maybe.

Blood and I crossed the street and came up into the blackness surrounding the building. It was what was left of a YMCA.

I didn't want her getting out; inside there was as good a place to screw her as any, so I put Blood on guard right beside the steps leading up into the shell, and I went around the back. All the doors and windows had been blown out, of course. It wasn't no big trick getting in. I pulled myself up to the ledge of a window, and dropped down inside. Dark inside. No noise, except the sound of her, moving around on the other side of the old YMCA. I didn't know if she was heeled or not, and I wasn't about to take any chances. I bow-slung the Browning and took out the .45 automatic. I didn't have to snap back the action—there was always a slug in the chamber.

I started moving carefully through the room. It was a locker room of some kind. There was glass and debris all over the floor, and one entire row of metal lockers had the paint blistered off their surfaces; the flash blast had caught them through the windows, a lot of years ago. My sneakers didn't make a sound coming through the room.

The door was hanging on one hinge, and I stepped over—through the inverted triangle. I was in the swimming pool area. The big pool was empty, with tiles buckled down at the shallow end. It stunk bad in there; no wonder, there were dead guys, or what was left of them, along one wall. Some lousy cleaner-up had stacked them, but hadn't buried them. I pulled my bandana up around my nose and mouth, and kept moving.

Out the other side of the pool place, and through a little passage with popped light bulbs in the ceiling. I didn't have any trouble seeing. There was moonlight coming through busted windows and a chunk was out of the ceiling. I could hear her real plain now, just on the other side of the door at the end of the passage. I hung close to the wall, and stepped down to the door. It was open a crack, but blocked by a fall of lath and plaster from the wall. It would make noise when I went to pull it open, that was for certain. I had to wait for the right moment.

Flattened against the wall, I checked out what she was doing in there. It was a gymnasium, big one, with climbing ropes hanging down from the ceiling. She had a big square eight-cell flashlight sitting up in the croup of a vaulting horse. There were parallel bars and a horizontal bar about eight feet high, the high-tempered steel all rusty now. There were swinging rings and a trampoline and a big wooden balancing beam. Over to one side there were wallbars and balancing benches, horizontal and oblique ladders, and a couple of stacks of vaulting boxes. I made a note to remember this joint. It was better for working-out than the jerry-rigged gym I'd set up in an old auto-wrecking yard. A

guy has to keep in shape if he's going to be a solo.

She was out of her disguise. Standing there in the skin, shivering. Yeah, it was chilly, and I could see a pattern of chicken-skin all over her. She was maybe five six or seven, with nice tits and kind of skinny legs. She was brushing out her hair. It hung way down the back. The flashlight didn't make it clear enough to tell if she had red hair or chestnut, but it wasn't blonde, which was good, and that was because I dug redheads. She had nice tits, though. I couldn't see her face, the hair was hanging down all smooth and wavy and cut off her profile.

The crap she'd been wearing was laying around on the floor, and what she was going to put on was up on the vaulting horse. She was standing in little shoes with a kind of funny heel on them.

I couldn't move. I suddenly realized I couldn't move. She was nice, really nice. I was getting as big a kick out of just standing there and seeing the way her waist fell inward and her hips fell outward, the way the muscles at the side of her tits pulled up when she reached to the top of her head to brush all that hair down. It was really weird, the kick I was getting out of standing and just staring at a chick do that. Kind of very, well, woman stuff. I liked it a lot.

I'd never ever stopped and just looked at a chick like that. All the ones I'd ever seen had been scumbags that Blood had smelled out for me, and I'd snatchn'grabbed them. Or the big chicks in the beaver flicks. Not like this one, kind of soft and very smooth, even with the goose bumps. I could of watched her all night.

She put down the brush, and reached over and took a pair of panties off the pile of clothes, and wriggled into them. Then she got her bra and put it on. I never knew the way chicks did it. She put it on backwards, around her waist, and it had a hook on it. Then she slid it around till the cups were in front, and kind of pulled it up under and scooped herself into it, first one, then the other; then she pulled the straps over her shoulder. She reached for her dress, and I nudged some of the lath and plaster aside, and grabbed the door to give it a yank.

She had the dress up over her head, and her arms up inside the material, and when she stuck her head in, and was all tangled there for a second, I yanked the door and there was a crash as chunks of wood and plaster fell out of the way, and a heavy scraping, and I jumped inside and was on her before she could get out of the dress.

She started to scream, and I pulled the dress off her with a ripping sound, and it all happened for her before she knew what that crash and scape was all about.

Her face was wild. Just wild. Big eyes: I couldn't tell what colour they were because they were in shadow. Real fine features, a wide mouth, little nose, cheekbones just like mine, real high and prominent and a dimple in her right cheek. She stared at me really scared.

And then . . . and this is really weird . . . I felt like I should *say* something to her. I don't know what. Just something. It made me uncomfortable, to see her scared, but what the hell could I do about *that*. I mean, I was going to rape her, after all, and I couldn't very well tell her not to be shrinky about it. She was the one cumup, after all. But even so, I wanted to say hey, don't be scared. I just want to lay you. (That never happened before. I never wanted to *say* anything to a chick, just get in, and that was that.)

But it passed, and I put my leg behind hers and tripped her back, and she went down in a pile. I levelled the .45 at her, and her mouth kind of opened in a little o shape. "Now I'm gonna go over there and get one of them

wrestling mats, so it'll be better, comfortable, uh-huh? You make a move off that floor and I shoot a leg out from under you, and you'll get screwed just the same, except you'll be without a leg." I waited for her to let me know she was onto what I was saying, and she finally nodded real slow, so I kept the automatic on her, and went over to the big dusty stack of mats, and pulled one off.

I dragged it over to her, and flipped it so the cleaner side was up, and used the muzzle of the .45 to maneuver her onto it. She just sat there on the mat, with her hands behind her, and her knees bent, and stared at me.

I unzipped my pants and started pulling them down off one side, when I caught her looking at me real funny. I stopped with the jeans. "What're *you* lookin' at?"

I was mad. I didn't know why I was mad, but I was.

"What's your name?" she asked. Her voice was very soft, and kind of furry, like it came up through her throat that was all lined with fur or something.

She kept looking at me, waiting for me to answer. "Vic," I said. She looked like she was waiting for more.

"Vic what?"

I didn't know what she meant for a minute, then I did. "Vic. Just Vic. That's all."

"Well, what're your mother and father's names?"

Then I started laughing, and working my jeans down again. "Boy, are you a dumb bitch," I said, and laughed some more. She looked hurt. It made me mad again. "Stop lookin' like that, or I'll bust out your teeth!"

She folded her hands in her lap.

I got the pants down around my ankles. They wouldn't come off over the sneakers. I had to balance on one foot and scuff the sneaker off the other foot. It was tricky, keeping the .45 on her and getting the sneaker off at the same time. But I did it.

I was standing there buck-naked from the waist down and she had sat forward a little, her legs crossed, hands still in her lap. "Get that stuff off," I said.

She didn't move for a second, and I thought she was going to give me trouble. But then she reached around behind her and undid the bra. Then she tipped back and slipped the panties off her ass.

Suddenly, she didn't look scared any more. She was watching me very close and I could see her eyes were blue now. Now this is the really weird thing . . .

I couldn't do it. I mean, not exactly. I mean, I *wanted* to fuck her, see, but she was all soft and pretty and she kept *looking* at me, and no solo I ever met would believe me, but I heard myself *talking* to her, still standing there like some kind of wetbrain, one sneaker off and jeans down around my ankle. "What's *your* name?"

"Quilla June Holmes."

"That's a weird name."

"My mother says it's not that uncommon, back in Oklahoma."

"That where your folks come from?"

She nodded. "Before the Third War."

"They must be pretty old by now."

"They are, but they're okay. I guess."

We were just frozen there, talking to each other. I could tell she was cold, because she was shivering. "Well," I said, sort of getting ready to drop down beside her, "I guess we better—"

Damn it! That damned Blood! Right at that moment he came dashing in from outside. Came skidding through the lath and plaster, raising dust, slid along on his ass till he got to us. "Now, what?" I demanded.

"Who're you talking to?" the girl asked.

"Him. Blood."

"*The dog!?!?*"

Blood stared at her and then ignored her. He started to say something, but the girl interrupted him. "Then it's true what they say . . . you can all talk to animals . . ."

"You going to listen to her all night, or do you want to hear why I came in?"

"Okay, why're you here?"

"You're in trouble, Albert."

"Come *on*, forget the mickeymouse. What's the up?"

Blood twisted his head towards the front door of the YMCA. "Roverpak. Got the building surrounded. I make it fifteen or twenty, maybe more."

"How the hell'd they know we was here?"

Blood looked chagrined. He dropped his head.

"Well?"

"Some other mutt must've smelled her in the theater?"

"Great."

"Now what?"

"Now we stand 'em off, that's what. You got any better suggestions?"

"Just one."

I waited. He grinned.

"Pull your pants up."

THE GIRL, THIS Quilla June, was pretty safe. I made her a kind of a shelter out of wrestling mats, maybe a dozen of them. She wouldn't get hit by a stray bullet, and if they didn't go right for her, they wouldn't find her. I climbed one of the ropes hanging down from the girders and laid out up there with the Browning and a couple of handfuls of reloads. I wished to God I'd had an automatic, a bren or a Thompson. I checked the .45, made sure it was full, with one in the chamber, and set the extra clips down on the girder. I had a clear line-of-fire all around the gym.

Blood was lying in shadow right near the front door. He'd suggested I try and pick off any dogs with the roverpak first, if I could. That would allow him to operate freely.

That was the least of my worries. *

I'd wanted to hole up in another room, one with only a single entrance, but I had no way of knowing if the rovers were already in the building, so I did the best I could with what I had.

Everything was quiet. Even that Quilla June. It'd taken me valuable minutes to convince her she'd damned well better hole up and not make any noise, she was better off with me than with twenty of *them*. "If you ever wanna see your mommy and daddy again," I warned her. After that she didn't give me no trouble, packing her in with mats.

Quiet.

Then I heard two things, both at the same time. From back in the swimming pool I heard boots crunching plaster. Very soft. And from one side of the front door I heard a tinkle of metal striking wood. So they were going to try a yoke. Well, I was ready.

Quiet again.

I sighted the Browning on the door to the pool room. It was still open from when I'd come through. Figure him at maybe five-ten, and drop the sights a foot and a half, and I'd catch him in the chest. I'd learned long ago you don't try for the head. Go for the widest part of the body: the chest and stomach. The trunk.

Suddenly, outside, I heard a dog bark, and part of the darkness near the front door detached itself and moved



inside the gym. Directly opposite Blood. I didn't move the Browning.

The rover at the front door moved a step along the wall, away from Blood. Then he cocked back his arm and threw something—a rock, a piece of metal, something-across the room, to draw fire. I didn't move the Browning.

When the thing he'd thrown hit the floor, two rovers jumped out of the swimming pool door, one on either side of it, rifles down, ready to spray. Before they could open up, I'd squeezed off the first shot, tracked across and put a second shot into the other one. They both went down. Dead hits, right in the heart. Bang, they were down, neither one moved.

The mother by the door turned to split, and Blood was on him. Just like that, out of the darkness, riiiip!

Blood leaped, right over the crossbar of the guy's rifle held at ready, and sank his fangs into the rover's throat. The guy screamed, and Blood dropped, carrying a piece of the guy with him. The guy was making awful bubbling sounds and went down on one knee. I put a slug into his head, and he fell forward.

It went quiet again.

Not bad. Not bad atall atall. Three takeouts and they still didn't know our positions. Blood had fallen back into the murk by the entrance. He didn't say a thing, but I knew what he was thinking: maybe that was three out of seventeen, or three out of twenty, or twenty-two. No way of knowing; we could be faced-off in here for a week and never know if we'd gotten them all, or some, or none. They could go and get poured full again, and I'd find myself run out of slugs and no food and that girl, that Quilla June, crying and making me divide my attention, and daylight—and they'd be still laying out there, waiting till we got hungry enough to do something dumb, or till we ran out of slugs, and then they'd cloud up and rain all over us.

A rover came dashing straight through the front door at top speed, took a leap, hit on his shoulders, rolled, came up

going in a different direction and snapped off three rounds into different corners of the room before I could track him with the Browning. By that time he was close enough under me where I didn't have to waste a .22 slug. I picked up the .45 without a sound and blew the back off his head. Slug went in neat, came out and took most of his head with it. He fell right down.

"Blood! The rifle!"

Came out of the shadows, grabbed it up in his mouth and dragged it over to the pile of wrestling mats in the far corner. I saw an arm poke out from the mass of mats, and a hand grabbed the rifle, dragged it inside. Well, it was at least safe there, till I needed it. Brave little bastard: he scuttled over to the dead rover and started worrying the ammo bandolier off his body. It took him a while; he could have been picked off from the doorway or outside one of the windows, but he did it. Brave little bastard. I had to remember to get him something good to eat, when we got out of this. I smiled, up there in the darkness: *if* we got out of this, I wouldn't have to worry about getting him something tender. It was lying all over the floor of that gymnasium.

Just as Blood was dragging the bandolier back into the shadows, two of them tried it with their dogs. They came through a ground floor window, one after another, hitting and rolling and going in opposite directions, as the dogs—a mother-ugly Akita, big as a house, and a Doberman bitch the color of a turd—shot through the front door and split in the unoccupied two directions. I caught one of the dogs, the Akita, with the .45 and it went down thrashing. The Doberman was all over Blood.

But firing, I'd given away my position. One of the rovers fired from the hip and .30-06 soft-nosed slugs spanged off the girders around me. I dropped the automatic and it started to slip off the girder as I reached for the Browning. I made a grab for the .45 and that was the only thing saved me. I fell forward to clutch at it, it slipped away and hit the gym floor with a crash, and the rover fired at where I'd

been. But I was flat on the girder, arm dangling, and the crash startled him. He fired at the sound, and right at that instant I heard another shot, from a Winchester, and the other rover, who'd made it safe into the shadows, fell forward holding a big pumping hole in his chest. That Quilla June had shot him, from behind the mats.

I didn't even have time to figure out what the fuck was happening . . . Blood was rolling around with the Doberman and the sounds they were making were awful . . . the rover with the .30-06 chipped off another shot and hit the muzzle of the Browning, protruding over the side of the girder, and wham it was gone, falling down. I was naked up there without clout, and the sonofabitch was hanging back in the shadow waiting for me.

Another shot from the Winchester, and the rover fired right into the mats. She ducked back behind, and I knew I couldn't count on her for anything more. But I didn't need it; in that second, while he was focused on her, I grabbed the climbing rope, flipped myself over the girder, and howling like a burnpit-screamer, went sliding down, feeling the rope cutting my palms. I got down far enough to swing, and kicked off. I swung back and forth, whipping my body three different ways each time, swinging out and over, way over, each time. The sonofabitch kept firing, trying to track a trajectory, but I kept spinning out of his line of fire. Then he was empty, and I kicked back as hard as I could, and came zooming in toward his corner of shadows, and let loose all at once and went ass-over-end into the corner, and there he was, and I went right into him and he spanged off the wall, and I was on top of him, digging my thumbs into his eye-sockets. He was screaming and the dogs were screaming and that girl was screaming, and I pounded that motherfucker's head against the floor till he stopped moving, then I grabbed up the empty .30-06 and whipped his head till I knew he wasn't gonna give me no more aggravation.

Then I found the .45 and shot the Doberman.

Blood got up and shook himself off. He was cut up bad. "Thanks," he mumbled, and went over and lay down in the shadows to lick himself off.

I went and found that Quilla June, and she was crying. About all the guys we'd killed. Mostly about the one *she'd* killed. I couldn't get her to stop bawling, so I cracked her across the face, and told her she'd saved my life, and that helped some.

Blood came dragassing over. "How're we going to get out of this, Albert?"

"Let me think."

I thought, and knew it was hopeless. No matter how many we got, there'd be more. And it was a matter of *macho* now. Their honor.

"How about a fire?" Blood suggested. "Get away while it's burning?" I shook my head. "They'll have the place staked-out all round. No good."

"What if we don't leave? What if we burn up with it?"

I looked at him. Brave . . . and smart as hell.

We gathered all the lumber and mats and scaling ladders and vaulting boxes and benches and anything else that would burn, and piled the garbage against a wooden divider at one end of the gym. Quilla June found a can of kerosene in a storeroom, and we set fire to the whole damn pile. Then we followed Blood to the place he'd found for us. The boiler room way down under the YMCA. We all climbed into the empty boiler, and dogged down the door, leaving a release vent open for air. We had one mat in there

with us, and all the ammo we could carry, and the extra rifles and sidearms the rovers'd had on them.

"Can you catch anything?" I asked Blood.

"A little. Not much. I'm reading one guy. The building's burning good."

"You may be able to tell when they split?"

"Maybe. *If* they split."

I settled back. Quilla June was shaking from all that had happened. "Just take it easy," I told her. "By morning the place'll be down around our ears and they'll go through the rubble and find a lot of dead meat and maybe they won't look too hard for a chick's body. And everything'll be all right . . . if we don't get choked off in here."

She smiled, very thin, and tried to look brave. She was okay, that one. She closed her eyes and settled back on the mat and tried to sleep. I was beat. I closed my eyes, too.

"Can you handle it?" I asked Blood.

"I suppose. You better sleep."

I nodded, eyes still closed, and fell on my side. I was out before I could think about it.

When I came back, I found the girl, that Quilla June, snuggled up under my armpit, her arm around my waist, dead asleep. I could hardly breathe. It was like a furnace; hell, it *was* a furnace. I reached out a hand and the wall of the boiler was so damned hot I couldn't touch it. Blood was up on the mattress with us. That mat had been the only thing'd kept us from being singed good. He was asleep, head buried in his paws. She was asleep, still naked.

I put a hand on her tit. It was warm. She stirred and cuddled into me closer. I got a hard on.

Managed to get my pants off, and rolled on top of her. She woke up fast when she felt me pry her legs apart, but it was too late by then. "Don't . . . *stop* . . . what are you doing . . . no, don't . . ."

But she was half-asleep, and weak, and I don't think she really wanted to fight me anyhow.

She cried when I broke her, of course, but after that it was okay. There was blood all over the wrestling mat. And Blood just kept sleeping.

It was really different. Usually, when I'd got Blood to track something down for me, it'd be a grab it and punch it and get away fast before something bad could happen. But when she came, she rose up off the mat, and hugged me around the back so hard I thought she'd crack my ribs, and then she settled back down slow slow slow, like I do when I'm doing leg-lifts in the makeshift gym I rigged in the auto wrecking yard. And her eyes was closed, and she was relaxed looking. And happy. I could tell.

We did it a lot of times, and after a while it was her idea, but I didn't say no. And then we lay out side-by-side and talked.

She asked me about how it was with Blood, and I told her how the skirmisher dogs had gotten telepathic, and how they'd lost the ability to hunt food for themselves, so the solos and roverbaks had to do it for them, and how dogs like Blood were good at finding chicks for solos like me. She didn't say anything to that.

I asked her about what it was like where she lived, in one of the downunders.

"It's nice. But it's always very quiet. Everyone is very polite to everyone else. It's just a small town."

"Which one you live in?"

"Topeka. It's real close to here."

"Yeah, I know. The access dropshaft is only about half a mile from here. I went out there once, to take a look around."



"Have you ever been in a downunder?"

"No. But I don't guess I want to be, either."

"Why? It's very nice. You'd like it."

"Shit."

"That's very crude."

"I'm very crude."

"Not all the time."

I was getting mad. "Listen, you ass, what's the matter with you? I grabbed you and pushed you around, I raped you half a dozen times, so what's so good about me, huh? What's the matter with you, don't you even have enough smarts to know when somebody's—"

She was smiling at me. "I didn't mind. I liked doing it. Want to do it again?"

I was really shocked. I moved away from her. "What the hell is wrong with you? Don't you know that a chick from a downunder like you can be really mauled by solos? Don't you know chicks get warnings from their parents in the downunders, 'Don't go cumup, you'll get snagged by them dirty, hairy, slobbering solos!' Don't you know that?"

She put her hand on my leg and started moving it up, the fingertips just brushing my thigh. I got another hard on. "My parents never said that about solos," she said. Then she pulled me over her again, and kissed me and I couldn't stop from getting in her again.

God, it just went on like that for hours. After a while Blood turned around and said, "I'm not going to keep pretending I'm asleep. I'm hungry. And I'm hurt."

I tossed her off me—she was on top by this time—and examined him. That Doberman had taken a good chunk out of his right ear, and there was a rip right down his muzzle, and blood-matted fur on one side. He was a mess. "Jesus, man, you're a mess," I said.

"You're no fucking rose garden yourself, Albert!" he snapped. I pulled my hand back.

"Can we get out of here?" I asked him.

He cast around, and then shook his head. "I can't get any readings. Must be a pile of rubble on top of this boiler. I'll have to go out and scout."

We kicked that around for a while, and finally decided if the building was razed, and had cooled a little, the roverpak would have gone through the ashes by now. The fact that they hadn't tried the boiler indicated that we were probably buried pretty good. Either that, or the building was still smouldering overhead. In which case, they'd still be out there, waiting to sift the remains.

"Think you can handle it, the condition you're in?"

"I guess I'll *have* to, won't I?" Blood said. He was really surly. "I mean, what with you busy fucking your brains out, there won't be much left for staying alive, will there?"

I sensed real trouble with him. He didn't like Quilla June. I moved around him and undogged the boiler hatch. It wouldn't open. So I braced my back against the side, and jacked my legs up, and gave it a slow, steady shove.

Whatever had fallen against it from outside, resisted for a minute, then started to give, then tumbled away with a crash. I pushed the door open all the way, and looked out. The upper floors had fallen in on the basement, but by the time they'd given, they'd been mostly cinder and light-weight rubble. Everything was smoking out there. I could see daylight through the smoke.

I slipped out, burning my hands on the outside lip of the hatch. Blood followed. He started to pick his way through the debris. I could see that the boiler had been almost completely covered by the gunk that had dropped from above. Chances were good the roverpak had taken a fast look, figured we'd been fried, and moved on. But I wanted Blood to run a recon, anyway. He started off, but I called him back. He came.

"What is it?"

I looked down at him. "I'll tell you what it is, man. You're acting very shitty?"

"Sue me."

"Goddamit, dog, what's got your ass up?"

"Her. That nit chick you've got in there."

"So what? Big deal . . . I've had chicks before."

"Yeah, but never any that hung on like this one. I warn you, Albert, she's going to make trouble."

"Don't be dumb!" He didn't reply. Just looked at me with anger, and then scampered off to check out the scene. I crawled back inside and dogged the hatch. She wanted to make it again. I said I didn't want to; Blood had brought me down. I was bugged. And I didn't know which one to be pissed off at.

But God she was pretty.

She kind of pouted, and settled back with her arms wrapped around her. "Tell me some more about the downunder," I said.

At first she was cranky, wouldn't say much, but after a while she opened up and started talking freely. I was learning a lot. I figured I could use it some time, maybe.

There were only a couple of hundred downunders in what was left of the United States and Canada. They'd been sunk on the sites of wells or mines or other kinds of deep holes. Some of them, out in the west, were in natural cave formations. They went away down, maybe two to five miles. They were like big caissons, stood on end. And the people who'd settled them were squares of the worst kind. Southern Baptists, Fundamentalists, lawanorder goofs, real middle-class squares with no taste for the wild life. And they'd gone back to a kind of life that hadn't existed for a hundred and fifty years. They'd gotten the last of the

scientists to do the work, invent the how and why, and then they'd run them out. They didn't want any progress, they didn't want any dissent, they didn't want anything that would make waves. They'd had enough of that. The best time in the world had been just before the First War, and they figured if they could keep it like that, they could live quiet lives and survive. Shit! I'd go nuts in one of the downunders.

Quilla June smiled, and snuggled up again, and this time I didn't turn her off. She started touching me again, down there and all over, and then she said, "Vic?"

"Uh-huh."

"Have you ever been in love?"

"What?"

"In love? Have you ever been in love with a girl?"

"Well, I damn well guess I haven't!"

"Do you know what love is?"

"Sure. I guess I do."

"But if you've never been in love . . .?"

"Don't be dumb. I mean, I've never had a bullet in the head, and I know I wouldn't like it."

"You don't know what love is, I'll bet."

"Well, if it means living in a downunder, I guess I just don't wanna find out."

We didn't go on with the conversation much after that. She pulled me down and we did it again. And when it was over, I heard Blood scratching on the boiler. I opened the hatch and he was standing there. "All clear," he said.

"You sure?"

"Yeah, yeah, I'm sure. Put your pants on," he said it with a sneer in the tone, "and come on out here. We have to talk some stuff."

I looked at him and he wasn't kidding. I got my jeans and sneakers on, and climbed down out of the boiler. We went off and he harangued me for half an hour about our mutual responsibilities. I was about up to here with him, and told him I was going to do right by him, like I always had, and he threatened me, saying I'd damned well better because there were a couple of very hip solos making it around the city, and they'd be delighted to have a sharp tail-scent like him. I told him I didn't like being threatened, and he'd better watch his fucking step or I'd break his leg. He got furious and stalked off. I said screw you and went back to the boiler to take it out on that Quilla June again.

But when I stuck my head inside the boiler, she was waiting, with a pistol one of the dead rovers had supplied. She hit me good and solid over the right eye with it, and I fell straight forward across the hatch, and was out cold.

"I TOLD YOU she was no good." He watched me as I swabbed out the cut with disinfectant from my kit, and painted the tear with iodine. He smirked when I flinched.

I put away the stuff, and rummaged around in the boiler, gathering up all the spare ammo I could carry, and ditching the Browning in favour of the heavier .30-06. Then I found something that must've slipped out of her clothes.

It was a little metal plate, about 3½ inches long and an inch and a half high. It had a whole string of numbers on it, and there were holes in it, in random patterns. "What's this?" I asked Blood.

He looked at it, sniffed it.

"Must be an identity card of some kind. Maybe it's what she used to get out of the downunder."

That made my mind up.

I jammed it in a pocket and started out. Toward the access dropshaft.

"Where the hell are you going?" Blood yelled after me.

"Come on back, you'll get killed out there!"

"I'm hungry, dammit!"

"Albert, you sonofabitch! Come back here!"

I kept right on walking. I was gonna find that bitch and brain her. Even if I had to go downunder to find her.

It took me an hour to walk to the access dropshaft leading down to Topeka. I thought I saw Blood following, but hanging back a ways. I didn't give a damn. I was mad.

Then, there it was. A tall, straight, featureless pillar of shining black metal. It was maybe twenty feet in diameter, perfectly flat on top, disappearing straight into the ground. It was a cap that was all. I walked straight up to it, and fished around in the pocket for that metal card. Then something was tugging at my right pants leg.

"Listen, you moron, you can't go down there!"

I kicked him off, but he came right back.

"Listen to me!"

I turned around and stared at him.

Blood sat down; the powder puffed up around him. "Albert . . ."

"My name is Vic, you little egg-sucker."

"Okay, okay, no fooling around. Vic." His tone softened. "Vic. Come on, man." He was trying to get through to me. I was really boiling, but he was trying to make sense. I shrugged, and crouched down beside him.

"Listen, man," Blood said, "this chick has bent you way out of shape. You *know* you can't go down there. It's all square and settled and they know everyone; they hate solos. Enough roverbaks have raided downunders and raped their broads, and stolen their food, they'll have defenses set up. They'll *kill* you, man!"

"What the hell do you care? You're always saying you'd be better off without me." He sagged at that.

"Vic, we've been together almost three years. Good and bad. But this can be the worst. I'm scared, man. Scared you won't come back. And I'm hungry, and I'll have to go find some dude who'll take me on . . . and you know most solos are in paks now, I'll be low mutt. I'm not that young any more. And I'm hurt."

I could dig it. He was talking sense. But all I could think of was how that bitch, that Quilla June, had rapped me. And then there were images of her soft tits, and the way she made little sounds when I was in her, and I shook my head, and knew I had to go to get even.

"I got to do it, Blood. I got to."

He breathed deep, and sagged a little more. He knew it was useless. "You don't even see what she's done to you, Vic."

I got up. "I'll try to get back quick. Will you wait . . .?"

He was silent a long while, and I waited. Finally, he said, "For a while. Maybe I'll be here, maybe not."

I understood. I turned around and started walking around the pillar of black metal. Finally, I found a slot in the pillar, and slipped the metal card into it. There was a soft humming sound, then a section of the pillar dilated. I hadn't even seen the lines of the sections. A circle opened and I took a step through. I turned and there was Blood watching me. We looked at each other, all the while that pillar was humming.

"So long, Vic."

"Take care of yourself, Blood."

"Hurry back."

"Do my best."

"Yeah. Right."

Then I turned around and stepped inside. The access portal irised closed behind me.

I SHOULD HAVE known. I should have suspected. Sure, every once in a while I chick cumup to see what it was like on the surface, what had happened to the cities; sure, it happened. Why I'd believed her when she'd told me, cuddled up beside me in that steaming boiler, that she'd wanted to see what it was like when a girl did it with a man, that all the flicks she'd seen in Topeka were sweet and solid and dull, and the girls in her school'd talked about beaver flicks, and one of them had a little eight-page comic book and she'd read it with wide eyes . . . sure, I'd believed her. It was logical. I should have suspected something when she left that metal plate behind. It was too easy. Blood'd tried to tell me. Dumb? Yeah!

The second that access iris swirled closed behind me, the humming got louder, and some cool light grew in the walls. Wall. It was a circular compartment with only two sides to the walls: *inside* and *outside*. The wall pulsed up light and the humming got louder, and then the floor I was standing on dilated just the way the outside port had done. But I was standing there, like a mouse in a cartoon, and as long as I didn't look down I was cool, I wouldn't fall.

Then I started settling. Dropped through the floor, the iris closed overhead, I was dropping down the tube, picking up speed but not too much, just dropping steadily. Now I know what a dropshaft was.

Down and down I went and every once in a while I'd see something like 10 LEV or ANTIPOLL 55 or BREEDER-CON or PUMP SE 6 on the wall, and faintly I could make out the sectioning of an iris . . . but I never stopped dropping.

Finally, I dropped all the way to the bottom and there was TOPEKA CITY LIMITS POP. 22,860 on the wall, and I settled down without any strain, bending a little from the knees to cushion the impact, but even that wasn't much.

I used the metal plate again, and the iris—a much bigger one this time—swirled open, and I got my first look at a downunder.

It stretched away in front of me; twenty miles to the dim shining horizon of tin can metal where the wall behind me curved and curved and curved till it made one smooth, encircling circuit and came back around around around to where I stood, staring at it. I was down at the bottom of a big metal tube that stretched up to a ceiling an eighth of a mile overhead, twenty miles across. And in the bottom of that tin can, someone had built a town that looked for all the world like a photo out of one of the water-logged books in the library on the surface. I'd seen a town like this in the books. Just like this. Neat little houses, and curvy little streets, and trimmed lawns, and a business section and everything else that a Topeka would have.

Except a sun, except birds, except clouds, except rain, except snow, except cold, except wind, except ants, except dirt, except mountains, except oceans, except big fields of grain, except stars, except the moon, except forests, except animals running wild, except . . .

Except freedom.

They were canned down here, like dead fish. Canned.

I felt my throat tighten up. I wanted to get out. Out! I started to tremble, my hands were cold and there was sweat on my forehead. This had been insane, coming down here. I had to get out. *Out!*

I turned around, to get back in the dropshaft, and then it grabbed me.

That bitch Quilla June! I shoulda suspected!

THE THING WAS low, and green, and boxlike, and had cables with mittens on the ends instead of arms, and it rolled on tracks, and it grabbed me.

It hoist me up on its square flat top, holding me with them mittens on the cables, and I couldn't move, except to try kicking at the big glass eye in the front, but it didn't do any good. It didn't bust. The thing was only about four feet high, and my sneakers almost reached the ground, but not quite, and it started moving off into Topeka, hauling me along with it.

People were all over the place. Sitting in rockers on their front porches, raking their lawns, hanging around the gas station, sticking pennies in gumball machines, painting a white stripe down the middle of the road, selling newspapers on a corner, listening to an oompah band on a shell in a park, playing hopscotch and pussy-in-the-corner, polishing a fire engine, sitting on benches reading, washing windows, pruning bushes, tipping boaters to ladies, collecting milk bottles in wire carrying racks, grooming horses, throwing a stick for a dog to retrieve, diving into a communal swimming pool, chalking vegetable prices on a slate outside a grocery, walking hand-in-hand with a girl, all of them watching me go past on that metal motherfucker.

I could hear Blood speaking, saying just what he'd said before I'd entered the dropshaft: *It's all square and settled and they know everyone; they hate solos. Enough rover-paks have raided downunders and raped their broads, and stolen their food, they ll have defenses set up. They'll kill you, man!*

Thanks, mutt.

Goodbye.

THE GREEN BOX tracked through the business section and turned in at a shopfront with the words BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU on the window. It rolled right inside the open door, and there were half a dozen men and old men and very old men in there, waiting for me. Also a couple of women. The green box stopped.

One of them came over and took the metal plate out of my hand. He looked at it, then turned around and gave it to the oldest of the old men, a withered cat wearing baggy pants and a green eyeshade and garters that held up the sleeves of his striped shirt. "Quilla June, Lew," the guy said to the old man. Lew took the metal plate and put it in the top left drawer of a rolltop desk. "Better take his guns, Aaron," the old coot said. And the guy who'd taken the plate cleaned me.

"Let him loose, Aaron," Lew said.

Aaron stepped around the back of the green box and something clicked, and the cable-mittens sucked back inside the box, and I got down off the thing. My arms were numb where the box had held me. I rubbed one, then the other, and I glared at them.

"Now, boy . . ." Lew started.

"Suck wind, asshole!"

The women blanched. The men tightened their faces.

"I told you it wouldn't work," another of the old men said to Lew.

"Bad business, this," said one of the younger ones.

Lew leaned forward in his straight-back chair and pointed a crumbled finger at me. "Boy, you better be nice."

"I hope all your fuckin' children are hare-lipped!"

"This is no good, Lew!" another man said.

"Guttersnipe," a woman with a beak snapped.

Lew stared at me. His mouth was a nasty little black line. I knew the sonofabitch didn't have a tooth in his crummy head that wasn't rotten and smelly. He stared at me with vicious little eyes, God he was ugly, like a bird ready to pick meat off my bones. He was getting set to say something I wouldn't like. "Aaron, maybe you'd better put the sentry back on him." Aaron moved to the green box.

"Okay, hold it," I said, holding up my hand.

Aaron stopped, looked at Lew, who nodded. Then Lew leaned forward again, and aimed that bird-claw at me. "You ready to behave yourself, son?"

"Yeah, I guess."

"You'd better be dang sure."

"Okay. I'm *sure*. Also *fuckin'* sure!"

"And you'll watch your mouth."

I didn't reply. Old coot.

"You're a bit of an experiment for us, boy. We tried to get one of you down here in other ways. Sent up some good folks to capture one of you little scuts, but they never came back. Figured it was best to lure you down to us."

I sneered. That Quilla June. I'd take care of her!

One of the women, a little younger than Bird-Beak, came forward and looked into my face. "Lew, you'll never get this one to cow-tow. He's a filthy little killer. Look at those eyes."

"How'd you like the barrel of a rifle jammed up your ass, bitch?" She jumped back. Lew was angry again. "Sorry," I said, "I don't like bein' called names. *Macho*, y'know?"

He settled back and snapped at the woman. "Mez, leave him alone. I'm tryin' to talk a bit of sense here. You're only making it worse."

Mez went back and sat with the others. Some Better Business Bureau these creeps were!

"As I was saying, boy: you're an experiment for us. We've been down here in Topeka close to twenty years. It's nice down here. Quiet, orderly, nice people who respect each other, no crime, respect for the elders, and just all around a good place to live. We're growin' and we're prosperin'."

I waited.

"But, well, we find now that some of our folks can't have no more babies, and the women that do, they have mostly girls. We need some men. Certain special kind of men."

I started laughing. This was too good to be true. They wanted me for stud service. I couldn't stop laughing.

"Crude!" one of the women said, scowling.

"This's awkward enough for us, boy, don't make it no harder." Lew was embarrassed.

Here I'd spent most of Blood's and my time above-ground hunting up tail, and down here they wanted me to service the local ladyfolk. I sat down on the floor and laughed till the tears ran down my cheeks.

Finally, I got up and said, "Sure. Okay. But if I do, there's a couple of things I want."

Lew looked at me close.

"The first thing I want is that little Quilla June. I'm gonna fuck her blind, and then I'm gonna bang her on the head the way she did me!"

They huddled for a while, then came out and Lew said, "We can't tolerate any violence down here, but I s'pose Quilla June's as good a place to start as any. She's capable, isn't she, Ira?"

A skinny, yellow-skinned man nodded. He didn't look happy about it. Quilla June's old man, I bet.



"Well, let's get started," I said. "Line 'em up." I started to unzip my jeans.

The women screamed, the men grabbed me, and they hustled me off to a boarding house where they gave me a room, and they said I should get to know Topeka a little bit before I went to work, because it was, uh, er, well, awkward, and they had to get the folks in town to accept what was going to have to be done . . . on the assumption, I suppose, that if I worked out okay, they'd import a few more young bulls from aboveground, and turn us loose.

So I spent some time in Topeka, getting to know the folks, seeing what they did, how they lived. It was nice, real nice. They rocked in rockers on the front porches, they raked their lawns, they hung around the gas station, they stuck pennies in gumball machines, they painted white stripes down the middle of the road, they sold newspapers on the corners, they listened to oompah bands on a shell in the park, they played hopscotch and pussy-in-the-corner, they polished fire engines, they sat on benches reading, they washed windows and pruned bushes, they tipped their boaters to ladies, they collected milk bottles in wire

carrying racks, they groomed horses and threw sticks for their dogs to retrieve, they dove into the communal swimming pool, they chalked vegetable prices on a slate outside the grocery, they walked hand-in-hand with some of the ugliest chicks I've ever seen, and they bored the ass off me.

Inside a week I was ready to scream.

I could feel that tin can closing in on me.

I could feel the weight of the earth over me.

They ate artificial shit: artificial peas and fake meat and make-believe chicken and ersatz corn and bogus bread and it all tasted like chalk and dust to me.

Polite? Christ, you could puke from the lying, hypocritical crap they called civility. Hello Mr This and Hello Mrs That. And how are you? And how is little Janie? And how is business? And are you going to the solidarity meeting Thursday? And I started gibbering in my room at the boarding house.

The clean, sweet, neat, lovely way they lived was enough to kill a guy. No wonder the men couldn't get it up and make babies that had balls instead of slots.

Finally, I started getting hip to the possibilities of getting out of there. It began with me remembering the poodle I'd fed Blood one time. It had to of come from a downunder. And it couldn't of got up through the dropshaft. So that meant there were other ways out.

They gave me pretty much the run of the town, as long as I kept my manners around me and didn't try anything sudden. That green sentry box was always somewhere nearby.

So I found the way out. Nothing so spectacular; it just had to be there, and I found it.

Then I found out where they kept my weapons, and I was ready. Almost.

IT WAS A week to the day when Aaron and Lew and Ira came to get me. I was pretty goofy by that time. I was sitting out on the back porch of the boarding house, smoking a corncob pipe with my shirt off, catching some sun. Except there wasn't no sun. Goofy.

They came around the house. "Morning, Vic," Lew greeted me. He was hobbling along with a cane, the old fart. Aaron gave me a big smile. The kind you'd give a big black bull about to stuff his meat into a good breed cow. Ira had a look that you could chip off and use in your furnace.

"Well, howdy, Lew. Mornin' Aaron, Ira."

Lew seemed right pleased by that.

Oh, you lousy bastards, just you wait!

"You 'bout ready to go meet your first lady?"

"Ready as I'll ever be, Lew," I said, and got up.

"Cool smoke, isn't it?" Aaron said.

I took the corncob out of my mouth. "Pure dee-light," I smiled. I hadn't even lit the fucking thing.

They walked me over to Marigold Street and as we came up on a little house with yellow shutters and a white picket fence, Lew said, "This's Ira's house. Quilla June is his daughter."

"Well, land sakes," I said, wide-eyed.

Ira's lean jaw muscles jumped.

We went inside.

Quilla June was sitting on the settee with her mother, an older version of her, pulled thin as a withered muscle. "Miz Holmes," I said, and made a little curtsey. She smiled. Strained, but smiled.

Quilla June sat with her feet right together, and her hands folded on her lap. There was a ribbon in her hair. It

was blue.

Matched her eyes.

Something went thump in my gut.

"Quilla June," I said.

She looked up. "Mornin', Vic."

Then everyone sort of stood around looking awkward, and finally Ira began yapping and yipping about get in the bedroom and get this unnatural filth over with so they could go to Church and pray the Good Lord wouldn't Strike All Of Them Dead with a bolt of lightning in the ass, or some crap like that.

So I put out my hand, and Quilla June reached for it without looking up, and we went in the back, into a small bedroom, and she stood there with her head down.

"You didn't tell 'em, did you?" I asked.

She shook her head.

And suddenly, I didn't want to kill her at all. I wanted to hold her. Very tight. So I did. And she was crying into my chest, and making little fists and beating on my back, and then she was looking up at me and running her words all together: "Oh, Vic, I'm sorry, so sorry, I didn't mean to, I had to, I was sent out to, I was so scared, and I love you and now they've got you down here, and it isn't dirty, is it, it isn't the way my Poppa says it is, is it?"

I held her and kissed her and told her it was okay, and then asked her if she wanted to come away with me, and she said yes yes she really did. So I told her I might have to hurt her Poppa to get away, and she got a look in her eyes that I knew real well.

For all her propriety, Quilla June Holmes didn't much like her prayer-shouting Poppa.

I asked her if she had anything heavy, like a candlestick or a club, and she said no. So I went rummaging around in that back bedroom, and found a pair of her Poppa's socks, in a bureau drawer. I pulled the big brass balls off the headboard of the bed, and dropped them into the sock. I hefted it. Oh. Yeah.

She stared at me with big eyes. "What're you going to do?"

"You want to get out of here?"

She nodded.

"Then just stand back behind the door. No, wait a minute, I got a better idea. Get on the bed."

She laid down on the bed. "Okay," I said, "now pull up your skirt, pull off your pants, and spread out." She gave me a look of pure horror. "Do it," I said. "If you want out."

So she did it, and I rearranged her so that her knees were bent and her legs open at the thighs, and I stood to one side of the door, and whispered to her, "Call your Poppa. Just him."

She hesitated a long moment, then she called out, in a voice she didn't have to fake, "Poppa! Poppa, come here, please!" Then she clamped her eyes shut tight.

Ira Holmes came through the door, took one look at his secret desire, his mouth dropped open, I kicked the door closed behind him and waloped him as hard as I could. He squished a little, and spattered the bedspread, and went very down.

She opened her eyes when she heard the thunk! and when the stuff splattered her legs she leaned over and puked on the floor. I knew she wouldn't be much good to me in getting Aaron into the room, so I opened the door, stuck my head around, looked worried, and said, "Aaron, would you come here a minute, please?" He looked at Lew, who was rapping with Mrs Holmes about what was going on

in the back bedroom, and when Lew nodded him on, he came into the room. He took a look at Quilla June's naked bush, at the blood on the wall and bedspread, at Ira on the floor, and opened his mouth to yell, just as I whacked him. It took two more to get him down, and then I had to kick him in the chest to put him away. Quilla June was still puking.

I grabbed her by the arm and swung her up off the bed. At least she was being quiet about it, but man did she stink.

"Come on!"

She tried to pull back, but I held on, and opened the bedroom door. As I pulled her out, Lew stood up, leaning on his cane. I kicked the cane out from under the old fart and down he went in a heap. Mrs Holmes was staring at us, wondering where her old man was: "He's back in there," I said, heading for the front door. "The Good Lord got him in the head."

Then we were out in the street, Quilla June stinking along behind me, dry-heaving and bawling and probably wondering what had happened to her underpants.

They kept my weapons in a locked case at the Better Business Bureau, and we detoured around by my boarding house where I pulled the crowbar I'd swiped from the gas station out from under the back porch. Then we cut across behind the Grange and into the business section, and straight into the BBB. There was a clerk who tried to stop me, and I split his gourd with the crowbar. Then I pried the latch off the cabinet in Lew's office, and got the .30-06 and my .45 and all the ammo, and my spike, and my knife, and my kit, and loaded up. By that time Quilla June was able to make some sense.

"Where we gonna go, where we gonna go, oh Poppa Poppa Poppa . . .!"

"Hey, listen, Quilla June, Poppa me no Poppa. You said you wanted to be with me . . . well, I'm goin' *up*, baby, and if you wanna go with, you better stick close."

She was too scared to object.

I stepped out the front of the shopfront, and there was that green box sentry, coming on like a whippet. It had its cables out, and the mittens were gone. It had hooks.

I dropped to one knee, wrapped the sling of the .30-06 around my forearm, sighted clean, and fired dead at the big eye in the front. One shot, spang!

Hit that eye, the thing exploded in a shower of sparks, and the green box swerved and went through the front window of The Mill End Shoppe, screeching and crying and showering the place with flames and sparks. Nice.

I grabbed Quilla June by the arm and started off toward the south end of Topeka. It was the closest exit I'd found in my wandering, and we made it in about fifteen minutes, panting and weak as kittens.

And there it was.

A big air-intake duct.

I pried off the clamps with the crowbar, and we climbed up inside. There were ladders going up. There had to be. It figured. Repairs. Keep it clean. Had to be. We started climbing. It took a long, long time.

Quilla June kept asking me, from down behind me, whenever she got too tired to climb, "Vic, do you love me?" I kept saying yes. Not only because I meant it. It helped her keep climbing.

WE CAME UP a mile from the access dropshaft. I shot off the filter covers and the hatch bolts, and we climbed out. They should have known better down there.

You don't fuck around with Jimmy Cagney.

They never had a chance.

Quilla June was exhausted. I didn't blame her. But I didn't want to spend the night out in the open; there were things out there I didn't like to think about meeting even in daylight. It was getting on toward dusk.

We walked toward the access dropshaft.

Blood was waiting.

He looked weak. But he'd waited.

I stooped down and lifted his head. He opened his eyes, and very softly he said, "Hey".

I smiled at him. Jesus, it was good to see him. "We made it back, man."

He tried to get up, but he couldn't. The wounds on him were in ugly shape. "Have you eaten?" I asked.

"No. Grabbed a lizard yesterday . . . or maybe it was day before. I'm hungry, Vic."

Quilla June came up then, and Blood saw her. He closed his eyes. "We'd better hurry, Vic," she said. "Please. They might come up from the dropshaft."

I tried to lift Blood. He was dead weight. "Listen, Blood, I'll leg it into the city and get some food. I'll come back quick. You just wait here."

"Don't go in there, Vic," he said. "I did a recon the day after you went down. They found out we weren't fried in that gym. I don't know how. Maybe mutts smelled our track. I've been keeping watch, and they haven't tried to come out after us. I don't blame them. You don't know what it's like out here at night, man . . . you don't know. . . ."

He shivered.

"Take it easy, Blood."

"But they've got us marked lousy in the city, Vic. We can't go back there. We'll have to make it someplace else."

That put it on a different stick. We couldn't go back, and with Blood in that condition we couldn't go forward. And I knew, good as I was solo, I couldn't make it without him. And there wasn't anything out here to eat. He had to have food, at once, and some medical care. I had to do something. Something good, something fast.

"Vic," Quilla June's voice was high and whining, "come on! He'll be all right. We have to hurry."

I looked up at her. The sun was going down. Blood trembled in my arms.

She got a pouty look on her face. "If you love me, you'll come on!"

I couldn't make it alone out there without him. I knew it. If I loved her. She asked me, in the boiler, do you know what love is?

IT WAS A SMALL fire, not nearly big enough for any Roverpak to spot from the outskirts of the city. No smoke. And after Blood had eaten his fill, I carried him to the air-duct a mile away, and we spent the night inside, on a little ledge. I held him all night. He slept good. In the morning, I fixed him up pretty good. He'd make it; he was strong.

He ate again. There was plenty left from the night before. I didn't eat. I wasn't hungry.

We started off across the blast wasteland that morning. We'd find another city, and make it.

We had to move slow, because Blood was still limping. It took a long time before I stopped hearing her calling in my head. Asking me, asking me: *do you know what love is?*

Sure I know.

A boy loves his dog. ■

M. JOHN HARRISON: THE ASH CIRCUS

1:—JERRY IS DEAD

JERRY CORNELIUS WAS buried at sea without honour, although Captain Vassily personally draped the plastic coffin with a Hungarian flag.

The coffin tumbled into the grey Pacific, vanished, then popped up again among its own bubbles to rock uneasily on the heavy swell. Vassily, who was prone to seasickness, left the taffrail, and none of his crew was interested enough in the English assassin to watch as the coffin was captured by a fast north-easterly current. By this time the flag had become dull and soggy. Bobbing jauntily like an apple in a tub, the coffin vanished into a low haze astern at five or six knots. When it reached a predetermined point about 50 miles off the Chilean coast, it sank again. Simultaneously, Vassily's destroyer was located by an Antarctic-based hydrofoil from the Panamanian Third Flotilla, bottled up in a coral lagoon, and taken out by a small tactical atomic shell. It was almost too late, but the Panamanians weren't to know that.

Two days later the nuclear submarine *USS Marty Lingham*, cruising south at fifty knots with five 'Mother's Day' strike missiles aboard, detected Jerry's sonar beacon. It dove to several hundred fathoms down and dispatched frogmen in self-propelled depth armour. In the infirmary they stripped the flag off and opened the box. Jerry had got wet. His long pale corpse glistened under the fluorescents like a stranded albino fish. There was a slight frown on his face.

Manny Ableson the psychotic resurrectionist, Jerry's friend from the Israeli death camp days, administered a massive dose of PbX in the form of a rectal suppository—noting that Jerry seemed to have given up the habit—then put the corpse to bed, where it lay for 24 hours, losing its pallor and smelling of seawater. Jerry had expressly forbidden photographs, but Ableson took them anyway,

chuckling. In the last frame, he found that Jerry's frown had vanished. It was now very definitely too late, for the Panamanians and for everyone else.

Jerry woke up feeling refreshed but hungry. He was bothered by an abstract mental itch, as if he'd forgotten an interesting dream: but he'd had enough of the essential passivity of eternal rest. Someone had laid out his lace-fronted shirt, bottle green frock coat, and black cords. He put them on, admired himself in a small mirror, and went to find the captain. On the way, he met Manny, who pinched his arm. "Didn't I tell you it would work, my boy? Where are your shoes?"

"Somebody forgot to pack them." Jerry considered his bare pink feet.

"Oh, see those pinkies," said Manny. "All that beautiful blood flowing again." He rubbed his hands together and leered.

"You can chuck the rest of the PbX down the sink. I shan't be doing this again." Jerry was off death, it made his hair greasy.

He walked into the captain's quarters without knocking. A dead man had certain extraordinary privileges. At the sound of his entrance, the captain gave a guilty jerk and did something below the level of his leather-topped desk. Jerry smirked and studied the beige decor of the cabin. On the wall behind the desk hung a Mercator projection of the world; areas damaged by the war were marked in green; a lot of England had gone, it seemed, before the American rockets had stopped falling. Underneath the map was an unframed homily. The Devil finds work for idle hands. The captain stopped fumbling and stood up. He was big and bulky, grey haired, and his uniform was crumpled as if he'd slept with it. He came round the desk on the balls of his feet, a large arthritic hand outstretched. Jerry imagined him exercising every morning with a Charles Atlas contraption.

"You must be Cornelius. I'm Captain Donne."

"I know." Jerry ignored the hand. "And it's Mr

Cornelius. I want to go to London." He sat down behind the desk, put his feet up, and examined them without prejudice.

"That's a long haul, Cornelius. Cornelius, I'd like my chair."

Donne squinted.

"Yes," said Jerry.

"I can't waste American time. There's a war on, you know."

Jerry knew about war. He was, he supposed, partially responsible for the lack of shoes. It had been a rush trip. He didn't think America had too much time left to waste.

"London." He hadn't seen London for some time.

"America owes *you* nothing, Cornelius. The truce would have got signed without your help. They all come to heel in the end. I don't know why the Pentagon endorsed this jaunt."

"They didn't. I arranged it with a friend. And there isn't a Pentagon any more." Jerry was a stickler for accuracy. He mentioned the name of his friend. He felt that he might be losing his patience. Donne said nothing. "Look," Jerry continued reasonably, "'Mr Cornelius has been accorded the temporary rank of C in C Ayn Rand Sector (E)'".

Donne lurched forward like a drunk, slammed his hands on the edge of the desk. Jerry looked with interest at his working features, the sweat dribbling into the eyes.

"Those bloody orders were sealed! You snide bastard, how—"

"I dictated them." Jerry yawned and got up. He had spent a night without sleep before he died. "London. The Thames estuary will do. I'll borrow one of your admirable little rubber dinghies."

"You're a bloody corpse!" yelled Donne. "Christ, you queer bastard—" His voice took on a derisive note, "How does it feel to be dead, Cornelius? To know you're nothing?"

"I forget," said Jerry. "Ask the priest."

"I could have left you there, you know!"

Donne screamed. He appeared to be unbuttoning his flies. Jerry shut the door behind him and wondered if people had stopped looking up to him. Lately they all seemed to want to prove something.

2:—THE RESURRECTIONIST

Jerry languished in the stern of the yellow inflatable, one white limp hand on the throttle of the outboard motor, the other trailing in the brown waves of the Thames. He was feeling decadent. His feet were cold. The *Marty Lingham* was sinking to port, the water closing over its fat hull with a sound like a stallion breaking wind. Jerry had company he hadn't expected. Earlier in the day, Donne had sent him a note that read:

GET THAT GREASY KIKE OFF MY BOAT, CORPSE-FACE.

So Manny was sitting in the bow, talking animatedly and waving his arms about. Jerry had stopped listening to him. He had taken no reprisals against Donne, merely chalked

TAKE YOURSELF IN HAND CAPTAIN
on the bulkhead of the officers' rest room.



"There was nobody about . . ."

London was in a mess.

The marshes had returned: the sunken housing estates of Deptford and Plumstead had become a flat tract of khaki mud, pocked by the glassy craters of low-yield nuclear explosions. It was twilight. Corpse lights flickered from pools of stagnant water; Jerry could smell the rotting flesh from way out on the water. Under a grey-green luminous sky, blasted trees poked up out of the silt. Here and there Jerry picked out the blistered facade of a *Chez Nous* or *Dunromin*. Off to the west, the hills of the city were dark misty heaps. Jerry remembered Verdun and the slime beds of Passchendaele. In his head they came over the top screaming, viscera exploding away like coils of pale conduit. He was depressed.

They dragged the inflatable partly out of the water and watched for a moment as the current plucked at its stern. The marshes were silent. There were no omens.

"What are you going to do now?" asked Jerry.

Ableson waved his arms about, beamed, pushed his spectacles up his nose.

"You surprise me Jerry." His pudgy arm made a sweeping gesture that included the whole smashed London basin. "This is . . . beautiful."

"Yes," said Jerry. "Well, bye bye."

The little jew shuffled forward through the mud and embraced him. His lips were wet and muscular. Jerry moved away quickly, disturbed.

"Until the next time, Jerry?"

Jerry loathed the paradoxical sermanic sense of *Schicksal* of the jews. He made a slight noncommittal motion of his head.

"You're welcome to it," he said.

Ableson went off toward the urban foothills. The last Jerry saw of him for some time was a fat cruciform shape in the gathering gloom: his right hand terminated in a thick glass tube that caught a little of the remaining light, his left in a sheaf of photographs; he was cackling loudly.

Struggling with his malaise of the head Jerry wandered along the indistinct shoreline looking for the transport he had arranged. He found it in a fold of land that might have been the bed of a vanished tributary—like most things, the old geomorphology no longer held. It was an LWN hovercraft, brooding, a big pale bird. Jerry loosened his heater in its cradle under his arm and made a couple of circuits of the machine, suspicious as an old dog about to lie down. There was nobody about, not even a pilot. The broken trees worried him, and here the mud was of a puzzling consistency, soft but fibrous. Bones, luminescent white caught at his feet. He tripped and fell heavily against the flank of the 'craft.

Inside, he showered and dressed in some of the nicer clothes in the locker, but it didn't cheer him up. Somebody had left his pale blue calf-length suede boots in the middle of the chart table, obscuring the Port Of London and most of the City. He strapped himself into the pilot's seat and lifted off on the first leg of the complex journey north, water and mud churning beneath the lift skirts of the 'craft. He decided that the cockpit smelled of *Le Galion Sortege*, a perfume he didn't particularly like.

3:—GODWIN AND DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

Things went from bad to worse. There were rumours of the Second Coming; a Dutch woman gave birth to triplets without showing previous indications of pregnancy.

The process of dislocation that had begun during the late fifties accelerated.

There were intimations of entropy everywhere: an avalanche trapped a hundred members of the Greek Orthodox Church in a mountain ziggurat in Capadocia where they were praying for revelation; two thousand people threw themselves into the sea off Scarborough after sighting a large green and gold hemisphere protruding from the base of a low cumulus cloud; the accidental detonation of a 'Thanksgiving' class orbital hydrogen device in the Van Allen belts severed global radio communication throughout the month of October; the Astronomer Royal reported a shift in the orbit of Halley's Comet and, operating from a jury-rigged radio telescope at the summit of Ben A' Choirn, declared the Millenium and the Age of Saturn.

Jerry, tired out by all this, hired a croft on the north west coast of Scotland and made the inevitable transition from decadence to Romance. He wandered through the rowan woods of Balmacara, dressed in a long black cloak and a russet felt shovel hat, reciting verses of his own composition and eating stale bread which he dipped in spring-water. His black hair grew longer and wilder, although it was still soft and heavy. In the long evenings he read Godwin and Dorothy Wordsworth in the orange light of an oil lamp, his eyes dark-circled like a racoon's in his thin nervous face. Byron's cremation moved him particularly. He formed a plan of action based on the following

data:

The appearance of Andy Warhol a thousand feet above the New York quarantine area—An abnormally heavy shower of Leonids which damaged several houses and a church in Prerov, Czechoslovakia—An outbreak of vulcanism at the north magnetic pole—The discovery of an Aryan with burning hair in the Negev desert—The opening of Joanna Southcott's box.

He could tell he had recovered when he began to find Keats' *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* something of a joke. He left the croft, but kept the shovel hat.

4:—JERRY'S NEW FRIEND

Jerry drove down from Glasgow to Manchester, making detours and admiring the bomb damage. The M6 between Preston and Haydock was impassable: worse still, his Phantom VI had broken down on the A72 and he had been forced to steal a cramped and uncomfortable Ford GT 40. Looking out of the side windows as he hammered along he reflected that at least there were roads in the north: the areas south of Manchester were nothing but desert, great plains of feathery ash dotted with ruined towns and sinking gun emplacements. For once, the Americans had been thorough.

As arranged, he met Ffolliott the anarcho-fascist in the bar of the Manchester Piccadilly. The tone of the place had gone right down since he'd last been there. All the wooden surfaces had a greasy look and there were cobwebs in the corners. A faint, weary smell of disinfectant hung in the air. It was bleak and cold and empty and he didn't like it much. As he entered he saw the only customer other than Ffolliott—an old workman with a muffler folded under his chin and a flat cap crammed down hard on his head—zip a delicate lace-edged handkerchief into his flies. Jerry caught his eye and grinned at him. He smiled back shyly, showing a brown, buckled row of teeth and a lot of discoloured tongue; he winked.

"Mister Cornelius. You haven't changed." Ffolliott was leaning on the bar and looking like a large black bear: fat, but with plenty of slack skin left over; hairy and bored and rather dangerous. He was juggling small change in a puddle of spilt beer, his fingers clumsy clumps of uncooked sausage. His small vicious eyes gleamed at Jerry, red rimmed and full of broken veins. Jerry pulled up a stool and sat down beside him. In the corner, the little fetishist was turning on, muttering "Oh, oh, oh."

"No," said Jerry, "My car broke down."

"Heh, heh."

"I don't find it funny," said Jerry.

"What's the news, Mister Cornelius?" Ffolliott's larynx had been maltreated in Paris some years before; his voice was a coarse whisper. He was a coarse man.

"News?" The barman gave Jerry a large Glen Grant. "You'd be in a better position to know if there were any—I've been resting. But there won't be any more news. Not for a couple of millenia at least." He sipped his whisky meditatively.

"Not on your own elevated plane, Mister Cornelius. No news of the mind, perhaps. But we materialists—"

"You've got me wrong. I'm not talking about anybody's



“This amused him even more.”

mind. Is the gear ready?”

“Not a thinker Mister Cornelius? We have everything set up. When does it start?”

“Christmas day, I think.”

“A celebration?”

“A fertility ritual.”

Jerry went over and bought the fetishist a sup of Newcastle Brown. After a while Ffolliott went away. Jerry left later with his new friend, who’d promised to find him a bed and some action – a dragster, as it turned out, and very professional too. Jerry happily readjusted to decadence: Man as a whole might bind Time, but Jerry was content enough to disorganise it.

5:—THE INSURRECTIONIST

They consummated the *putsch* at nine o’clock on Christmas

morning.

The Fairbairn Coalition government had set up its administrative offices in Central Library, a prison-like edifice on the periphery of St Peter’s Square. Jerry led his detachment in a frontal attack on the main doors, storming out of Oxford Street with his heater set on needle beam and a bag of nerve bombs swinging from his shoulder. It was snowing. A high wind hurling across the square out of the morning gloom spat cold brittle flakes into his face. The going was slushy and treacherous. There were a few Catholics on the streets. Jerry revelled in the sound of hobnails thumping behind him in a flying wedge, the rattle of machine pistols; well junked-up, he screamed into the wind, shooting at huge shadows in the murk.

He was carefully dressed for the part in a black shako and a double breasted leather trench coat that slapped round the tops of his shiny cavalry boots as he ran. He

hadn't been so blocked in years.

They were met by a withering burst of fire from the library entrance: half the Regular Army seemed to be inside, and they had a pair of Brens mounted on the steps. Jerry slid to a halt behind the cenotaph and motioned his men into the cover of the flower beds. For a moment he was too overcome with laughter to do anything. Then he fumbled a Vickers pistol out of his shoulder bag and sent a red starshell arcing up into the weather. This amused him even more; he rolled about in the slush.

In answer came the throaty concussion of a shaped charge as Ffolliott's squad, sniding up the dark alley of Library Walk from Albert Square, blew in a side door. Windows flickered with red light. Jerry jumped up again as the Brens guttered into astonished silence. Never a dull moment. He waved his heater in the air above his head, and with a ragged cheer his lads followed him on to the mouths of the guns.

He met up with Ffolliott among the books. Skirmishing was going on in the reference section, spilling over into Current Affairs. Christmas decorations hung in charred unhappy strips from the tops of the shelves. There was a lot of noise.

"!" shouted Ffolliott. "!"

"Downstairs," Jerry suggested. "In the theatre—"

They clattered down the parquet steps, Ffolliott ahead and to the right. The Army had a bazooka set up in front of the doors. A gout of flame and a retching noise. The rocket bomb went right through Ffolliott and failed to explode. "Hard luck." Jerry burnt down the opposition, his heater fizzing nastily. The doors were locked and barred, which was expressly forbidden in case of fire. He fetched Ffolliott's bombardier and indicated the obstacle.

"Yessir," said the bombardier. "I should stand a little way back if I were you sir."

The doors bulged inwards in a puff of smoke, hung raggedly off their hinges. The bombardier took part in a snappy exchange of fire, then fell over with blood running into his eyes.

"Nice try," said Jerry, with feeling.

Inside, he found Cassock, Minister For Internal Affairs, an empty Skoda machine pistol in his hands and a look of frustration on his face.

"Where's Fairbairn?" Jerry asked him, making an unpleasant face and brandishing his heater.

"Fuck off," sneered Cassock. "He got away. Look darling, I don't know what you're after, but Cornelius and Brunner aren't going to like this—"

"Ho ho," said Jerry, "Pardon?"

"Who the hell *are* you? No, don't bother. Fairbairn's a joke, but he'll be halfway to London by now. They aren't going to fancy *you* much when he turns them on to this—"

"Christ," Jerry murmured softly. It was too late for that. He recognised the theatre as a watershed: Time was leaking away, draining into the channels he had prepared. He felt great tsunamis of Time washing over him. He had made a mistake. His high disintegrated, leaving him very cold. He began to shiver, and his head ached. The walls of the theatre advanced and receded rhythmically.

Cassock blew a wet raspberry at him.

"What's the matter, dearie? Got the curse?"

6:—AN UNPLEASANT SURPRISE

He borrowed an old twin-engined Piaggio P 166 pusher from Ringway airport and programmed its automatic pilot to take him over the site where his London base had been. The P166 chugged along under 65% power at 11,000 feet. He would have preferred something faster.

He was drifting, tapping energy and direction from the Time-reservoir in his body: he sensed that where he had previously fed on the vitality of his contemporaries, he was now leaching a bare sustenance directly from the past. It was a chilly, morose substitute. The junk had gone away, leaving his bones like jelly. Something was missing.

He wept quietly as he gazed out over the endless melancholy southern snowscape, his head aching ferociously to the fazed 4/4 beat of the Lycoming GSOs.

Trying to come to terms with the latest fuck-up, he reflected that it boiled down to a struggle between the soft Romance rituals and the tragic influence of the weekday gods—and now England had conceded: the desolation beneath his wings, once stripped of the myth of American potency, became the property of Woden; Chretien De Troyes and Jessie Weston notwithstanding, England had given way to Angle-Land and voted for ice.

Jerry felt displaced, wondering what section of the Time-scale he was travelling as the Piaggio bumbled south. The cycle was renewing itself too soon, gathering momentum. He thought that being dead might have its advantages after all.

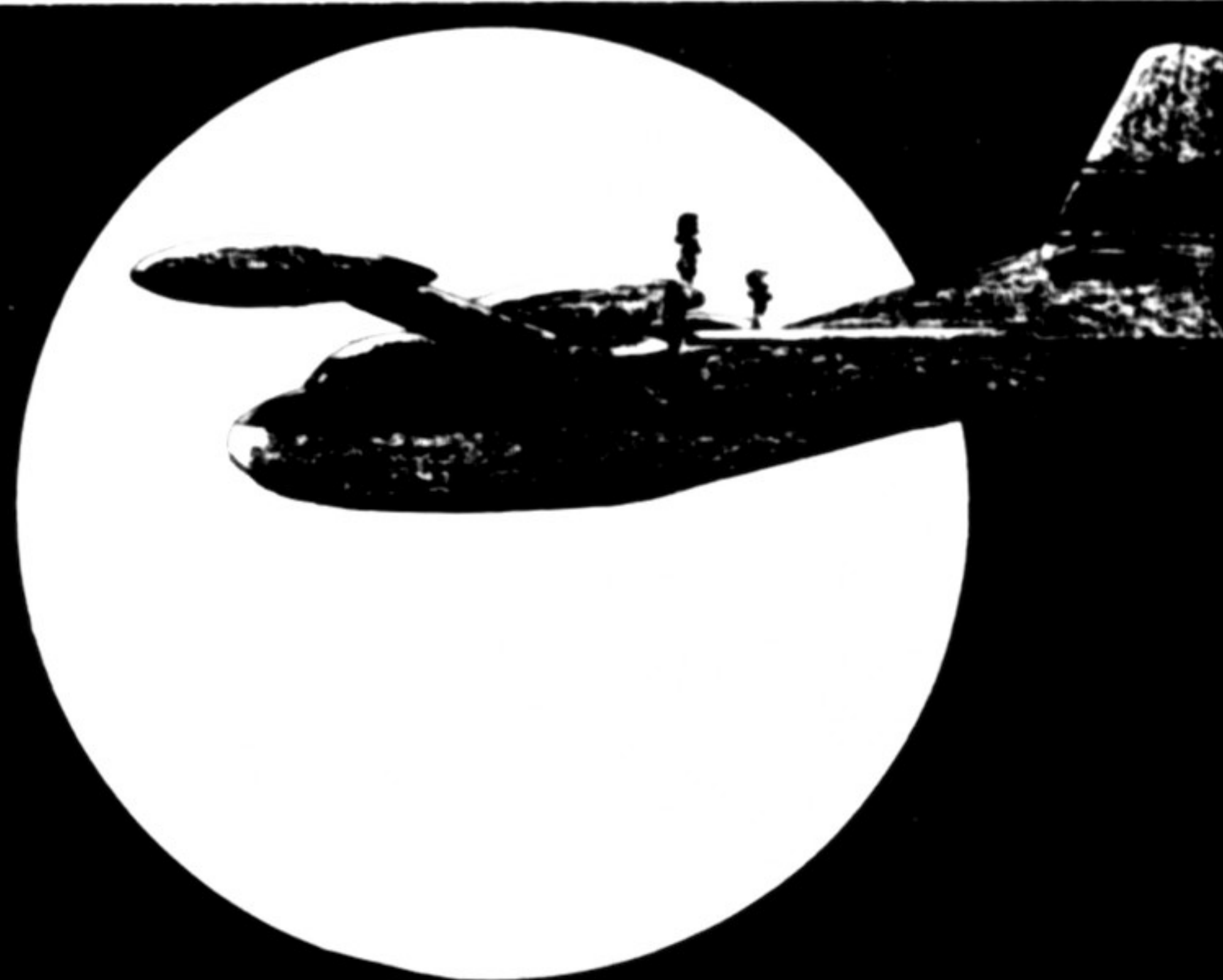
It was growing dark as he sideslipped out of the pall of cloud blanketing London, one engine coughing irregularly. There wasn't much fuel left, according to the instruments.

It was a nasty surprise to find the Poor Clare convent in West 11 intact and in reasonable condition after seeing it destroyed six months before by a pair of light strike bombers.

Jerry rubbed his eyes and flew in low along Ladbroke Grove. For miles around there was nothing but ash and snow and heaps of frozen mud that followed the old street patterns like molehills. His hands trembled slightly on the controls; various premonitions and insights itched up and down his spine in a disorderly manner. It wasn't the estate he had known: the walls were down in places, and huge garish flowers rioted out of the gaps. They packed the grounds, obscured the outbuildings, filled the Piaggio's cabin with conflicting perfumes. An ornate fountain played at the centre of the whole tasteless set-up; Europa being raped by an offensive stone bull, water pouring out of her mouth and her back arched happily. Jerry couldn't believe it.

Disturbed by the sound of a plane, a herd of stunted red deer skittered through the vegetation and out on to the ash-flats. A flock of gaudy parrots burst from the undergrowth and wheeled round the fountain.

Jerry set the P166 to circling a few thousand feet up, baled out with his heater in his hand, and landed in the wet mauve petals of an enormous pansy, sneezing and struggling



“He was drifting . . .”

with his chute harness. The air was warm and heavy. Jerry felt the perfume turn him on.

Miss Brunner stepped out of shadows of the fountain, dressed nicely in a beige trouser suit cut a little severely at the neck. She held a Smith & Wesson thirty eight. There was a smile on her pointed bitch-fox features.

“Oh yes,” said Jerry, stumbling about, “You would be here. I can’t seem to get my balance, Miss Brunner.”

“Hello Mr Cornelius. You look pale.”

“Don’t say that, it makes me worry about myself.”

Fairbairn was small and pin-striped but quite strong enough to take Jerry’s gun away from him and pinion his arms in a full-nelson. Jerry nodded politely to him.

“Guess who’s dying to meet you?” asked Miss Brunner coquettishly as the Prime Minister frog-marched him toward the convent.

Fitting it together at last, Jerry began to scream and choke, tears running down his cheeks. He thrashed about and kicked, but the flowers had sapped his strength.

“Now, now,” Miss Brunner said, “we’re all friends here.”

His screams echoed down a long corridor, batting back into his own ears. Embrasured low wattage bulbs glowed dimly. His feet rattled and dragged on tile. The mass of building above blocked out the drone of the orbiting Piaggio. Miss Brunner led him into the refectory, which was full of broken trestles. At the opposite end of the hall two people sat facing him across an oak table, their features running like wet water colour in the poor light. Jerry redoubled his struggles, roaring and crying; back-heeled Fairbairn’s crutch, got one arm free; rushed at the figures behind the table. Miss Brunner put out an elegant foot.

“Naughty,” she said. “Pick him up Fairbairn, and don’t let him do it again.”

“Hello Jerry,” said Frank, “I’m glad you came. Brothers oughtn’t to fight, you know. I’ve had lots of time to

think.” His voice was clogged and pustulant. He smelled foul. In front of him on the table was a pile of glossy half-plate photographs.

Manny Ableson, full of smiles, put a plump hand on his arm. Bits fell off it. “Not too much talk, Frankie,” he advised, “It’s not good for you so soon.”

Jerry’s shrieks scraped impotently at the stonework.

“Please, Jerry,” said Frank glutinously, half rising and shedding things. “Now we’ve both ” The words turned into a stinking cough. “Now we both *know*, there’s no point in fighting. Here’s my hand. In friendship. Catherine wasn’t all my fault. You had your justice anyway ”

He stood up, leaned forward.

“Jerry, it was you I loved. Jerry, kiss me like a brother should.”

Manny restrained him as he lifted one leg on to the table preparatory to clambering over it. They stood like that for some time, Frank wheezing through puckered lips, Jerry giving the PM a bad time of it and screaming “You shit, oh you *shit* - !” Then there was a silence as Jerry cunningly set Fairbairn up for another kick in the privates.

“Jerry ?” Frank’s voice wormed coyly into the gap. “Jerry? I’ve been off the junk a long time Jerry? Couldn’t we get together - ?”

Miss Brunner giggled. She was sitting on the edge of the table, swinging her legs gently and smoking a St Moritz Filter. She was enjoying herself.

Jerry and Frank broke free simultaneously, falling toward one another across the table.

Jerry’s heater clattered on to the floor. Fairbairn hopped about, sucking his breath in through his teeth and looking guiltily at Miss Brunner. Jerry began to tear with hooked fingers at the deliquescent flesh of his brother’s face. Frank scrabbled with his decomposing front limbs, scattering the photographs. Bent over the table, his buttocks quivering slightly, he moaned.

Miss Brunner’s sexy laugh turned into a high rising

whine. As Jerry—who was laughing himself now—picked at Frank's eyes, the refectory roof fell in with a bang. Flames flickered through the billowing dust. The Prime Minister, his legs trapped under a lump of masonry, emptied the clip of a Mauser at Miss Brunner, *bang, bang, bang*.

"You treacherous bitch," he said.

She dropped him without much trouble, holding the S & W in both hands. Manny Ableson had vanished. Miss Brunner looked at the mess and shook her head sadly. She stubbed out her St Moritz, reversed her pistol, and reluctantly hit Jerry over the head.

7:—JERRY IS UNORIGINAL

"It's a matter of acceptance really," Miss Brunner said to herself, regarding the burning convent with a faint, amused frown. She was sitting in the pilot's seat of a little CZAL HC-2 helicopter, dangling her legs out of the door. Her feet were almost brushing the ground. She had opened a fresh packet of St Moritz.

"Because of that, none of us gained from the experience."

Sticking out of the roof of the refectory at an angle of seventy degrees, the fuselage of Jerry's Piaggio was outlined with fire, its stringers like a burning skeleton. Occasionally the wreckage spluttered and settled; gobs of molten dural dropped into the convent, sending up fresh showers of prettily coloured sparks. There was a dull concussion from the depths of the building and one of the walls fell in.

"Dying, I mean," Miss Brunner went on.

"Christ." Jerry was sprawled weakly on the cold damp ash near Miss Brunner's feet. "I think I'm damaged. I feel bad." He was shivering again. All his clothes had got dirty. He had a cut lip, his glands were swollen, and there was a tender spot at the base of his skull. He was sick and tired of everything.

"Nonsense. Where's your sense of destiny? Come on, Mr Cornelius."

She was in her element, Jerry realised. So was he, in a way. He got up, wanting sympathy, supporting himself against the tail spar of the CZAL.

"Fuck off," he said pettishly. He got into the passenger seat, barked his shins on the low dashboard. "Where's my gun? I can't go without my gun."

Miss Brunner started the tiny 75 hp motor and they ascended into the night. At nine thousand feet, a little below the chopper's ceiling, she swung north-east. Below them the snow glowed in the light of a partial moon. Jerry glared down at it, his body and brain like lead. Even Miss Brunner was a comfort to him. He turned from the white depression of Ragnorak to her small strong face, limned in blue light from the instrument panel. She looked very capable.

"I'm not sure of anything any more." He made a tentative gesture. "In the last few weeks I've had hundreds of *deja vu* experiences." And he had, too.

The North Sea crept underneath the helicopter.

"Really?" Miss Brunner's laugh wasn't at all comforting. Her eyes were very bright as she turned to him.

"I'd have expected something more original from you, Mr Cornelius." ■

ANTHONY HAYDEN-GUEST: HOW THE SPONSORS HELPED OUT

Musak, Hertz, and Cellophane
Have all sent parcels to the Front
IBM sent us a brain
Playboy sent a plastic cunt

EMI for recreation
Sent hits by wholesome entertainers
The Container Corporation
Sent containers of containers

The Safeways chicken broiler farms
Sent sheets of parti-coloured stamps
The Board of Butlins sent a warm
Good Morning, Lads! from all their camps

The Postmaster sent a Greeting
Cablegram (delivered late)
The Peace Corps sent pamphlets on eating
Wisely, which we pulped, and ate

Carters sent some Tested Seeds
Woolworths sent simulated pearls
Gala Films filled different needs
With film-clips of extraordinary girls

Alcoa, Kapok, Fibreglass
Forward their Springwear Catalogue
Modelled by glamorous bits of arse
For a post-nuclear spread in *Vogue*

Lyons sent Individual Pies
Medici Prints sent us Good Taste
Carelessness of ICI's
Sent mounds of bio-chemical waste

Boots sent drugs (for normal uses)
Time sent its version of the news
United Fruit sent canned fruit juices
Polaroid sent vivid views

Andrex sent rolls of tinted tissue
Esso sent tigers for our tanks
Fortune sent a double issue
Devoted to the Central Banks

Hamleys sent toys, and party tricks
Polythene sent a see-through lunch
Nabisco, Mars, and Weetabix
All turn up trumps before the crunch

Unilever sent detergent
Porton sent bottles of disease
The Prudential sent an urgent
Refund, on all policies

Hilton sent pictures of a penthouse
The Haig Fund sent remembrance poppies
Rank-Xerox copies us, and sent us
Copies of copies of their copies

The Readers Digest sent a number
Of compressed Thoughts for us to read
Norwegian Pine sent lengths of lumber
Which they seem to think we'll need

Revlon, Yardleys, Rubinstein
Send lotions to preserve the skin
Gallup sends a dotted line
The Censor sends a Vision of Sin ■

LABYRINTH

By D. M. Thomas

NOTES

The poem describes the feelings of a girl bearing an illegitimate child; specifically, in terms of the myth, it is Ariadne after Theseus has deserted her to return to Athens.

It was conceived as a poem for light-and-movement, the letters to be made from neon tubes. Each 'month' would be lit up word by word until the whole month's 'thought' was shown; this would then be erased and the succeeding one would start. After the ninth, perhaps the whole labyrinth would be lit up.

As presented here, each month's 'thought' is in bold type, those of the preceding months being allowed to accumulate in typewritten form.

FIRST MONTH

es-conveniently-easy
o
g
e h e has spun t h
h h e line
- sa noos t
o t h t
m stirred
i d e b
h na da t e
d h e w
e l ti tsaeb gnipeels o
u
n
d
up by a man

soon as he has spun the thread and stirred the sleeping beast it led him to - he goes - conveniently - easy the line to be wound up by a man

VED YOU
 O L H E
 es conveniently easy
 g NOT EVEN
 e U e has spun t h e
 h O Y h h e
 o Y sa NOOS A T O WAIT WHILE
 t DEVOL T D stirred i b e
 m h L ina da t h e WENT
 d I THGUOHT
 e l ti tsaeb gnipeels woun
 FFORP-TI DELLIK DNA NI
 ERE ROW
 D ME HIS S up by a man

then he said i thought i loved you - not
 even i loved you - he offered to wait while
 i went in and killed it - proffered me his
 sword

WRITHE-AND W
 H
 D N A T S I W T I H C H W N I T L U B
 Y M H C I
 ved you
 o l h e
 es Conveniently easy
 o g not even fTO THINK
 e u e has spun t e e H A T
 h o y h h e h d line T
 o t d sa noos t o wait Whil
 m v t d stirred i NE i
 h i l ina da t h e Pe w
 d i thguoht e L Aw ent
 e l ti tsaeb gnipeels Eu t
 fforp ti dellik dna ni
 e r o A
 S Y D M Sup by a man
 A A S d me his s A
 LRE IHT DNALSI SIHT NO DLIHC

to think that when i played as a child on
 this island - the maze was already built in
 which i twist and writhe - and which my
 hands contain

FOURTH MONTH

FIFTH MONTH

DARKNESS
 writhE and w A N D L
 H T y m h c i THE GROUND T R E M
 N h v e d y o u H A T
 l a n o l T H M Y B O D Y T Y R A N
 t n A h A h L
 s P d E N E B S E
 i DEES conveniently easy WOULD
 w o n o f t o t h i n k K
 t g g not even f e r h t h i l l
 i e u e has spun t e e h a l
 h o y h h e h d line t
 h c h w o t d sa noos t o wait whiln
 n i t d e v t d stirred i n e L L I K
 t h l i n a d a t h e M w
 l l i u b d i t h g u o h t e a w e v y s e l
 a w e z a l t i t s a e b g n i p e e l s y o a n f
 s y m f f o r p t i d e l l i k d n a n i
 a d e r o a sup by a man
 a a s d m e h i s s a
 l r e i h t d n a l s i s i h t n o d l i h c

i feel you stirring deep in the darkness -
 the ground trembles beneath my body - tyrant
 i love and hate - would kill and kill myself
 to save

LEAVING YOU LOOK W
 N writhE and w LL IF THERE I n d
 O d h h the ground t S d
 C n a t y m h c i r A
 I n a n h v e d y o u m a t o
 O t i a n o l t h m y b o d y t y r a n U
 C s i p d e n e b s e
 A l w d e e s c o n v e n i e n t l y e a s y w o u l d N E E D
 E t g g not even o f t o t h i n k k D
 R i e u e has spun t e e h i l l
 A h r h o h h e h d line t
 S c i o y s a n o o s t o w a i t w h i l n
 S d h s e h i h o h e d
 W u i o t d s t i r r e d i n e l l i k
 S i y h l i n a d a t h p e m w
 H T l e e f d i t h g u o h t e a w e v y s e l
 L l t i t s a e b g n i p e e l s y o a n f
 I M E D N U f f o r p t i d e l l i k d n a n i
 U G Y I O e r o a sup by a man
 a w e z a H O T F r
 s y m e H E W A L K S
 a d E H A S d m e h i s s a
 l r e i h t H D N A L S I s i h t n o d l i h c
 E H T N O E M H T

he walks with me on the island he has found
 to hide my guilt - his words are laconic on
 leaving - you look well - if there is any-
 thing you need

SIXTH MONTH

leaving you look w darkness e ll if there i n a evo l
 n writhe and w h the ground t s d i
 OOM EH h h the ground t s d i
 N d T tym hci r a i
 'c n nh ved you m a to
 si a r nh o ia o th my body tyranu
 n t o ia n l a h l e
 Mo t o n l a h l e
 Yc s e pd ss eneb se n
 a i cdees conveniently easy woulde
 Sl w a o n n o
 O t fg g not eveni fto think kd
 re i n ain lenolfer h t i
 rr i yie u e has spun t e e h l
 Oa rr h o h eh d a l
 W h gr y he He line t
 is c ni o sa noos T ht a
 Nd i at t d e a tto wait whiln
 Gr h s m v t d stirred si ne ed
 Mw iu i o d e R b llik
 O n ro h l ina da t Upe
 Ts i ey d i thguoht e awevysel
 Hi t tleef lyo a nf
 Eh t tleef lti tsaeb gnipeels leu s ot
 R l a l ti tsaeb gnipeels leu s ot
 i f m e udn
 C ug ynd dnufforp ti dellik dna ni
 O b ui oe r Sa
 law ezash ot fr o sup by a man
 ls y m e he walksy
 s d e e hasd me his s Ma
 a a shth w
 slre iht dnalsi siht no dlihc
 t eht no em htt
 RETCH OUT TO FILL THE LABYRIN

the sun my father's angry face or the moon's
 my sorrowing mother - coils stretch out to
 fill the labyrinth - my skull bursts with
 the loneliness

SEVENTH MONTH

leaving you look w darkness e ll if there i n a evo l
 n writhe and w h the ground t s d i
 oom eh h h the ground t s d i
 n d t tym hci r i a r i n
 'c n nh VED YOU FAMI a tol
 si a r nh o ia O th my body tyranu
 n t o n L a h l e
 yc s e pd ss eneb se n
 a i cdees conveniently easy woulde
 sl w a o n n o
 o t fg g NOT EVENI fto think kdY
 re i n ain lenolfer h t i
 rr i yie U e has spun t e e h D AL L
 Oa rr h O h eh d a n EL I
 W h gr Y HE he line ti Y A E
 is c ni o sa noos S t ht LB A
 Nd i at t D e A tto wait whiln
 Gr h s m V h I hiw st o h ed
 o w s m V t D stirred si ne
 mw iu i O d e r b llik
 o n ro h L ina da t upe
 ts i ey h bl m w
 hi h d I THGUOHT e awevysel
 eh t tleef lyo a nf
 r l a l ti tsaeb gnipeels leu s ot
 i f m e udn
 c ug ynd dnufforp ti dellik dna ni
 o b ui oe r sa
 law ezash ot fr o sup by a man
 ls y m e he walksy
 s d e e hasd me his s ma
 a a shth w
 slre iht dnalsi siht no dlihc
 t eht no em htt
 retch out to fill the labyrinth

he said i thought i loved you - not even i
 loved you - familiar ground - all pointless
 - my life a blind alley

EIGHTH MONTH

leaving you look w darkness e ll if there i n a evo p
 n writhe and w h the ground t s d i
 oom eh h h the ground t s d i
 n d t tym hci riar i n
 'c n OF YLL elnything yt
 si a r nhR U ved you fami a tol
 n t o iam F o th my body tyranue
 mo t o n l a h l e
 yc s e pdd ss eneb se ns
 a i cdees conveniently easy woulde
 sl w a oon n n o
 o t fg g wnot eveni fto think kdy
 re i n ain lenolfer h t i
 rr i yie Su e has spun t e e hd al l
 oa rr h Hou eh d a n el i
 W h gr yL he he line ti y f
 is c ni o Dsa noos t ht lb a e
 Nd i at t d E e a tto wait whiln
 Gr h s e RINGh i hiw st o h ed
 o w s m v t d stirred si ne
 mw iu i o A d e TTr b llik
 o n ro h l ina da StAupe
 ts i ey PATH B AhUbl m w
 hi h d i thguohtU Pet awevysel
 eh t tleef lti tsaeb gnipeels leu s ot
 R l a l ti tsaeb gnipeels leu s ot
 i f m e CSUdn
 c ug ynd dnufforp ti dellik dna ni
 o b ui oe r E sa PRES
 law ezash ot fr o S I SUP bySa man
 ls y m e he walksy SEIRC O W
 s d e e hasd me his s may O UT OF
 a a shth w
 slre iht dnalsi siht no dlihcU O
 t eht no em htt
 retch out to fill the labyrinth W DAERHT
 IND UP THE

fully formed now - shouldering a path -
 bursting past taut muscles - i suppress
 cries - you wind up the thread out of woman

NINTH MONTH

UOY MORF TIXE ON SI EREHT EM ENOG EVAH U
 R leaving you look w ANDS FOR und all O
 n writhe and w h the ground t s d i
 loom eh h h the ground t s d i
 Rn d t tym hci riar i n
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 E YOUR FACE ind up the

my life is an empty labyrinth you haunt -
 though you have gone to abler hands - for me
 there is no exit from your birth - round
 every corner i shall see your face

j. g. ballard:

the

beach

murders

AN ENTERTAINMENT FOR GEORGE MacBETH

INTRODUCTION

Readers hoping to solve the mystery of the Beach Murders—involving a Romanoff Princess, a CIA agent, two of his Russian counterparts, and an American limbo dancer—may care to approach it in the form of the card game with which Quimby, the absconding State Department cipher chief, amused himself in his hideaway on the Costa del Sol. The principal clues have therefore been alphabetised. The correct key might well be a familiar phrase, e.g. PLAY-MATE OF THE MONTH, or meaningless, e.g. qwertyuiop . . . etc. Obviously any number of solutions is possible, and a final answer to the mystery, like the motives and character of Quimby himself, lies forever hidden.

Auto-erotic

As always after her bath, the reflection of her naked body filled the Princess with a profound sense of repose. In the triptych of mirrors above the dressing table she gazed at the endless replicas of herself, the scent of the Guerlain heliotrope soothing her slight migraine. She lowered her arms as the bedroom door opened. Through the faint mist of talcum she recognised the handsome, calculating face of the

Russian agent whose photograph she had seen in Statler's briefcase that afternoon.

Brassiere

Statler waded through the breaking surf. The left cup of the brassiere in his hand was stained with blood. He bent down and washed it in the warm water. The pulsing headlamps of the Mercedes parked below the corniche road lit up the cove. Where the hell was Lydia? Somewhere along the beach a woman with a bloody breast would frighten the wits out of the Russian landing party.

Cordobes

The self-contained face of the bullfighter, part gamin, part Beatle, lay below Quimby as he set out the cards on the balcony table. Whatever else they said about the boy, he never moved his feet. By contrast Raissa was pacing around the bedroom like a tigress in rut. Quimby could hear her wide Slavic hips brushing against his Paisley dressing-gown behind the *escritoire*. What these obsessives in Moscow and Washington failed to realise was that for once he might have no motive at all.

Drinamyl

Those bloody little capsules, Raissa thought. No wonder the West was dying. Every time she was ready to lure Quimby over to Sir Giles's villa he took one of the tranquillisers, then went down to the sea and talked to the beachniks. At Benidorm he even had the nerve to bring one of the Swedish girls back to the apartment. Hair down to her knees, breasts like thimbles, the immense buttocks of a horse. Ugh.

Embonpoint

The Princess slid the remains of the eclair into her mouth. As she swallowed the pastry she pouted her cream-filled lips at Statler. He lowered his rolled-up copy of *Time Atlantic*, with its photo of Quimby before the House Committee. The dancers moved around the tea-terrace to the soft rhythm of the fox-trot. There was something sensuous, almost sexual, about Manon's compulsive eating of eclairs. This magnificent Serbo-Croat cow, had she any idea what was going to happen to her?

Fata Morgana

Lydia felt his hand move along the plastic zipper of her dress. She lay on the candlewick bedspread, gazing at the sea and the white sand. Apart from the dotty English milord who had rented the villa to them the place was empty. As Kovarski hesitated the silence seemed to amplify all the uncertainties she had noticed since their arrival at San Juan. The meeting at the nudist colony on the Isle du Levant had not been entirely fortuitous. She reached up and loosened the zip. As her breasts came out she turned to face him. Kovarski was sitting up on one elbow, staring through his Zeiss binoculars at the apartment block 300 yards along the beach.

Guardia Civil

Quimby watched the olive-uniformed policemen ambling along the shore, their quaint Napoleonic hats shielding their eyes as they scanned the girls on the beach. When it came to the crunch, on whose side would they see themselves—Stat's, the Russians', or his own? Quimby shuffled the Cordobes-backed cards. The platinum-haired call-girl who lived in the next apartment was setting off for Alicante in her pink Fiat. Quimby sipped his whiskey. Five minutes earlier he had discovered the concealed aerial of Raissa's transmitter.

Heterodyne

Kovarski was worried. The sight of Raissa's body on the pony skin reminded him that Statler was still to be reckoned with. The piercing whistle from the portable radio confirmed that Raissa had been lying there since dusk. He



knelt down, eyes lingering for a last moment on the silver clasps of her Gossard suspenders. He put his finger in her mouth and ran it around her gums, searching for the capsule. A cherry popped into his palm. With a grimace he dropped it into the vodkatini by the radio. He opened Raissa's right hand and from the frozen clasp of her thumb and forefinger removed the capsule. As he read the message his brow furrowed. What the devil had the Princess to do with Quimby? Was this some insane CIA plot to restore the Romanoffs?

Iguana

The jade reptile shattered on the tiled floor at Sir Giles's feet. With an effort he regained his balance. Pretending to straighten his Old Etonian tie, he touched the painful bruise under his breast-bone. He looked up at the tough, square-jawed face of the American girl. Would she hit him again? She glared at him contemptuously, bare feet planted wide on the pony skin. Ah well, he thought, there had been worse moments. At Dunkirk the bombs falling from the Stukas had made the beach drum like a dancing floor.

Jasmine

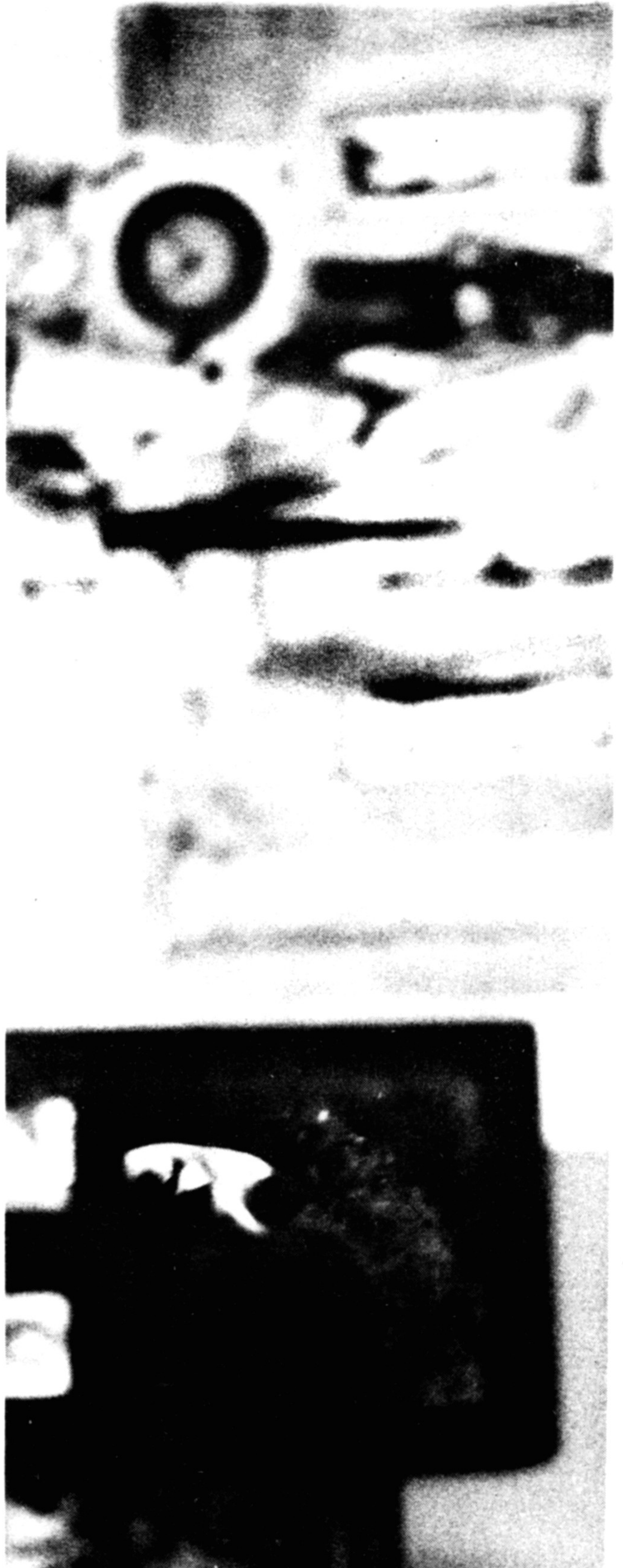
Statler gazed at the white salver-shaped flowers in the lobby. Their nacreous petals, bled of all colour, reminded him of Manon's skin, and then of Quimby's large pallid face, with its too-intelligent eyes watching over the sunken cheeks like a snide Buddha's. Was the exchange a fair one, the Princess for the complex, moody cipher chief? He walked out through the revolving doors of the hotel into the bright Alicante sunlight, realising with a pang that he would never see Manon again.

Kleenex

Raissa bent forwards over the bed. With the ring finger of her right hand she lifted her eyelid. For a moment the elegant mask of her face was contorted like an obscene paraquet's. She tapped the lower lid and the micro-lens jumped on to the tissue. The minute R on its rim shone in the beam of the Angelpoise. She wiped the lenses and placed them in the polarimeter. As the door of the safe opened, revealing the dials of the transmitter, she listened to Quimby singing *Arrivederci Roma* in the bathroom. All that drinamyl and whiskey would keep the pig drowzy for at least an hour.

Limbo

The bar had been a mere twelve inches from the floor, Kovarski recollected, as he felt the hard curve of Lydia's iliac crest under the midnight blue stretch pants. For once the nightclub in Benidorm was hushed, everyone watching as this demented American girl with the incredible thighs had edged under the bar, hips jerking to the throb of the juke-box. Kovarski picked his nose; involuntarily thinking



about Stat. The CIA man had a face like ice.

Mercedes

The brake servos had gone. Holding the hand-brake, Lydia groped behind Kovarski's chest for the off-side door handle. The Russian lay against the sill, his handsome face beginning to sag like the first slide of an avalanche. As the door opened he fell backwards on to the gravel. Lydia released the handbrake and let the car roll forwards. When Kovarski had gone she wound up the window, elegantly starred by the bullet which had passed through the door. She flashed the headlamps for the last time and pressed the starter.

Neapolitan

Raissa finished off the remains of Quimby's ice-cream with the eager lips of a child. In three hours they would be six fathoms under the Mediterranean, due to surface for the first time in the Baltic. She would miss the sunlight, and the small, dark Spaniards with their melancholy eyes following her down the dusty street to the bodega. In the end it would be worth it. Throw away the Man-Tan, as Kovarski often quoted to her in his mock-Yevtushenko, the sky will soon be full of suns.

Oceanid

For a moment Manon realised that Kovarski was undecided whether to rape or kill her. She backed into the bathroom, her left hand covering her powdered breasts. The trapped steam billowed into Kovarski's face. He goggled at her like an insane student in a Dostoevski novel. He stepped across the cork bathmat and took her elbow in a surprisingly tender gesture. Then the alabaster soap-dish caught her on the side of the head. A second later she was lying in a hot mess in the bath, Kovarski's arms moving over her head like pistons.

Poseidon

Quimby handled the bottle of Black Label with a respect due their long acquaintance. The proto-Atlantic ocean had covered all North America and Europe except for Scotland, leaving intact a percolation system 300 million years old. As he filled his glass he watched Sir Giles's villa on the bluff above the cove. The swarthy Russian and his American beatnik had moved in yesterday. No doubt Stat was at the Carlton in Alicante. Quimby set out the cards for the last game. The hand would be hard to play, but luckily he was still dealing.

Quietus

Statler was dying in the dark surf. As the Russian bosun let him drift away in the shallow water he was thinking of the Princess and her immense brown nipples. Had she borne a child then, keeping alive the fading memories of the Austro-Hungarian Empire? The burning wreck of the Mercedes shone through the water, illuminating the bodies

of the two Russians being dragged towards the dinghy. Statler lay back in the cold water as his blood ran out into the sea.

Remington

Lydia knelt by Kovarski's Travel-Riter. In the courtyard below the bedroom window Sir Giles was setting off for Alicante in his battered Citroen. That twitching old goat, did the English ever think about anything else? She removed the hood from the typewriter, then peered at the new ribbon she had inserted while Kovarski was in San Juan. The imprint of the letters shone in the sunlight. She jotted them onto the bridge pad, then tore off the sheet and slipped it into the left cup of her brassiere.

Smith & Wesson

Kovarski blundered through the darkness among the dunes. Below him the surf broke like a lace shawl on the beach. The whole operation was going to pieces. By now Raissa should have been here with Quimby. He climbed the slope up to the Mercedes. As he felt for the pistol in the glove compartment something moved on the gravel behind him. The gun-flash lit up the interior of the car. Kovarski fell sideways across the seat. The second bullet passed through his chest and went on into the off-side door.

Tranquiliser

Statler opened the capsule and drew out the folded tissue. In Raissa's untouched vodkatini the rice paper flared like a Japanese water-flower. He fished it out with the toothpick and laid it on the salver. So this was how they made contact. He looked down at the body on the pony skin and smiled to himself. With luck Kovarski would literally eat his own words. As he turned the Russian girl over with his foot the cherry popped from her mouth. He pushed it back between her lips and went over to the Travel-riter.

U.V. Lamp

With a sigh the Princess dropped the goggles into the douche-bag on the dressing table. In spite of her efforts, the months of summer bathing on the Cote d'Azur before her meeting with Stat, her skin remained as white as the jasmine blossoms in the lobby. In her veins ran the haemophilic blood of the Romanoffs, yet the time to revenge Ekaterinburg had passed. Did Stat realise this?

Vivaldi

Lydia tuned in Radio Algiers with a wet forefinger. The



French had left some damned good records behind. She stood on the pony skin, admiring her tough, man-like hips as she dried herself after the swim. Her sharp nails caressed the cold skin of her breasts. Then she noticed Sir Giles's marmoset-like face peering at her through the fronds of the miniature palm beside the bedroom door.

Wave Speed

6,000 metres per second, enough to blow Stat straight through the rear window of the Merc. Kovarski lifted the hood and lowered the bomb into the slot behind the battery. Over his shoulder he peered into the darkness across the sea. Two miles out, where the deep water began, the submarine would be waiting, the landing party crouched by their dinghy under the coning-hatch. He tightened the terminals, licking the blood from the re-opened wound on his hand. The Princess had packed a lot of muscle under that incredible ivory skin.

XF-169

The Lockheed performance data would make a useful bonus, Raissa reflected as she slipped her long legs into the stretch pants. The charge account at GUM and the dacha in the Crimea were becoming a distinct possibility. The door opened behind her. Siphon in hand, Quimby stared at her half-naked figure. Without thinking, she put her hands over her breasts. For once his face registered an expression of surprising intelligence.

Yardley

Sir Giles helped himself to Statler's after-shave lotion. He looked down at the Princess. Even allowing for her size, the quantity of expressed blood was unbelievable. His small face was puckered with embarrassment as he met her blank eyes staring up at the shower fitment. He listened to the distant sounds of traffic coming through the empty suite. He turned on the shower. As the drops spattered on the red skin the magnificence of her white body made his mind reel.

Zeitgeist

The great fans of the guardia civil Sikorski beat the air over the apartment block. Quimby bent down and retrieved two of the cards from the tiled floor. Below, along the beach road, the Spanish speed cops were converging on the wreck of the Mercedes. Quimby sat back as the helicopter battered away through the darkness. All in all, everything had worked out. The face of Cordobes still regarded him from the backs of the cards. A full moon was coming up over the Sierra. In the Alicante supermarket the hips of the counter girls shook to Trini Lopez. In the bodega wine was only ten pesetas a liter, and the man with the deck still controlled the play ■

IT IS DARK OUTSIDE, empty and cold too I know, dirty cold because this city is dirty and the people are dirty and it is not like winters were in Wyoming, white and clean and sharp on the face and in the chest. But they were empty there too only you never knew it because it was so blinding bright on the ground and so blue in the sky like robins' eggs would be if you mixed a little black in them, and there weren't any noises except maybe the horses snorting and stamping their feet and Donny yelling and Buzzy crying because Donny dumped snow down her back and Nick slapping his big-mittened hands against his sides.

It's no different here, the noise. There isn't any, but it is a dead no-noise and people are dying on the floor below. What time is it that there isn't any noise? I would scream if I could but I am frightened to scream because I would not know what to do if someone came, and it would be worse if no one came so I will not scream even though it is late and dark and I am empty inside.

Aunt Laura I hate you because you made me more empty when I wanted you to smile and I would smile back and you would tell me how everyone in Wyoming was and how Donny was going into the Air Force at seventeen next month and how Buzzy looked when she went to her first dance and about mother and Nick. I hate them because I love them and don't like them and they don't know me because I never let them know me. I couldn't and they didn't understand I couldn't because I know so much more than they do, but I don't know anything and I hate me and them because I am frightened and empty inside.

Why Janie, you said, you look lovely.

And you sat in the chair at the side of my bed, knowing it was not serious, that it was just female trouble, you know when the flow reverses at that time of the month and bends a little oh so tiny female hair back and ruptures the follicle the doctor told you, a little infection and a few days in the hospital nothing at all but just to be on the safe side. Laugh I wanted to laugh but I would have shrieked. I was a wire stretched too taut and I would have snapped and whipsawed and never have been joined again, and you were plucking on me and the gentle doctor whom I love was plucking and the city and the people and you didn't see the blue-black holes in the crooks of my arms and the backs of my hands or if you did you didn't understand them. That is where they put the tubes so they can pour blood and plasma into you to make you strong again. But you were confident and cheery and spooned me verbal chicken soup which is what I wanted you to do, but it did not make me feel different and it did not make me love them or them love me and please oh goddamn you why didn't you help me?

You smiled at your lovely little black-haired Janie niece and we chatted so very nicely and it was sweet of you, you thought, to bring me the pretty picture cover magazines and the chocolates and then finally you had to leave with my love to be given to everybody back home and after marveling at the Radio City Rockettes you returned to your hotel and now you and all your Church Group friends have landed again in Wyoming and are back in your homes with hooked rugs and soft mattresses and sleeping well under the clean Wyoming sky.

The sky is warm there because it is dark, soft darkness

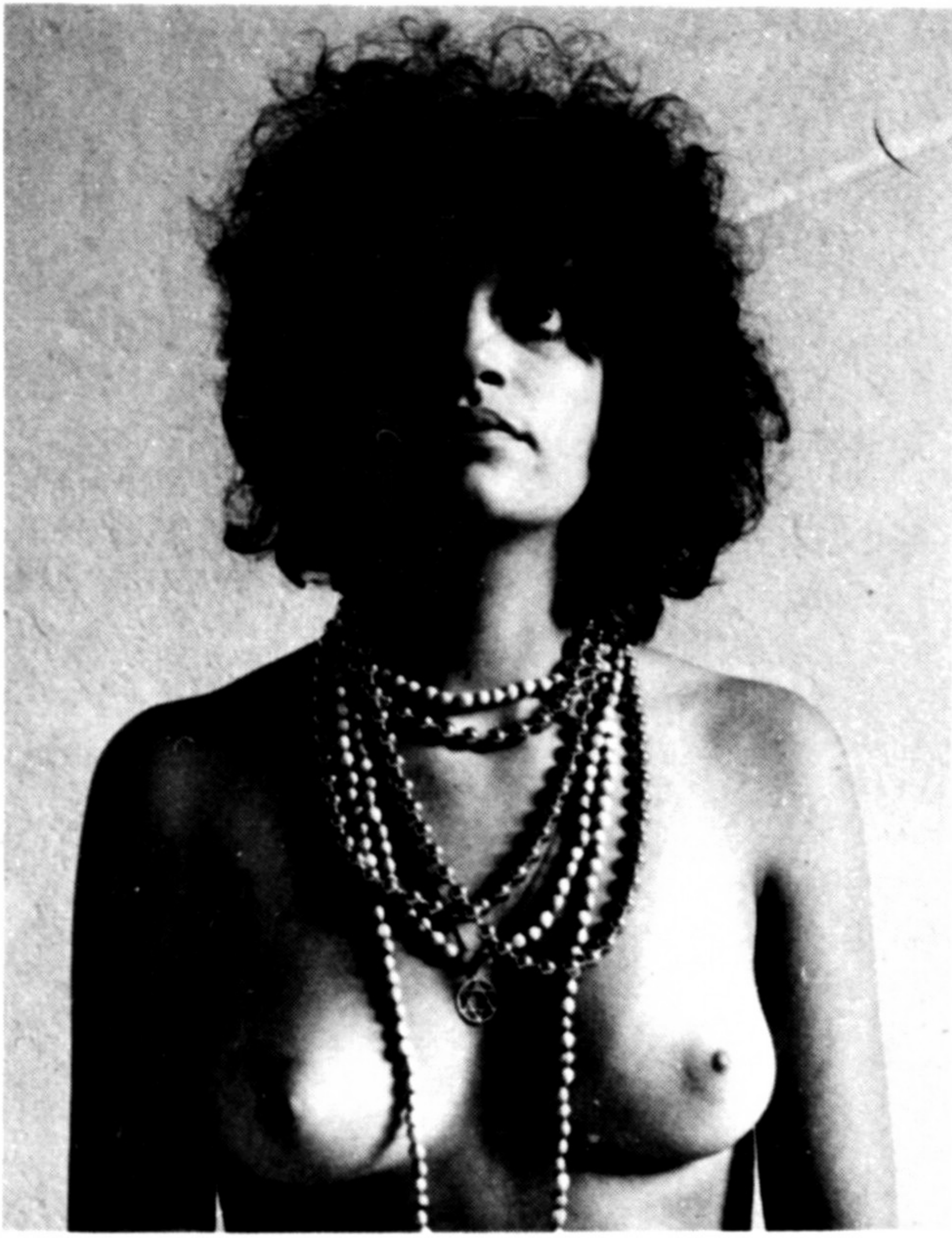
inside by j.j. mundis

not like the dead darkness here, and full of stars so very full of twinkling little lights that when I was a little girl I used to think it would get too heavy and sag and burst and spill the stars in shining streams and I would catch them in my hands like grains of sand and they would be bright like tears and I would cry with joy. I hate you all because your sky is endless and warm and friendly, and I tried to go back to my friendly sky over Wyoming three years ago when I was twenty but the sky was stiff and the stars were dead.

What did you feel about him my father, mother? Did you love him or hate him or want him or just let him have you without caring either way? You were silent and this was the only part of you I never understood and I could not escape you until I knew. But you were hard and kept it locked in the granite of your heart and if you had only let me have him it might have been better for you and I. Thank you at least for saving one picture of him, the one I have carried with me since I was seven and the one I showed to people in Chicago when I went looking for him after I found the shredded envelope and letter to me you thought I'd never know about.

My father restless and always running it was something out of a barely funny novel when they told me in Chicago that he'd gone to Alaska two weeks earlier. And I followed him and found where he had been in Anchorage, but he was gone already because the money I had stolen from you and Nick had run out almost and I stayed in small towns and worked sometimes as a waitress and sometimes as a cleaning girl which would have gnawed at your dignity like a barn rat if you had known and two months passed before I got there.

So I went back home and you and Nick sent me to the University where I was very successful even though I was only seventeen because I was always a bright girl. My



Before you were married? And after the divorce did you fuck with Nick before you married him? Oh never mind because it doesn't matter anyway, but you would not believe how much I know about it. Once I tried to count how many there had been and I got as far as 16 and then I knew there were too many faces and hands ever for me to remember them all so I gave it up and went back to sleep. Someday maybe I will tell you about them even how I made our little homosexual do it to me and how he got sick and vomited later and about how black skin looks lying across my white belly and my white breasts and how terribly exciting it is. Then when you hear that maybe your granite heart will crack and fall into little crumbly pieces and all of us, you and I and Donny and Nick and Buzzy and Laura and all the others can hate each other in peace.

I have never known anybody and no one has ever known me. But why should anyone ever know anyone? that is senseless and it does not make anything better. Or worse. Except Jackson, Jackson I knew or at least I was with him, my big bay horse, and we spent long afternoons together and he carried me with long easy strides, gaping nostrils and foam at the ends of his bit and my hair tangling in the wind but you had him gelded when I was 12. He was too mean you said and dangerous you said and I looked at what you had done to him and should have hated you but I didn't and I did not miss him, nor he me, though we were never together again.

My nipples are brown now instead of the pretty pale pink they once were and my thighs and belly and the undersides of my breasts are scored with jagged white scars and at first I could not look at myself naked in a mirror but that passed soon, for I had become neither better nor worse and I had become no uglier than I had been pretty, nor prettier than I had been ugly. I had changed that is all and change is only change and nothing more.

If I had found my father we would have shook hands or maybe kissed each other and had dinner and drinks and talked for a while and then he would have gone and I would have gone because there was nothing really we could have done with each other and so after the first time I never looked for him again.

And after a while I left San Francisco and in time came here to the other side of the country and nothing interesting or uninteresting happened and I am empty inside because I bundled into my new winter coat last week and with six hundred dollars I rode an old subway train to Brooklyn where a kindly grey-haired doctor examined me and then with my feet in the stirrups of his table he scraped me clean of the thing that was in my womb because it is difficult to give birth and to find lawyers and to do everything that must be done and this time I did not want to do it. The Brooklyn doctor made a mistake though and now I am in the hospital and my gentle doctor here reported it as an ectopic pregnancy and finished it well and soon I will be strong enough to leave.

But these are all things and things do not have significance. They are just things and they are meaningless and I hate and I love you but that is not true because I do not really hate anything more than I love anything which is not at all. I feel nothing. I am empty inside.

It is dark and on the floor below people are dying.

medical student was five years older than I and quiet and he knew more about almost everything than I did and we talked a lot, sometimes about my being a virgin and I knew he was the right one. The boys at home were hungry and snickering and crude and though I had touched some of them through their pants and let them put their hands on me and sometimes their fingers in me I did not want them to do it because they were dirty. But my medical student was different and one Sunday we went to church together then to his apartment where he washed himself and very neatly and precisely deflowered me on top of a clean sheet and I was neither happy nor sad.

Later something went wrong and he offered to marry me but I didn't love him and he didn't love me although he was nice so I went to San Francisco which seemed as far away from everything as any other place and since I was grown and ready to accept responsibility I went ahead and had my baby. It didn't mean anything to me but I had to see that it would be properly cared for and so I told the lawyer I wanted to meet these people who wanted the baby. I didn't like them at first and said no, but they had the right income to see it would have all it needed and would go to school and they seemed to love it though I didn't see how they could so I finally told the lawyer all right. The lawyer was nice and afterwards I let him take me out and on our third date we went to bed and then it grew strange in San Francisco and there were a lot of people and a homosexual lived with my roommate and I for a while and there were always parties and I took amphetamine and learned to drink martinis and margueritas and smoke marijuana and I learned to fuck very well but I have never had an orgasm at least I don't think I have even though I get passionate and excited so bad I think I can't stand it. Do you know about fucking, mother? Did you and my father do it much?

For Czechoslovakia

By George MacBeth

In Switzerland, September 1968

We are told that soldiers of the Soviet Union have occupied Poland up to the River Bug. Their aeroplanes are marked with the Soviet star, their lorries are supposed to have an inverted swastika on them. This will mean an end of Poland. Warsaw is supposedly not yet taken, but completely encircled. The Fuhrer is said to have given them twelve hours to evacuate Warsaw, after which time it will be attacked, with the help of the heaviest artillery and bombers.

EVERYTHING BACKFIRED, NOT VERY
SIMULTANEOUSLY

At 6.00 a.m. every inch of my body was shaking with the cold. It drizzled the whole night and everything was cloaked in fog. The straw and our coats were soaking wet, and what's more, my blanket has disappeared. They've forgotten to feed my men since yesterday morning. We haven't been able to wash since Saturday. And to cap it all my watch is broken.

1

When you took the bottom out of the country,
quick as a feather

the shit came.

2

Somebody must have waited
with irregular spruce-knots.

FLOOR TO FLOOR SNOWBALLS ARE
ACCELERATING MADLY

We're supposed to have encircled 7 Polish divisions, who are hidden in the surrounding villages and woods, and are being bombarded by our heavy artillery. They should surrender, for there's no point in their going on with it.

1

The panorama of cupidity
rankles:

butresses creak
in the molars of the new broom.

2

Somewhere along the spine
the cables have been cut:

grease your axles, Mr Nobody,
it's going to be a long, cold yesterday.

AFTER THE DAY OF THE STORM TROOPERS,
THE NIGHT OF THE CHRYSANTHEMUMS

Our flyers have dropped leaflets over the Poles, in which they are told that Russian soldiers have pushed 70 km. into Poland, that the Bug River is to be the demarcation line between the Soviet Union and Germany, and that the Poles should give up their resistance, lay down their arms, and come over to us; nothing will happen to any of them, nothing whatsoever.

1

If only I could have Himmler
to play with!

longingly prayed
Colonel Adekunle.

2

I snap my instantaneous
fingers:

this way
for the tooth-paste concerto.

3

Why else
do you think we baste lentils?

It isn't as if
there's a blood shortage.

LONGINES FOR PRESIDENT

A large majority of the Poles don't dare to surrender because their officers tell them that they'll be shot by us, tortured, etc., which is of course pure rubbish. Quite the contrary; they are specially well treated. Nothing happens to them, not even a harsh word, whereas the Poles do the vilest things with our people.

1

Electric aficionados!
Well, hardly:

a stringency of limestone
heeled the rack-railway all the way up.

2

Descending,
muted horns echoed:

fractions of equivalent sterility
to the power of minus one.

3

Over the drawn lakes,
a mist of plenty:

spirochetes
in the high registers of the Kantonbank.

4

I take my own trouble
sponging the Pfalz:

in the pipes of the Eurotel
the *Interlaken* flushes blue.

5

Singed irisipilis!
Those purpled faces,

drained to their own boots
with egg and steel!

WHO'S BEEN EATING MY ROCK HUDSON?

I'm surprised that the Polish officers—they are supposed to be men of character—allow such things to happen. But if you know that the Polish officers simply leave their men sitting high and dry in the most dangerous situations, then you understand it all. The day before yesterday, when we captured more than 100 prisoners, they themselves told us what had happened: when our tanks drove into the forest, the officers disappeared and left their men alone, and some of them came over to us.

1

Why are you all so political?
screamed Alice,

twitching her elastic stew:
the Capebara wilted.

2

It was a tremendous day
for bloodstock:

the sun shone like a tomahawk.

KNEES UP, MOTHER RUSSIA

Our artillery has been roaring away since 3.00 in the morning. The Poles are completely encircled, and there's

no way out for them. But what good does that do us? These troops will surrender, and afterwards we'll get another order at once. For us, as a rush division, there will be no peace till the war is completely finished. And how long will that be? My dear Henny, I hope it will not be all too long. Fourteen days? A month? Or longer?

1

I considered the number of figs
for a freshwater Len Deighton:

all round
slates were falling into disrepute.

2

Cigars
jangled for recognition:

water-boatmen
were elusive and various.

3

Moonlight filtered
into the gilt sack-cloth:

the pedal-steamers
all had holes in their navels.

4

When it gets really wet,
you have to split:

feather-dusters
never taught anyone anything.

THE DAY THE BIG SUSPENDERS WERE LET DOWN

It's in the nature of things that it will be increasingly difficult for us as the autumn progresses, and as it gets steadily colder and wetter. Up to now the nights have been icy cold and the days boiling hot, but now there is no more sun during the day. Even now we have to keep our coats on all the time. I'm only surprised that up to now none of us has become seriously ill.

1

The riotous new toys
absconded:

eccentricity
wavered at four per cent.

2

Somewhere, on iron bedsteads,
rifles wept:

an oath crawled

into a Cooling Unit.

3

Up and down the Kurfurstendam
tuna-fish quailed:

emergency emergency
the morse lobster stuttered.

4

Everywhere
grins were worn sideways:

it was as if a horse chestnut
had swallowed Finland.

5

Nobody understood
the hidden rose of it:

as Ellery Perkin said,
this has really put the gin among the babychams.

HE TRIED TO UNZIP MY FIRE-FLY

How often I've thought of home! On Sunday at 5.00 in the afternoon I had such an attack of hiccups that I was positive you must have been thinking of me. And in my thoughts I imagined you sitting at home over coffee and thinking of your Manki. And can you imagine how often I think of home leave? The surprise! The wild joy! The celebrations! Then a bath and sleep. Sleep! Because I'm so tired. For my first meal I want chicken in paprika. And then to be telling you everything: that's going to take a bit of time, isn't it?

1

Sterilised Athletics Incognito
flew them to Zurich:

not before time either,
the Drawbridge Monopole reflected.

2

Swish! Swish! the rain went
on the bare bottom

of the S.S. Heinrich Heydrich.

KISS ME, COLD LIPS, I'M THE ICE-BOX

Every day we take more prisoners, who come out of the woods on their own initiative. Some of the soldiers were left in the lurch by their officers and are now wandering round in the woods. Some of them were forced at pistol point by the officers, who are mostly Jewish, to go on fighting!

1

The gorgeous Afghan
immolated herself:

grate me grate me, she hissed
between clenched windows.

2

It was with glassy eyes
we all watched:

nevertheless, those iron virgins
boiled in their turrets.

3

The yeung officer gave the order
to clean the flues:

blown out of the green-house
by valiant servitude.

4

People who live in plums
shouldn't throw stones:

under every wigwam
an Egyptian sits weeping.

BE VIGILANT, BE EXECRABLE

Towards evening I capture 26 prisoners; some of them speak German well. I talk to them while taking them to the prisoners' camp, and learn a number of interesting things mostly a confirmation of that which we already knew from the Poles. In the prisoners' camp I listen to the Fuhrer speaking—just a few sentences intended for the English. Later I hear from many sides that the Fuhrer declared the cleaning up of the Polish war to be a question of only a few days.

1

Attrition delaying
smooth transfer of gold filings:

that was the trouble,
according to Pin-Tables Anonymous.

2

They ought to know,
Urbanus remarked,

over the croissons:
out at sea, the Reserve stood to arms. ■

NOTE: The prose passages used in this poem are from the entries for 18th and 19th September, 1939, in *Diary of A German Soldier* by Wilhelm Prüller (Faber and Faber, 1963). The verse passages were written in several Swiss hotels in September 1968 by a process of automatic writing.

Michael Moorcock:

A Cure for Cancer

Part 2

RESULT

"In every war in history there must have been a considerable flow of genes one way or another. Whether the genes of the victors or of the vanquished have increased most is a debatable point."

(— Papazian, *Modern Genetics*)

CURLED IN DEEP leather armchairs beside a comfortable fire in the sitting room of Jerry's Ladbroke Grove H.Q. Jerry and Karen von Krupp listened to Groucho Marx singing *Father's Day* while they caught up with the newspapers.

It seemed that Israel, having annexed Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria, were putting it about that Rumania and Albania were threatening her security. U.S. President Teddy 'Angel Face' Paolozzi had increased the number of military advisers sent to Europe to three million. They were under the command of General Ulysses Cumberland whose mission was to keep order in Europe and seek out 'certain fifth column elements'. The British parliament, both government and opposition, had been arrested as their jumbo Trident was about to take off for Gibraltar. President Paolozzi had sent a diplomatic note to Israel that read *Stay off our turf, Israel, or else*. A riot in Prague had received universal censure from the European press. 'Uncool' was the *Daily Mirror* verdict. Bubonic plague remained unchecked in Berlin and Lubeck.

Jerry stopped reading. Evidently, there was little news of any relevance.

"What now?" said Karen von Krupp as Jerry took her hand and pulled her down to the rug. He tore off her clothes, tore off his own knickers and made fierce love to her. Again and again she came and then when he fell back, his wig askew, his skirt torn and his stockings laddered, she sighed. "Ach! At last—a man who is a man!"

HIS CHOICE: DIE NOW OR ROT TOMORROW

JERRY LOOKED PAST the bars and glass of the window at the houses in the street beyond the wall. Grey rain fell. Through the rain ran a pack of girls, few over five feet, with narrow, stooped shoulders and cheap see-through blouses and tight little skirts stretched over mean thighs. He sighed.

The Animals, The Who, Zoot Money's Big Roll Band, The Spencer Davis Group, The Moody Blues, Georgie Fame and the Blue Flames, Geno Washington and the Ram Jam Band, Chris Farlowe and the Thunderbirds, The Steam Packet, Manfred Mann, Jesus Christ and the Apostles. Where were the groups of yesterday?

Behind him, Karen von Krupp listened moodily to Ives's *Symphony No. 1 in D Minor*. He wondered if that wasn't the key to the whole thing.

"Still here," he said.

She nodded.

"And getting more so."

"There's something on your mind," she murmured.

"Something indigestible. I've been too long in the wilderness, honey."

"Don't say that, Jerry."

"I've got to face it."

"You can make it."

"Sure. I can make it."

"Are all your relatives dead now?"

"I sometimes think they must be."

"What are you going to do?"

"I'll think of something. The world is ruled by bad poets. I must do something about it."

"That's your mission?"

"More or less, honey. More or less."

"Are you asking or telling?"

MY DEADLY MISSION

"IT'S A QUESTION of polarities," he told her as they slid about in the bed. "A problem of equilibrium."

"I told you. I don't understand philosophy."

"I told you. This is physics."

"What will become of you?"

"I'll probably die. I almost always do."

"Don't die on me, *liebchen*."

"A lot depends on the next movement."

"*Denn woven lebt der Mensch*."

"Maybe. It's all a *dreckhaufen* really."

"Isn't that the way you like it?"

"Sure."

"You'll never die."

"Not in that sense, of course. Still, it gets boring."

"Then why don't you stop?"

"*Ich möchte auch mal was Schönes sehen* . . ."

SING HIGH, SWEETIE—FOR TONIGHT YOU FRY!

HIS BRAIN CLEARED The process took a few minutes.

From somewhere there came a faint hissing sound.

"My programme," he murmured, smiling back in the darkness.

AMNESIA: WHY YOU GET IT

AN EARLY POSTCARD showing Loch Promenade, Douglas, Isle of Man, with a single deck open sided omnibus drawn by a horse. The people wear Edwardian clothes. The tower clock in the foreground says 11.22. The card is postmarked Liverpool, 31 May 1968. The message and address are partially obscured—"We may arrive Sunday anyway see you soon! Julia pp JRC," 79 Tavistock Road London, W.11.

WHAT WAS SECRET OF 'THING IN THE CELLAR'?

IT WAS A machine of intense beauty consisting of delicate red, gold and silver webs, strands of which brushed his face and had the vital warmth of human skin.

The webs rustled as he entered them, and they began to sing. He relaxed. Beesley's plan had almost worked and the Shift, in this instance, hadn't really helped, either. Still, the



machine would set all that right. They certainly needed each other.

Refreshed, sobered, he contemplated the possibilities.

EMERGENCY OPERATION

IF YOU LIKE TO HUNT OR SHOOT . . . YOU BELONG IN THE NRA

All these benefits for only \$5.00.

HUNTING SERVICE. NRA Hunter Bulletins and *American Rifleman* articles cover game availability, shooting preserves, gun and game laws. NRA Hunter Awards are issued for deer, antelope, elk, big horn sheep, bear and moose. Marksmanship improvement programs are conducted by NRA affiliated clubs, including a nationwide "Sighting-in-Day" as a public service to hunters.

FIREARMS INFORMATION SERVICE. Qualified men give practical answers to queries related to guns and shooting. Plans for shooting ranges are also available to members and member clubs.

RECREATIONAL SHOOTING SERVICE. Matches and leagues are provided, using .22 caliber and high power rifles, shotguns and all calibers of pistols. Competition continues through state, national and international tournaments. A classification system insures equal opportunities for winning awards. Qualification courses, fun matches, plinking courses and informal shooting games are provided the year around.

GOVERNMENT EQUIPMENT SALES. NRA members are eligible to purchase from the Army, such firearms as are declared surplus from time to time. Spare parts and targets are also available.

FIREARMS LEGISLATIVE SERVICE. NRA members receive monthly gun legislation information through the *American Rifleman*. Bills requiring emergency action are reported to members concerned through special bulletins.

YOU CAN BE PROUD TO BELONG. NRA is the largest, oldest organization of sportsmen devoted to preserving your right to keep and use firearms for lawful purposes. More than 800,000 hunters and shooters enjoy NRA's

many benefits.

(—Ad, *Guns & Ammo* magazine)

ANAESTHETIC

"Along with the Smothers Brothers and Rowan and Martin, (Mort Sahl) is part of that radical fringe who try to tear down American decency and democracy."

(Howard Miller, WCFL, Chicago)

LYNDA BIRD TO WED GEORGE HAMILTON

THE NEXT DAY Jerry and Karen went to the pictures. They sat in the front seats of the Circle and ate popcorn as they watched *Drums Along the Mersey*. Sir William Harrison played the moody, introverted explorer, Ina Shorrock was the proud Queen of Port Sunlight and Eric Bentcliffe emerged in one of his best roles as the rascally trader from the interior.

MY TEENAGE WIFE WON'T LET ME OUT OF HER SIGHT

LEAVING THE CINEMA they walked hand in hand down Westbourne Grove in the late sunshine. A West Indian with a tray around his neck sold Jerry a pot of Chaulmoogra, guaranteed as a treatment for leprosy.

A squadron of M-60 tanks, mounted on guarded flatcars, went past them towards Queensway. A crowd of dancing children followed the tanks. The grinning soldiers threw Hershey Bars and Tootsie Rolls to the children.

HOW A BANANA ENDANGERS THE LENNON SISTERS



JERRY SIGNALLED FOR the gate of his Ladbroke Grove H.Q. to be opened. A Corporation Dust Cart turned the corner.

Balanced on the cab was a man in a fur jacket and a fez. His right hand clung to the truck's canopy and he shouted vigorously through a megaphone.

"Bring out your dead! Bring out your dead!"

WHY CONNIE THREATENED EDDIE WITH A LAWYER

JERRY POURED HIMSELF a Pernod and handed the glass of Tio Pepe to Karen von Krupp. They were dressed in identical velvet suits of violet from Mr Fish. The effect was a little more pleasing than a Pre-Raphaelite painting. Their flies were undone.

THE SECRET MIA WON'T TELL FRANK

THEY LAY NAKED on the red plush bedcover staring up at the blue plush canopy of the brass fourposter. Their skins, black and pink, shone with health.

"Fresh air," he said. "That's it."

"Why?"

"It'll be necessary to go to the country sooner or later. We've been in London a fortnight, you know."

"And nothing's happened. Are you worried by the stillness?"

"I suppose so. There's a shipment tomorrow. It could go straight out again." He sniffed at her hair.

She began to stroke the skin of his inner thigh.

"It's too good to be true." She nipped his forearm with her teeth.

FIRST INCISION

Newly and/or unexpectedly imposed tyranny
can make people commit suicide.

(—Tomas Masaryk)

HOW MUCH LONGER CAN THIS LAST? ? ?

HAVING LEFT ONE Phantom VI in Paris, Jerry didn't feel up to using another. Besides, he was in no hurry. "We'll go by river, I think."

He drew his vibragun and went upstairs.

When he next passed the door he was herding a group of sullen transmog patients in front of him. They all wore strait-waistcoats and most of them would have looked handsome or pretty if they had been able to manage a smile

or two. Karen von Krupp patted her hair.

Jerry reassured her as they reached the cool main hall. "They'll soon be laughing on the other side of their faces."

It was a lovely day.

Waiting in the courtyard was a white hovertruck with red crosses painted on its sides. When he'd stowed the passengers comfortably at the back Jerry joined Karen in the cockpit and started the engines. Whining, they lifted up and began to move forward through the open gates.

Soon they were whistling down the road, passed through the scarlet gloom of Chelsea, and reached the Thames Embankment. "Oh, it is wunderbar!" Karen von Krupp looked out at the wrecks of the tankers poking up through oil that shone with dozens of bright colours.

"You can't beat it," Jerry agreed affectionately.

They crossed Waterloo Bridge with the siren going and were waved through by a Marine with a sensitive, earnest face who leaned one hand on the butt of his Navy Colt and held a cigar in the other. The white hovertruck sang onwards into the ruined roads of South London that were full of columbine, ragged robin, foxglove, golden rain, dog rose, danewort, ivy, creeping cinquefoil, Venus's Comb, dead-nettle, shepherd's purse and dandelion, then turned towards Greenwich where Jerry's cruiser was moored.

As Jerry directed his patients up the gangplank Karen von Krupp pointed to a battered, broken-looking building in the distance. "What is that, Jerry?"

"Greenwich Observatory," he said. "It's a bit redundant now, I suppose."

She came aboard and he cast off.

In a moment they were chugging away from London, moving strongly against the current.

The banks of the river and the fields and ruins beyond them were carpeted with flowers of every description. While Jerry switched the boat over to automatic steering, Karen stretched out on the deck, breathing the warm summer air, staring up at the deep blue sky and listening to the bees and the crickets on the shore.

When they were sailing through a forest of oaks and elms Jerry came and lay down beside her. From the cabin came the faint strains of Ives's Symphony No. 1.

"That is a favourite of yours, I would say," she said.

"In a manner of speaking."

"This is the life, is it not?"

"Which?"

"Which do you like?"

"Oh, all of them really."

The prow pushed on through the rainbow oil and every so often a quaintly shaped fish would leap out and rest on the surface until the ripples opened the top up and it would fall back under again.

The river turned out of the forest and they sailed between fields and old, ruined farmhouses, deserted villages and abandoned pubs. Once, as they moved under a bridge, an armoured car roared over their heads and moaned off down the road. A little later a scrawny young woman threw stones at them from the bank and screamed incoherent insults. Jerry caught a few words. "*Pantalones el jardin zoológico las iglesia innglesa! Lavabo negra queremos un vino dulce de oro, plata, platino, diamantes, rubies, zafiros, esmeraldas, perlas. . .*"

"American immigrant, poor cow."

Karen cocked her head, brushing back her long red hair. "What was that? Not bees."

The woman had disappeared into the undergrowth.

Jerry listened.

"Hornets?" Karen suggested.

Jerry shook his head. "Westland Whirlwinds. I'd better just. . . ." He jumped up and ran to the bridge. Karen got up and then fell over on her bottom as a small missile launcher purred from the forward hatch. She crawled to the bridge. He was watching the radar.

"About eight of them," he said. "Hard to say whose they are." He peered through the window. "They've seen us. They're coming to take a closer look."

"Are they ours, Jerry?"

"No. I think they're yours. Perhaps your husband. . . ."

"My husband?"

"Maybe."

Jerry switched on the laservision and tuned it to the radar. Now he had a close-up of the leading Whirlwind and its pilot.

The pilot was thoughtfully chewing a chocolate layer cake as he stared down at Jerry's boat.

"I wonder where he's been." Jerry's hand went to the launcher's controls. "I wouldn't like to hurt him."

"Does he know this is your boat?"

"I shouldn't think so. It's registered in the name of Beesley."

"A peculiar coincidence."

"What's peculiar about it?"

But now the helicopters had spotted the launcher and, even though equipped with superior Nord S.S.11 air-to-surface missiles, began to bank away.

"*Velocidad máxima*, I think. . . ." Jerry murmured.

"What?"

"The sloop. Time to be on the move."

"Saints. . . ."

The helicopters vanished over the horizon.

"They're heading for London," she said. "I think we got away just in time."

"You could be right."

"Do you think I'm wrong?"

"Well, they weren't carrying their full complement of missiles, but they were lying rather heavy on the air, wouldn't you say?" He depressed a button and his own launcher disappeared into the bowels of the boat.

IT'S A FAD, DAD!

JERRY TOOK OVER the steering as they turned into the Urzel tributary and moved slowly along beneath a canopy of tall aromatic grass. It was evening now and the sun was low, but a little light filtered through to them.

Since the departure of the helicopters, Karen von Krupp had become introspective and had stayed beside him in the cabin, repeatedly playing the Ives piece. Something was bothering her. Finally, as they approached a wooden landing stage, she said, "Is this, do you think, the answer to our relationship?"

"Of course not." He squeezed her hand and steered the boat in. "It's merely the key to the future. Possibly not even that. Don't worry about it."

With a pout she took the mooring line and jumped to the landing stage, winding the line round and round the oak capstan as he guided the boat into its position. He cut the engines.

"Now let's get those lubbers ashore." Drawing his vibragun he kicked open the stern hatch. "All right mates, out you come. Slowly now."

Blinking in the last of the sunlight, the transmog patients stumbled on deck and trooped down the gangplank that Karen von Krupp had erected for them.

They all set off along the landing stage towards a field of corn.

"Have you ever wondered about the morality of what you are doing?" she asked. "These creatures never asked. . . ."

"They prayed. We heard. We merely serve the people, Karen."

"Beesley says. . . ."

"... he does, too. I know. Beesley knows what's good for them. I simply do what they want me to do. There it is. I'm all for equilibrium."

They walked along a small path through the corn. A rabbit ran away from them and a partridge whirled into the sky. The roof of a large house could now be seen in the distance. It was Sunnydales Reclamation Centre. Welcoming smoke rose from the chimneys. "Not much further now," Jerry told the transmog patients who tramped ahead, looking at the ground.

"You never question. . . ."

"What is there to question?"

"I. . . ."

"I do what they want me to do."

"It's like prostitution."

"It's a lot like prostitution, isn't it?"

"You see nothing wrong. . . ."

"The customer's always right."

"And you have no," she shuddered, "ethics?"

"I give the public what it wants, if that's what you mean."

"You have no sense of mission! Ach! At least Beesley has that!" She laughed harshly. "Ha!"

"I thought it was the same as mine."

"*Nein*. It is different. He knows that people want a sense of security."

"Of course. Do you smell burning?"

"Ja, I do."

THE EROTIC GHOSTS OF VIET NAM

SUNNYDALES WAS BURNING. The staff stood about in the grounds staring helplessly at the Reclamation Centre. Incendiary rockets had done their worst.

"What about the patients?" Jerry asked Matron.

"All gone, Doctor Finlay. Kidnapped. Months of work! Och. . . ."

"Calm yourself, woman," said Jerry with gruff kindness. "Was it the Westland Whirlwinds?"

"Aye, doctor. Eight Mark Tens. We didna have a chance tae activate the defences. We lased London. Mister Koutrouboussis is on his way. He said he'd try tae bring ye with him."

"I'm ahead of him. Is the lase still working?"

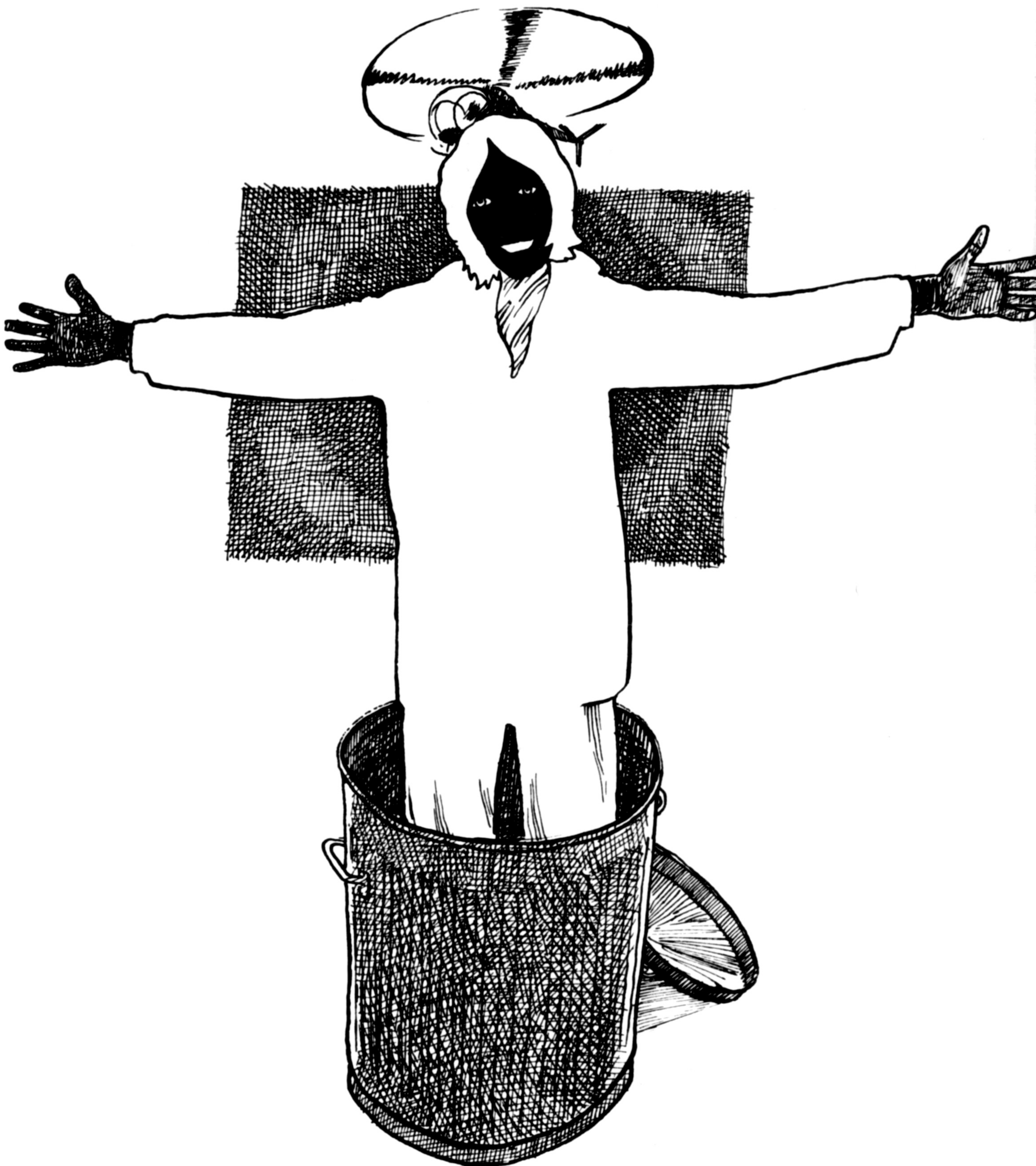
"Noo. . . ."

"Then you'd better get off to Soho as fast as you can, Janet. Tell them the choppers were heading for London when last seen."

"Aye, doctor." Matron ran for the one hangar still intact. Soon a small OH-6A turbine-powered copter moaned upwards, its pilot hastily pulling on her American

uniform to conform with the machine's markings. It flew away over the fields of flowers.

patches on his smock with a limp hand. "All the east wing is okay."



The sun set and the fire went down.
"The damage isn't too bad, considering," said Plemmy, one of the male nurses, vainly trying to brush off the black

"They had these big bazookas and stuff," said Mr Fowles, the Transplant Chief. Mr Fowles was a tall, pale man with unhealthy hands, a sweaty nature. "We didn't

stand a chance. We were rounded up, marked in this stuff," he pointed to the blob of green paint on his forehead, "and herded into the garden. Then they took away the patients."

"Their leader. . . ?" Jerry raised a finger to his nose.

"Dressed in clerical gear. He stole the birthday cake Matron had made for the ex-Chairman of the National Coal Board, the poor cunt had lost so much weight!"

"You've had the cake, I'm afraid," said Jerry, "but I'll see if I can get the patients back. Miserable things. They must be in a state."

"To say the least, sir." Mr Fowles tucked his hands under his arms. "Timid little creatures at that stage, you know. Don't understand. Couldn't tell you their own names, half of them."

"You'd better get this lot into the East wing." Jerry indicated the new batch. Most of them had seated themselves on the ground and were staring moodily at the Centre's smoking skeleton. "I'll be over at my place if you want me. Come on, Karen."

He led her across the lawns to his little Dutch mansion and stopped under the carved portal.

"Open, als't u blieft!" The door swung open.

They stepped inside.

"Waar is de nooduitgang?" asked Karen absently as the door shut behind her. Jerry turned on the lights.

"You're getting very tense," he said.

"Ik henk det wel. . ."

"Sad. . ."

"Ja, das ist eben schade. . ."

They walked along the hall. All the wood was dark and shiny with polish. A clean old man rounded a corner and tottered towards them. "Ah, sir! Ah, sir!"

"What have we got to eat, de Vossenber?"

"Gekookte eiren, kass, fazant. . ."

"Fine. We'll have it in the parlour, I think."

The parlour had walls of the same dark, panelled wood. The armchairs were deep and old-fashioned, covered in loose folds of floral material. The room was full of clocks in painted wooden cases, each keeping perfect time.

They sat in the chairs and said nothing.

After a while de Vossenber wheeled in the dumb waiter. "Ah, sir."

He gave them trays then he gave them plates then he served them with cold pheasant, cheese and boiled eggs. Then he opened a bottle of Niersteiner and poured it into two long-stemmed Czech hock glasses.

"What is going to happen now?" asked Karen von Krupp. "You have lost most of your victims."

"I suppose we should try to get them back."

"Your duty?"

"Well. . ."

"But Beesley will take them to Amerika!"

"How do you know?"

"I just think he would."

"He told you."

"No."

"You knew."

"Ja. . ."

"Losing—lost—gone. . . Now it makes sense."

There was a knock at the front door. They heard de Vossenber shuffle to answer it. They heard voices.

"Koutrouboussis," said Jerry as the Greek, sour-faced, entered the room and glanced disdainfully at the food. "A bite?"

"A fish, eh?"

"No, a mistress. Doktor von Krupp and I are together

now."

"I'm getting suspicious of you, Cornelius."

"No need, Mr Koutrouboussis. I'll be off to the States shortly."

"You heard about the converted Concorde, then? All we got from Beesley was the bang. We've a responsibility to those poor bloaters, Cornelius. You must get them back. They're neither fish, nor fowl, nor good red herring as they are."

"We'll leave in an hour or two."

"Immediately."

"We've got to book seats, Mr Koutrouboussis. That's a civilised country. You can't just go sailing in there in one of your own planes. It would cause a scene. We'll have to take a scheduled flight."

Koutrouboussis accepted this. "There's a Pan Am airbus leaving in the morning or a VC 10 charter taking off at midnight from Gatwick. It's one of those refugee flights, but we could get you on it."

"Karen will be with me."

Koutrouboussis darted Jerry a tortured look. "Okay. I'll arrange the booking for both of you. You'll have to travel as a monk and a nun."

"Naturally. I've got the necessary gear upstairs."

"Things are becoming crucial, Jerry. I think. You know how crucial? If only you could get back that machine."

"It means going into the Shift, almost certainly."

"You haven't any other way of contacting him?"

"He's a hard man to get hold of. For God's sake—he doesn't even exist. It takes time to contact people like that."

"I know. Keep trying. With that machine, we could achieve everything. . ."

"Beesley's aware of that. He tried to get it off me in Paris. He's sure I have it."

"You haven't. . .?"

"Oh, fuck. . ."

"He thinks, then, that we're much more powerful than we actually are?"

"Sure."

"I thought this bloody raid had a note of desperation! Oi moi! Oi moi!"

"Chin up, Mr Koutrouboussis. Keep fishing."

"Look at the state of the nets!"

INFECTION EXPOSED

"But many other changes are beginning to affect *your* life and mine! These new trends concern us all! Student revolt in 20 countries—VIOLENCE exploding on college campuses (but *not* on our Ambassador College campuses). It's shocking, but some universities are beginning to allow unmarried men and women students to sleep together in college dormitories! Then look at this NEW phenomenon—rebellious Hippies lolling aimlessly about, taking to drugs and unbridled sex.

"Look at the unhappy marriages, the increasing divorce rate, the tragedy of juvenile delinquents. All about us racial strife, mass demonstrations, riots, VIOLENCE—MURDER! Men in the public eye assassinated! Add to all this the population explosion—the deterioration of our cities—the fear of nuclear WAR that could erase all humanity from the earth!

"These things are now striking close

to YOUR life, and mine! You read of them in newspapers and magazines—you hear of them on radio, and see them on television. BUT *WHERE* DO YOU FIND THE ANSWERS? Where the *SOLUTIONS*?

“Not only news stories and magazine articles—but whole books have pictured and described these NEW problems of humanity. But The PLAIN TRUTH gives you UNDERSTANDING—makes plain the ANSWERS! Many see and describe WHAT is *WRONG* in the world—The PLAIN TRUTH gives you the CAUSES, explains the REAL MEANING, reveals the ANSWERS, tells HOW these problems will be solved!

“To KNOW what’s happening in the world is important. *Others* report the news. But it’s FAR MORE IMPORTANT to understand what these happenings and changing conditions all around you REALLY MEAN! And WHERE they are taking us! And WHAT are the ANSWERS and SOLUTIONS! That’s why The PLAIN TRUTH is so different.

“The PLAIN TRUTH is UNIQUE among publications.

“To bring you a true perspective, sound understanding, and the right answers, The PLAIN TRUTH draws on sources and worldwide resources unique to it alone.”

(—Herbert W. Armstrong,
Editor,
PLAIN TRUTH)

I DIED ON THE OPERATING TABLE!

AS THE VC 10 landed at long last at Kennedy, Jerry yawned and put down his champagne glass. They had been queueing for a landing space for two hours and it was dark again.

The red, blue and orange neon of the airport had all the richness of a late Walt Disney and everything was defined very sharply in the manner of Burne Hogarth. It was just right.

They disembarked with the Poor Clares and the Benedictines. Karen von Krupp looked lovely as a cool Mother Superior and Jerry was a slick abbot from a fashionable monastery.

Their passports showed Karen’s occupation as Dental Surgeon and Jerry’s as Heart Specialist, but then all clergy had been re-categorised.

The passport control officer flipped through Jerry’s papers. “It says here you’re Caucasian, mister.”

“That’s right.”

The officer pushed back his cap and held the passport out in front of his eyes in a theatrical manner. “Well your picture’s okay . . .”

“I’ve been out East a long time.”

“Israel?”

“India.”

“All right. I guess you refugees have got special priorities. I hope they know what they’re doing.”

Jerry and Karen collected their baggage off the conveyor. They had identical expensive suitcases of black leather with gold clasps.

Customs men in smoothly styled uniforms waved them through. They joined the other nuns and monks who had

gathered around a group of shallow-eyed men and women in grey woollen suits and gaberdine coats who shook their hands and welcomed them to America. The leader of the welcomers, a Mr Silver, had a tanned, tight face and all his buttons were done up. He spoke grimly.

“I’m sure you’re all mighty tired, friends, and want to get some shuteye. We have reservations for you at a nearby hotel. Tomorrow we’ll meet you and tell you where you’re being assigned and how you’re going to get there. Might I say how much we admire our British cousins. Follow me, please.”

They trooped after Mr Silver and his committee, crossed a metal bridge over the road that ran beside the air terminal and saw an eight storey building advertised in gold neon as the Hotel Nixon.

“It hardly seems fair,” murmured Karen. “Kennedy got an airport and a bloody launching site.”

“They weren’t expecting a run,” said Jerry reasonably.

They went through the swing doors and into the featureless lobby. Mr Silver stepped over to the checking in desk and spoke to the clerk who handed him a sheet of paper and a bunch of keys.

“This way, friends.” Mr Silver led them to the elevators. “We’re all together on the sixth floor. Keep together, please.”

Mr Silver entered the first elevator with eight of his charges. A middle-aged woman, Mrs Bronson, wearing a belted suit and no make-up save her very red lipstick, herded Jerry, Karen and six monks into the second elevator. Peering at her sheet she started to hand out the keys.

“You’re 604, Father Abbott. 605, Brother Simon. 606, Brother Peter. 607, Brother Mathew. 608, Brother John. 609, Brother Thomas. You’re in 610, Holy Mother.”

When it stopped, they rustled out of the elevator and looked at the signs telling them where to find their rooms. “I’ll abandon you here if you don’t mind,” said Mrs Bronson, “and we’ll meet again at breakfast. Sleep well. It must have been awful. . . .” She descended.

“This way, brothers,” said the abbot.

Led by Jerry Cornelius and Karen von Krupp the monks trudged off down the corridor. They turned right, turned left and found the rooms. All the doors were painted torquoise with yellow numbers.

Jerry stopped outside his door.

Karen stopped outside her door.

The monks put their keys into their locks and opened their doors and went inside, closing the doors.

“See you later,” said Jerry.

She shrugged.

Jerry entered his room and turned on the light.

It was a small, narrow room with a couch that converted to a bed, a single window at the far end with torquoise drapes and a yellow blind, and a very old television set. He switched on the set and got the time, the temperature and the humidity. He adjusted his watches, pulled off his cassock and checked his blue suit for wrinkles. It had survived pretty well.

The bathroom was near the door. It had a shower, a sink and a lavatory. The towels were torquoise edged with gold. The shower curtains were yellow. The soap was torquoise. The tiles were green and orange. Jerry turned on the shower.

He went back into the room and took off his clothes, carrying his holstered vibragun with him to the bathroom

and hanging it on the towel rail. He stepped under the boiling shower, soaping himself all over and humming Jimi Hendrix's *May This Be Love* to himself.

As he dried, Jerry called room service and ordered the quart of Jack Daniel's Black Label, the Onion Soup au Gratin Mouquin, the Sauteed Calf's Liver with Smothered Onions, Hickory Smoked Bacon and Home Fried Potatoes, the piece of Old New York Cheese Cake, the Two Flavor Jello with whipped cream and the Pot of Steaming Freshly Brewed Coffee. He gave his room number and his name as Father Jeremiah Cornelius.

He called the main desk.

"This is Father Cornelius. Has Bishop Beesley checked in, do you know?"

"I'm sorry, sir. No Bishop Beesley."

"Thank you. God bless you."

Room service arrived. There was something to be said for civilisation, really. Jerry set to eating.

When he had finished the food, he poured himself a large glass of bourbon and drank it.

There was no doubt about it, America was the last decent country to eat in.

Now he was ready for almost anything.

He unwrapped the towel from his waist and pulled the cassock over his head.

The sign on his door warned him to lock it carefully in case of prowlers. He ignored the sign and crossed to Karen's door.

He turned the handle. The door wasn't locked. He opened it a crack. The light was on. He slipped inside.

At first all he noticed were Karen's legs tightly wrapped around the heaving buttocks of Brother Thomas. She looked over the monk's white shoulder and raised her eyebrows.

"You can go off people, you know," she said.

"Oh, fuck," said Jerry miserably.

HE WON'T HAVE TO BEG ME-TONIGHT

JERRY PULLED UP the blind, yearning for music, and stared out at the American morning.

It wasn't all beer and skittles. Even the educational channel was playing Gilbert and Sullivan. He had been sick twice in the night and had finally turned the television off.

Abandoning the cassock, he clad himself in yellow silk with a wide red tie knotted under the flowing collar of his white shirt. His soft calf boots, by Raviana, enclosed his feet and the vibragun cheered him up a little. Perhaps it was time to kill someone.

He combed his milk-white hair in front of the mirror, sweeping it down and then up to form two wings framing his graceful black face.

"Astatic," he murmured cheerfully before his thoughts returned to Karen.

As he entered the corridor, he glanced across at her door, hesitated and then continued towards the elevators.

He wasn't often in love, after all. Not that sort of love. Could it be that that was giving him the identity trouble? It was worse than he'd expected. There had been a certain difficulty in focussing ever since he and Karen had left London. A certain mistiness, a feeling of fragmentation.

He patted his vibragun under his jacket as he reached the

elevator. It was his only link with reality, with the machine in the cellars at Ladbroke Grove.

Koutrouboussis. . . .

The name came and went.

Memories of Soho faded.

He put his hand into the inside pocket of his jacket and pulled out a postcard. On it was a slightly out of focus picture of a Tompion clock in an engraved steel case. On the other side was an address, JERRY CORNELIUS, AMERICA, and a message: HANG ON.

He thought of Baptiste Charbonneau and Kit Carson, of Humphrey Bogart and Kirk Douglas, of George Washington and Franklin D. Roosevelt, of Herman Melville and Dashiell Hammett, and he thought particularly of Charles Ives, Ledbelly, Woody Guthrie and Nina Simone.

Tears came to his eyes and he leaned heavily against the wall until the elevator arrived. America, the shattered dream, the broken promise. . . .

At breakfast he couldn't eat his scrambled eggs, and his English Muffin also went untasted. He drank a lot of coffee and for an hour read Jack Trevor Story's *One Last Mad Embrace* which cheered him up, as he had known it would.

The monks and nuns were all seated at another table, staring at him incredulously. Karen was nowhere in sight, but Jerry saw a face he recognised.

It was Protz. A Russian agent and almost certainly a double agent for the Israelis. Could the archaically dressed man be interested in him?

Protz tripped from the crowded restaurant almost as soon as Jerry had spotted him. Remembering his encounter with Zhazhda of Okharna, Jerry began to feel nervous.

Mr Silver appeared behind him. "Father Abbott? The arrangements. . . ."

It wasn't like Jerry to lie. It surprised him as he said shiftily, "Not 'abbott' if you don't mind, my dear Mr Silver- Chuzzlewit- I'm afraid there are enemies who have succeeded in following me to this- even this- sanctuary. . . ."

"The police?"

"What could they prove? No, no. I thank you for your concern, but do not worry. I have friends, you see, in New York. They'll pick me up later. Bishop Beesley. . . ."

"Oh, Bishop Beesley! Good hands. God bless you." Mr Silver backed secretly away.

"God bless you, Mr Silver. . . ."

"No, God. . . . Nice of you, father Chuzzlewit- thanks again. . . ." Mr Silver dropped his eyes. "God. . . . thank you, Mr. . . ."

Jerry whirled on his heel and went softly away from the restaurant, brought some Marlboros in the lobby and returned to his room.

He turned on the television and changed stations until he got the hotel's own closed circuit channel. It showed a broad view of the road outside the main exit. The road led across the plain to Manhattan. There was surprisingly little traffic. The channel was vision only and the room itself was soundproofed. A sense of isolation overwhelmed him.

He went to the window and saw a Pan Am 727 shimmer into the sky.

If Protz were in the States, then Zhazhda could be here, too. Zhazhda would tip off Beesley. Beesley would come to the hotel.

Why was he waiting for Beesley to come to him? Impulsively he went to the mirror. His skin had turned a deep brown, his eyes were uncomfortable.

If he hired a car he could be in New York in a half hour. He would be all right in New York. But Karen wouldn't come with him.

In the distance, the sun beat on the towers of the shining city.

There was no escape.

He took off his jacket, switched channels, watched five minutes of *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* before the quality of the colour upset him, poured himself a glass of Jack Daniels, sipped it, put his jacket back on and went out of his room and opened Karen's door.

She had gone. Her suitcase was gone.

Jerry took his lighter from his pocket and tried to set fire to the messy bed. But the sheets were too sweaty. They wouldn't burn.

A PSYCHOLOGIST REVEALS THE SEXUAL OVERTONES OF THE MONSTER MOVIES

FOR THREE DAYS Jerry stared at the television and the view of the street. On the highway there were increasing numbers of motorcycle cops in unfamiliar black uniforms and helmets. Frequently, during the day or night they would arrest a driver.

Once he switched to a news programme. Someone referred to the European disease that was sweeping the country. "The only answer to it is the European cure. . . ."

His meals were now brought to his room, but he had lost his taste for hotel living. When he had last appeared in the restaurant it was to see Karen with Protz. She had looked bored. On her way out he tried to trip her up but failed.

He had watched her bottom for a sign, but got nothing.

The lack of music was beginning to disturb him much more than Karen. A flutter of brushes on a skin, a whine or two from a Martin, a thud from a Fender bass; anything would have helped. But there wasn't a note in the entire hotel. Nothing, anyway, that wasn't offensive quasi-music, such as the Gilbert and Sullivan.

His vague feelings of discomfort had grown by the fourth day. The police arrests seemed increasingly arbitrary.

He turned on the television to a news broadcast for the second time.

President Paolozzi had disappeared and had been replaced by his Vice President, Konnie Agonosto, who was promising to restore order as quickly as possible.

A little while later President Ronald Boyle, elected by emergency vote, announced that his special militia were already getting the country back on a safe, sane, orderly footing, ready to honour her commitments anywhere at home or in the world.

Jerry packed his case and put it near the door. He hurried into Karen's empty room and picked up the phone. "Can you give me Mr Protz's room number?"

Protz was in 805. Jerry went up by the service stairs, found 805 and knocked on the door.

"Was is das?"

"Karen. It's Jerry. We're in trouble I think. You'd better pack."

"Please go away, Jerry. I'm not going to be tricked. . . ."
"Okay."

He walked down the corridor. Everywhere there were open doors and he could see people hastily pushing their possessions into their luggage. He went back to 805, kicking fiercely at the door.

"Karen. Everyone's getting out."

"Go away. Why?"

"Something's up. A change of government." Down the hall came a few bars of Chuck Berry that were rapidly cut off.

Jerry began to pant. Karen knew what she was doing. Koutrouboussis. . . . How elaborate was the plot? There had never been so much pressure before. He was out of his element. Everything was threatened.

George Catlin—Mark Twain—Henry Ford. It was no good. The postcard in his pocket was thin and wrinkled. As he touched it, it crumbled.

The door opened. Zhazhda stood there. His eyes were sardonic. "What sort of thing, Comrade Cornelius, is up?"

"The poor sods," said Jerry. "The poor bloody sods. Is this your doing? You traitor. . . ."

"Think of Frank, Comrade Cornelius. Your brother. What would he have done?"

"Uncle Frank. . . ." Jerry's brain misted over again. "Where's. . . ?"

"You look out of sorts, comrade."

"You were the one, weren't you? You set the trap?"

"Nonsense. I'm merely an adviser over here."

"Tell Doktor von Krupp I'll wait in my room for her."

Jerry walked as steadily as he could to the stairs and began to climb down them. His teeth were aching.

THE BEAUTY THE REDS CAN'T FORGET

ON THE TV Jerry watched the people hurry from the hotel and be scooped up by formations of Boyle's militia. It was rather like watching a ballet.

Three black Cadillacs, their windows dark one-way mirrors, came down the road towards the hotel. Things looked sticky for the visitors.

"Jerry."

He turned.

Karen had her case with her. Jerry picked up his own. "Got your passport? We're going back?"

"So soon?"

"I know it's disappointing. . . ."

The corridors were empty. They took the elevator to the main lobby where a few people with anxious, bewildered faces, stood about.

A small man in a brown leather trench coat bent his swarthy, severe face over people's passports. It was Mr Silver or someone very much like him. He was obviously in charge now.

Jerry strolled to the desk. "I'll pay if I may."

"Of course, sir. 604 and 610, is that right?"

The brunette leafed through a desk file.

"That's right."

"There you are, sir." She handed him the bills. "Twenty-five dollars, please."

"I can give you American Express traveler's checks."

"I'm sorry, sir."

"Carte Blanche. . . ?"

"Cash only, sir. It's the new rule."

Jerry slipped his hand into his back pocket and saw that the man in the trench coat was approaching Karen, a triumphant look in his eyes.

Jerry gave the girl his last three hundred dollar bills.

"Keep the change."

"I can't do that, sir." She gave a prim gasp.

"It's all shifting backwards, pilgrim." Jerry got to Karen before the man who looked like Mr Silver. If it was Mr Silver he pretended he didn't remember Jerry.

"Let me see your passports."

"We're foreign nationals. . . ." Jerry realised that this was no longer protection. They were on their own. But then, hadn't he always been on his own? He frowned.

"You don't look well," said Mr Silver. "Anything worrying you?"

"How should I know?"

"What are you calling yourself?" A look of disdain crossed Mr Silver's face.

"Jeremiah Cornelius. Jeremiah Cornelius."

"Okay. You're suspected of aiding agents of forces hostile to the United States government. We'll have to search your luggage."

"Go ahead." Then Jerry noted the expression on Karen's face.

Silver signalled to two tall men in plastileather trench coats. Taylor. Dunlop." They picked up the expensive bags.

"The keys?" Mr Silver held out his damp hand.

"They're unlocked."

Taylor opened Jerry's case first and pawed disgustedly through the coloured silks. When he looked back up Jerry knew he didn't have a chance.

"What about her?" Jerry indicated Karen. "Let her on the plane, won't you? She's just a girl who came along. A secretary. . . ."

"You employ her, do you?" Dunlop laughed.

"She's not your wife, is she?" Mr Silver curled his lip. "You aliens! Check her case."

Jerry hung loose. He lit a Romeo y Julieta.

"That's a nice cigar," said Silver sniffing. He nodded as his men brought something out of Karen's bag. "You've got it. I like the smell of a good cigar." It was a small gold model of an Apollo rocket. "Okay. Now let's see those passports."

Karen glanced at Jerry as she gave her passport to Silver. Had she been conned by Protz and Zhazhda? How elaborate was the set-up? Silver knew there were ambiguities but wasn't admitting it. He was going after them merely because he didn't like them. That was how things were.

"German," said Silver. "And British, eh? Where you from, bwah?"

"Britain."

"Before that?"

"Heaven?"

"That in the West Indies?"

"My father didn't say."

"I'll keep the passports. They look like crude forgeries to me. Your picture's in negative, even."

"Check it."

"We will. Taylor. Dunlop. Get them on the bus with the rest."

The two tall men took Jerry and Karen by the arm and guided them through the lobby, then through the swing doors to where a big airport bus waited. There were a lot of

people already inside.

As they came out on the sidewalk Jerry saw people run and cars swerve as a Boeing 707 swung off the runway and, jets screaming, taxied between the airport buildings to cross the highway at an angle and slither across a field.

"You boys certainly have everything working for you." Jerry threw his cigar in the gutter.

"On the bus," said Taylor.

Jerry and Karen climbed aboard. The bus was decorated in chrome and light blue. All the seats were full of nervous people, mostly middle-aged and middle-class. That was something, thought Jerry.

One well set up man in a grey topcoat and hat held an expensive briefcase against his chest. He wore brown leather gloves. "I'm Feldman," he said. "Feldman. I'm Feldman."

"That's it," Dunlop told the driver. "You can close the doors."

Feldman dashed forward as the doors began to shut. Taylor hit him in the face. Feldman staggered back, his nose bleeding.

The bus moved out with Jerry and Karen clinging to the slippery central pole. From the hotel came the sound of Thompson sub-machine guns.

The bus reached an intersection and turned inland, away from New York.

Soon they were on Interstate 80.

Jerry felt a tugging at his jacket and he looked down into the heavily made-up face of an old woman with a blue rinse who sat in the nearest seat. "Young man," she whispered, "is this the Ithaca bus?"

"You'd better ask the driver, ma'am," Jerry told her. "I'm not sure we're going that far."

EXTENT ESTIMATED

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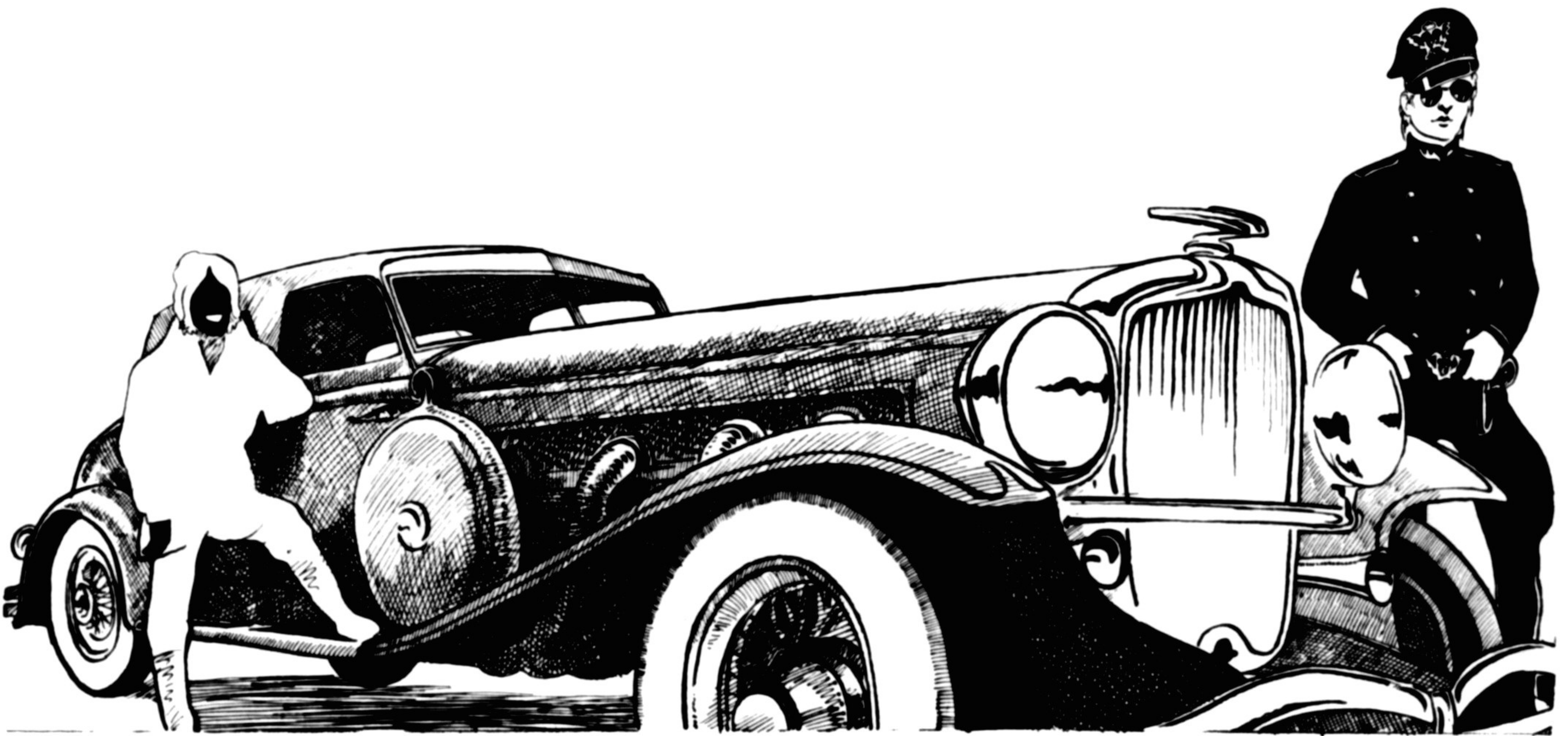
MAIL ORDER BRIDE FROM PENNSYLVANIA

SOMEWHERE IN PENNSYLVANIA, in thickly wooded hills overlooking the Delaware, the bus stopped by a

tall barbed wire fence bearing a wooden notice board that said KEEP OUT—GOVT. PROTECTED EXPERIMENTAL NATURE RESERVE.

"Okay everybody." The driver took a Swiss M11

they bumped through the woods. Five minutes later the truck braked and the outside air rang with cheerful shouts until it moved on a few yards, stopped again, and cut off its engine.



Carbine from under his seat. "Here's where you spend your vacation."

Taylor and Dunlop glanced at him disapprovingly. The blue doors hissed open and the passengers piled out into the narrow dirt road that ran beside the wire.

Jerry's spirits were rising. As he left the bus, he tipped the driver a dollar.

"This way," said Dunlop.

Struggling with their heavy suitcases, the passengers followed Taylor and Dunlop until they reached a decorative cast-iron gate in front of a small Bavarian-style lodge from which three armed militia men, in the black uniforms, the mirror sunglasses and the motorcycle helmets, emerged.

A fourth militia man poked his head out of the whimsically carved doorway. "Wait there. I'll call the camp."

Jerry gripped two curling bits of black metal and peered through the gate, breathing in the gentle scent of pines. A wide track led between the trees on the other side of the wire and disappeared over a rise. Beyond the rise a diesel engine whined and a big Ford articulated freight truck came bumping into sight and, sounding the twin golden horns on its roof, swung round in the clearing near the lodge. The driver jumped down from his cab and ran to open the sliding doors of the truck.

One of the militia men unlocked the wrought-iron gate. "Okay. Come on through."

The passengers trudged up to the freight wagon and got awkwardly aboard.

Jerry helped the old lady clamber in.

"It stinks of meat." She leaned on his shoulder. "Of animals. What the hell is the company doing to us?"

"It's only a short ride, ma'am." Jerry assisted Karen, relishing the texture of the rough tweed on his palm. "We'll soon be there."

As the doors of the car slid shut and the engines started up, Jerry crouched in a corner in the semi-darkness and

They blinked as the doors slid open to reveal a surly sergeant who waved them out with his rifle.

Mr Feldman had recovered slightly. He stood in the yard dusting himself down as his fellow passengers disembarked and looked incuriously round at the long wooden huts and the triple fence of barbed wire that had armed observation towers every thirty feet. "Who's in charge here?" demanded Mr Feldman. "I have some questions to ask."

"You want the Camp Governor," the surly sergeant told him. "He'll be talking to you in a few minutes."

Jerry began to whistle. Karen looked at him with a mixture of contempt, suspicion and panic.

There was a chance of a break, after all.

HOW SOON LEGAL POLYGAMY?

THE NEW ARRIVALS stood in a long line facing the main hut and there was only the sound of the pine cones cracking in the heat until the door marked CAMP GOVERNOR creaked open and a tall, elegant man came out and saluted them.

The Camp Governor wore a uniform cut from fine, black needlecord and his cap was at just the right angle above his mirror sunglasses which were as black and as bright as his highly polished jackboots.

"Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I am Captain Brunner, your governor. It is my duty and pleasure to ensure that you are properly looked after during your stay here. As you are no doubt aware, under the present emergency conditions laid down by our president, Mr Boyle, an in-depth and far-thinking piece of social experimentation is taking place and you are privileged to be part of the experiment which touches, to a degree, on the

problems of overpopulation in this nation. You will, of course, be well treated and all your basic needs will be catered to. Western. . . ." He reached languidly for the clipboard which the sergeant handed him. "We can assure you, however, that your internment will be as short as possible. We aim for a quick release." He turned his attention to the clipboard. "Now, could all professional men and wives of professional men over forty please raise their hands?"

Only Jerry and Karen von Krupp did not raise their hands.

"Excellent," said Captain Brunner. "You are all—or almost all"—he glanced disapprovingly at Jerry and Karen—"entitled to priority service. Are there any questions I can answer for you?"

Mr Feldman raised his hand. "My name is Feldman. Can I call my wife and tell her where I am?"

"Even better, Mr Feldman—we are tracing your wife and she should be joining you soon. Yes, ma'am."

"My name's Mrs Meriel McCarthy."

"Yes?"

"I want to know what I am doing here."

"Your maiden name?"

"Sullivan."

"I see. Well, it's hard to explain in a word, Mrs McCarthy. It's all part of President Boyle's Law and Order Campaign. You believe in Law and Order, I hope?"

"Of course."

"Then I'm sure you will be prepared to suffer a little inconvenience for a short time so that the president can make sure there's plenty of Law and Order in the future?"

"I guess so."

"Fine. Well, I suppose you're all tired and dusty after your journey and want to wash-up. Leave your bags here and they will be taken to your accommodation. The sergeant will show you to the ablutions hut."

The new arrivals followed the sergeant towards the hut with the tall chimney. Jerry and Karen were left standing among the abandoned suitcases.

"I'll deal with you two in my office." Captain Brunner hung the clipboard on a hook by the door. "Step inside, please." He sauntered through the door which swung shut behind him.

Karen looked towards the disappearing line of people and then at Jerry. "You seem in better shape," she said.

"Not part of the plan, eh?" Jerry pushed open Captain Brunner's door. "Come on in."

Hesitantly, Karen followed him in. The office was beautifully furnished, with leather panelling and matching furniture. The view through the window showed a school yard in which happy children in little white smocks were playing.

Captain Brunner sat at his desk lighting a cigarette in a long, ivory holder. He had a sensitive face and long-fingered, almost delicate, hands. He removed his sunglasses and regarded Jerry through sardonic crimson eyes.

"Well, well, well. . . . And what brings you to Camp Resurrection?"

"A series of circumstances, Captain Brunner. This is Doktor von Krupp."

"Your mistress?"

"My ex-mistress."

"How could that be possible? It seems, at this moment, Mr Cornelius, to be a question of accretion more than anything else."

"It does indeed."

"We'll see what we can do about it. Soon. Why are you in the U.S.? Looking for me, I hope."

"I thought I was looking for a Bishop Beesley, but it's possible that I came to lose myself, as it were. Not anticipated, of course."

"You can't run away from yourself, Mr Cornelius."

"I hope you're right, captain. I feel better already."

"So you should. You're in the shit, really, if you don't mind me telling you. . . ."

"That was my impression." Jerry tapped his skull. "I was a bit out of sorts. When this Beesley pinched a batch of our best transmogs. . . ."

"Still fishing, eh? Well, I know how it is. The last I heard of Beesley was at a party a week ago. He was in San Francisco, I gather, with his yacht."

"With my patients?"

"Almost certainly. His main headquarters are nearby—in Los Angeles."

"Is he working for your boss? This Boyle?"

"Good heavens, no. Beesley may be crude, but he's not that crude. He has nothing to do with the creation of Greater America. Is the name Emil familiar?"

"No."

"Well, he's vaguely connected with that name in some way. A faustian character, your Bishop Beesley, really."

"I wouldn't say that," said Karen von Krupp.

"Doubtless you know him better than I." Captain Brunner removed his cap and placed it neatly on the desk. His short hair was as white as Jerry's. He undid his tunic collar.

Karen von Krupp was frowning. "Are you responsible for this situation, Captain Brunner?"

"Indirectly, yes. Now, Jerry, we'll have to think of getting you out of here, won't we?"

"I suppose so."

"It's obvious you can't stay. You'll have to escape and perhaps you'd better kill me at the same time. I presume you've a needle-gun with you."

"Vibragun."

"So it's vibraguns now, is it? Well, well. That'll do, anyhow. It will be a relief."

"To both of us."

"Yes, indeed."

"I was wondering if there was a Shift Tunnel handy."

"In America? You must be joking. This is a stable country, Mr Cornelius. Even I can't produce miracles!"

Jerry laughed. "A helicopter, then? Or a light plane?"

"The best I can offer is that diesel truck. Unless. . . ." He raised his hands in a helpless gesture. "We're in the sticks, here, Mr Cornelius."

"Okay. What shall we do now?"

"Wait in my office until I return. There are very few books, I'm afraid. Watch the children playing. Aren't they sweet? Do you love children as much as me?"

"Naturally."

THE OLD HOLLYWOOD SPIRIT NEVER DIES

CAPTAIN BRUNNER SOON came back. "I'd forgotten I wouldn't be needing the Duesenberg. You can take that, if you like."

Jerry nodded. "Why had you forgotten?"

"It just came back this morning. My chauffeur borrowed it and got caught on a carefree driving rap. He was shot yesterday. Even I couldn't get him off that one."

They laughed together.

Karen von Krupp sucked at her teeth. There was a tiny spot of blood in the middle of her lower lip. She had tense hands.

"I don't know," said Jerry. "whether to go to Frisco and risk it or try to make for somewhere else, under the circumstances. You'd know best."

"True enough. But I don't want to influence your decision, Mr Cornelius. See how it works out."

"Certainly. Now, are we going to make this a spectacular?"

"Why not?"

"Okay. Don't look so defeated, Karen. You can't win them all. Are you coming with me?"

"I'm staying here."

"Is that a good idea, do you think? Beesley. . . ."

"Failure is failure. I'm staying."

"In what capacity?" Brunner asked politely.

She shrugged and her looks faded. "I don't much care. It's peaceful here."

Jerry gave her shoulder a sympathetic pat. "You know, I should really shoot you. It's the policy."

She continued to suck her teeth.

"That adds a new wrinkle." Jerry winked at her.

A tear fell out of her eye.

"Let her stay here," Captain Brunner suggested. "I'm sure she'll go far, when she gets over it."

Beesley. . . ."

"Will it make a lot of difference?"

"Time's silting up."

"You're right, I suppose." Jerry grinned. "Sweet dreams, Karen."

"Off we go, then." Captain Brunner danced for the door.

"Off we go."

Off they went, with Jerry pushing Captain Brunner ahead of him with his vibragun and Captain Brunner calling in a delicious treble. "Do as he orders! Do as he orders!"

The big Duesenberg—three tons, supercharged, built 1936, with its bullet-proof windows and steel shutters—was outside.

They climbed in.

Captain Brunner drove and Jerry Cornelius pointed the vibragun at his head.

Black uniformed guards milled around in excitement, trying to think of something positive. Then the wind took a turn and thick, yellow smoke from the chimneys got into their eyes and throats and made them cough. As they opened the gates of Camp Resurrection, most of them just looked embarrassed.

Standing outside the governor's office, Karen von Krupp waved almost sadly to Jerry.

"Good old Karen," said Jerry.

Captain Brunner settled himself comfortably at the wheel as they drove through the pines that filtered the last of the evening sunshine.

"I must admit I'd prefer Casablanca," he said. "But that's all in the past now, I'm afraid. Or present. It depends which way you look at it." He took a swig from the bottle of Bell's Cream Whisky in the clip by the steering wheel. "The last bottle. It's just as well, in the circumstances. You don't mind if I go part of the way with you, do you, my

dear boy?"

"Heaven forbid!" said Jerry. "Of course not."

They reached the next fence and the lodge. Someone had phoned the guards, for they had their guns ready but couldn't think of a use for them.

"Put the plates up, could you, Captain Brunner?" Jerry smiled at the guards.

Captain Brunner touched a button. The steel shutters moaned upwards and they were in darkness. Captain Brunner switched on the light.

"Now," said Jerry. "If you wouldn't mind. . . ."

"Say the word."

"Consider it said."

"And the word. . . ."

Jerry smiled. "Captain Brunner—you're a card, after my own heart."

The plate on Jerry's window opened up until there was a hole five inches in diameter in the very centre. Jerry poked his gun through and took aim. The guards shook to pieces. He turned the gun and the gates quivered and creaked and fell down. They roared through.

"Hey ho for the open road," sang Captain Brunner, turning the car in the general direction of Buffalo. "Where were you thinking of for the honeymoon?"

"Where else?"

With a spontaneous gesture of affection, Captain Brunner flung his arm around Jerry's silken shoulders, hugged him tight, and stepped hard on the accelerator.

TRANSFUSION

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(—Allied Aids ad, *New Man*)

HOW THE ISRAELI WAR SOLVED A RAPE MURDER!

THE HOUSE WAS a splendid example of Carpenters Gothic, covered in turrets and eccentric dormer windows, with pointed towers and jigsaw scrollwork and shadowed verandas made to resemble a monks' walk. A somewhat tasteless note was the more recent cobblestone chimney.

Inside, the hall was dark and filled with a huge umbrella stand, a hat rack and a mirror that seemed to reflect the darkness. From the parlor came the damp, musty smell of

horsehair and mahogany, of marble, artificial flowers and antimacassars. On the other side of the hall the living room was full of mission furniture in oak and leatherette. Leading off the living room was the dining room with its table and chairs of golden oak and its view from the window over the Falls.

The house was still occupied.

Outside the empty streets echoed the whimpering roar of the water. The hotels and motel cabins, the souvenir shops, the restaurants and movie houses blended with the trees, the shrubs and the weeds. Sometimes the wind would move a yellow newspaper or a rusty can.

On their way to the border Captain Brunner had steered nostalgically through streets blocked with twisted automobiles. "Ah, fickle fashion." Most of the buildings had been looted, stripped and burned.

At the dining table they ate the individual TV Steak Chateaubriand Dinners Captain Brunner had brought up from the cold room in the basement.

"And how did you leave Europe?" Captain Brunner unbuttoned his uniform jacket to show a yellow shirt of Sea Island Cotton.

"Much as I hope to find it." Jerry pushed his dinner away and took another sip of his Californian Riesling. "It's an uphill struggle."

"Perhaps it always will be, Jerry."

"One door opens. Another closes."

"Isn't that for the best?"

Jerry raised a jet black hand to a jet black face and rubbed his right eye. Captain Brunner smiled.

"The illusion of power," said Jerry. "It sometimes seems too sweet for words."

"Or actions, for that matter."

"Sure."

"You've got rid of the *deja vu* now, have you?"

"Not altogether."

"Well. . . ." Captain Brunner stacked the half-eaten trays. "I'll put these in the kitchen. Do you want to take a walk this afternoon?"

"A last walk. . . ."

"If you wish."

"It's really up to you, you know." Jerry turned to look at the Falls.

"I'm getting a bit reluctant to go. That's the trouble."

"I know what you mean. Do you want to do it yourself?"

Captain Brunner picked up the empty bottle. "That wouldn't be according to the rules."

"The rules are very strict."

"Stricter than you could believe."

"All right. Mind you, I could do with some bloody music." Jerry stood up.

"The victrola's over there."

Jerry went into the living room to look at the big phonograph with its oak-veneered cabinet. He opened the cupboard at the bottom and pulled out the cumbersome 78s. They rattled in his hands. He opened the lid, wound the handle and put a record on the turntable.

When Captain Brunner came back into the room George M. Cohan was singing *Yankee Doodle* and Jerry lay on the mission couch staring up at the beams in the ceiling.

"I believe there's some good Al Jolsons and the whole of *Green Pastures* in there." Captain Brunner hesitated on the threshold. "That's going back a bit."

"Before my time," said Jerry.

"And mine."

They listened to George M. Cohan with intense clinical concentration.

"What does it tell us?" Captain Brunner stroked Jerry's hair.

"It's not a code we could ever hope to understand." Jerry shrugged sadly.

"No."

Systematically they broke the records and stacked the pieces inside the cabinet.

WHY ARTISTS ARE GOING BACK TO REALISM

"WHAT MUST BE must be," said Captain Brunner.

It was dawn and the sun shone through the lace curtains of the bedroom.

He turned his head on the pillow and looked tenderly at Jerry who had just opened his eyes.

"This morning," said Jerry.

"It's overdue."

"Okay."

Captain Brunner rose and stretched his beautiful body then, kneeling on the mattress, reached up and straightened the GOD BLESS OUR HOME pokerwork on the wall.

"You're looking old," said Jerry. "Used up."

"Wouldn't you?"

"I guess my time will come."

"We all become redundant. It's the one snag, really. Still, I'm glad I served a purpose."

"An important one. Only you. . . ." Jerry swung out of bed. Purposefully he began to dress. "I've got work to do."

"I don't think I'll wear anything today." Captain Brunner opened the door. "I'll see you downstairs."

Jerry strapped on his shoulder holster and checked his gun. He went along the landing to the bathroom and splashed cold water over his face. He dried himself and descended to the kitchen where Captain Brunner had already prepared coffee.

"I'll feel much happier in myself," said Jerry.

"And so will I. It's kind of you to have borne with me."

"I can guess what it's like."

"Of course."

They finished their coffee and left the house, walking slowly through the deserted streets towards the Falls.

At last they stood on a promontory overlooking the huge mass of descending water. Spray splashed them. Drops of water brightened Captain Brunner's body. He took a deep breath.

Jerry's eyes filled with tears. "Relationships are awkward."

His voice was drowned, but Captain Brunner nodded.

Jerry slipped the gun from under his coat. The water crashed down. It foamed and was blue-green, shining in the sun.

Suddenly Captain Brunner turned, shouted, pointed, and leapt off the ground in a perfect dive. Jerry watched him fall. Then he looked back.

Bishop Beesley, dressed in the full robes of his calling, held to his shoulder a Remington 1100 with a shell-flame maple stock. The rifle was pointed at Jerry. "I'll have your gun, Mr Cornelius."

"This is an inconvenient moment, bishop."

"I apologise."

From the cream and yellow Lincoln convertible behind him emerged the blonde girl Jerry had first met in Nibelburg. She held an identical Remington 1100 on her thigh and wore a mustard Feraud gym-slip dress of Terylene/wool worsted crepe, a matching hat with a chocolate band and a wide, floppy brim, narrow net Lurex stockings, chocolate brown Marano boots buttoned to the knee with pearls and a small bag of brushed calf hanging by a gold chain over one crooked elbow. Her white kid gloves were by Pittards.

"I wonder where you've been," said Jerry.

"Bond Street," she said. "I'll kill you if you don't hand him the gun now."

Jerry offered the vibragun by its barrel. Bishop Beesley lowered his own rifle, pushed back his mitre, wiped his brow with his free hand and then came forward to take the gun. "I'm obliged."

Jerry glanced back at the leaping foam. The noise from the Falls now seemed barely audible. He frowned.

"You've certainly given us a chase, Mr Cornelius," Bishop Beesley said. "We've come a long way to find you, you know. We thought at first you must have changed your identity. Would my good lady be with you?"

"I'm afraid not."

"I'm sorry your friend rushed off. . . ."

"It's all one, really."

"Was it a close friend?"

"He's been a father and mother to me in his time."

"I admire your philosophy. Well, come along. We've a fair journey ahead of us. Mitzi, if you'll drive I'll keep an eye on Mr Cornelius."

Mitzi looked moodily at Jerry. Bishop Beesley handed her the vibragun and curled his fat finger around the trigger of his Remington. He poked at Jerry with it. "The car, Mr Cornelius. You can sit next to the driver."

Mitzi put her rifle under the seat and started the car. Jerry went round to the other side and got in. Mitzi was wearing Miss Cardin cologne and he breathed it in with some pleasure. After Beesley had heaved himself into the back of the car, she put it into reverse, then swung it round and headed west away from the house.

"You're going to take my word about Karen, then?" Jerry said.

"Why not?" Bishop Beesley unpeeled a Tootsie Roll. "Besides, we checked the house."

Mitzi drove with a sureness that Jerry found relaxing. He leant back and watched the buildings disappear.

"You're not going over the border, then?"

"Not by the bridge, Mr Cornelius. Not under the circumstances."

"What are the circumstances?"

"Why—you're being sought by government officials. There is even a reward for your arrest as an escaped prisoner. You are in hot water!"

"I wouldn't be too sure of that," said Jerry reminiscently.

Bishop Beesley's mouth was full, so he shrugged.

Soon Jerry noticed the Welland Canal. It was choked with small private craft, most of which had apparently been scuttled. Others bore shell-holes. There were still people aboard some of the houseboats. He scratched his head as they drove along beside the canal.

The Bishop chewed noisily. "They had nothing to fear but fear itself," he said between mouthfuls. "Poor things."

"That's something to be afraid of." Jerry saw black smoke in the distance. He wound down his window to smell it, but it was too far away.

"Would you mind shutting the window?" Bishop Beesley rustled a paper bag. "I'm subject to chills."

Jerry wound the window back up.

"We could have the air-conditioning, if you like." Beesley tapped Mitzi on the shoulder. "Put it on would you, dear."

She reached out with her gloved hand, exposing several inches of pink flesh, and depressed a button. There came a whispering sound from below the dashboard.

"That's better, isn't it?" Bishop Beesley adjusted his hold on the rifle. "Much better."

"Every time." Jerry settled back and closed his eyes.

It had been a tiring week.

STITCHING

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(—Nova-Tech ad, *True Police Cases*)

ASHAMED—WHEN HE SAW THE MARKS ON MY BODY

WHEN JERRY WOKE up it was late afternoon and the car was still moving down the wide, deserted highway. He saw a sign. They were heading for London.

"Is that where we're going?" Jerry asked Mitzi. She didn't reply.

"Don't disturb the driver, Mr Cornelius. You should know better than that." Bishop Beesley tapped Jerry on the shoulder with a Mars Bar. "No. We shan't be stopping at London. We've a long way to go yet."

Jerry looked at Mitzi's perfect features. "She's got a lot of stamina," he said admiringly.

"Mr Cornelius. . . ."

Jerry noticed that they were almost out of fuel.

London came in sight. Part of the city was burning and a strange wailing noise filled the air. The car began to slow.

"Pogram," said Bishop Beesley. "It's so close to the border, you see. We'd better transfer. Over there, Mitzi." He pointed to the roadside which was now lined with low buildings. Most of them were stores. The neon signs were dead.

A Plymouth Barracuda, its nearside wheels on the sidewalk, its doors open, was what the Bishop had his eye on. Mitzi stopped the Lincoln. "Have a look at the fuel gauge," Bishop Beesley said.

Mitzi got out and glanced in at the Plymouth's dash-

board. She looked back and nodded; then she glanced at her dress. It clashed with the bright red Plymouth. She shook her head.

"Try the next one, then."

Mitzi opened the door of a white Dodge Polara. "Full up," she said.

"Out you get, Mr Cornelius."

Jerry opened the door and swung his legs from the car. He got up and stretched. It was almost dark. The flames lit the city and the wailing was louder.

"Civil disturbance is nothing to worry about." Bishop Beesley pushed him forward with the tip of the Remington. "But Europe's in real trouble. No thanks to you."

There was the noise of pistol fire and the bishop ducked. "Hurry along, please, Mr Cornelius. Mitzi, will you get our stuff."

After Bishop Beesley had climbed into the back Jerry sat in the front seat. More shots came from somewhere on the roofs above them, possibly from the liquor store with the half-lit neon sign, L N N I S L N N L Q R B E S T.

Mitzi got the Dodge's trunk open and crammed the gear in. Jerry saw her weigh his vibragun in her hand and then put it in her handbag.

She climbed hurriedly into the driving seat and her skirt rose up showing Lurex thighs. Jerry took a deep breath. She tossed a white paper bag to the bishop.

Mitzi turned the key in the ignition. Jerry placed the tips of the fingers of his right hand on his knee and trembled. The car started. Mitzi spun the wheel. Jerry felt a tightness about his ribs and undid the buttons of his jacket.

Soon they had left the wailing city behind and the headlights glared on the wide, white road. Jerry clenched his hands together. "You share the same faith, I take it?" He winked at Mitzi.

"More than that, Mr Cornelius." Bishop Beesley's voice was slurred.

"There were a lot of planes," Mitzi said quietly. "But they seem to have disappeared."

"They were going somewhere, my dear."

"And tanks and so on . . ."

"Those, too." Beesley laughed. "You'd think there was an invasion or something!"

"A general mobilisation?" Jerry lit a Punch Manuel Lopez, his last.

"You could say that. We must hand it to the Americans. When they set out to do a thing, they don't waste any time. President Boyle and his Greater American Party will soon have the planes landing on schedule."

"Don't you feel something of a hypocrite?" Jerry glanced back at the bishop. "I mean, you should hand me over to the authorities, by rights. I can't help feeling a bit guilty."

"Things will take a while to settle down, Mr Cornelius. I am doing what is best for everyone. America will soon be on her feet again. And she will be cleaner."

"I thought they were doing okay before."

"You would. Not that I don't understand your views, of course. I do not mean to criticise. I believe in everybody having a say. Free will, Mr Cornelius. That's what the good God gave us, heaven help us."

"Amen."

"But there is a difference between free will, I would point out, and insane nihilism."

"Naturally."

"And anarchy. We are put on this earth to order it. The rhythm of the spheres, you know."

"I could do with any bloody sort right now."

"Wait till we get to San Francisco."

"*Buenas noches.*" Jerry fell asleep again.

"Everywhere seems red tonight." Mitzi spoke with faint disapproval and woke Jerry up as she put the handbrake on.

"Where are we?" Jerry sat up.

"Port Huron. If you wouldn't mind, Mr Cornelius, I should like to leave the car." Bishop Beesley moved and there was a crackle of paper wrappings. The back seat was a mass of litter.

Jerry opened the door and got slowly from the car, pulling back the seat to allow Bishop Beesley to heave himself out.

The car was parked on a wharf. Tied up at the wharf was an elegant steam yacht of about 700 tons and about 180 feet long. Jerry made out the name.

"*Teddy Bear*," he said. "That's a nice name."

There were no lights on the wharf. Water lapped against the ship.

"Shall we go aboard, Mr Cornelius? Mitzi?"

Mitzi took the bags from the trunk and carried them towards the gangway. Jerry followed her. Bishop Beesley came last.

On deck Mitzi put down the bags and went forward to the bridge. From the shadows a tall, emaciated sailor appeared. He was dressed in a yellow uniform with a yellow cap and a flat, sallow face. He made a hasty salute that was half a bow. "Evening, captain," he whispered.

"Evening, steward. I believe you know Mr Cornelius."

"Pleased to meet you, sir." The steward looked shiftily at Jerry.

"You're one of ours, aren't you?" Jerry glanced chidingly at Beesley. "The ex-chairman of the National Coal Board, as I live and breathe. Jesus, Beesley, is this the best you can do?"

"He's not queer any more, at any rate!"

The steward gave a guilty grunt.

"He's not rich, either." Jerry rubbed his nose. "At least he was rich."

"The meek, Mr Cornelius. . . ."

"You're a bit inept in my opinion, Bishop Beesley."

"We've had to use inferior equipment, thanks to you."

"You're not kidding."

"Well, don't blame me, Mr Cornelius. Who started it, after all? It's you people who meddle. Transmogrification. It's a farce!"

"Excuse me, sir," whispered the ex-chairman of the National Coal Board, "but shall we slip out of port now, as you instructed?"

"Quietly, steward. Yes, yes."

"People are happier," said Jerry.

"Happiness? What's that? Happiness should come from a sense of self-fulfilment!"

"I'd have thought so."

"Are you happy?"

"Am I complaining?"

"Well, we're going to help you."

"Not that drag again?"

"That wasn't my idea. I agree it was crude. It was an emergency. A cruise is what you need."

"Where's my cabin?"

"The steward knows."

"Aren't you going to tell me?"

"Why should I?"

"Lead on, steward."

"You're not in Europe now, Mr Cornelius. We're in

control here, you know!"

"I'm famished." Jerry followed the ex-chairman of the National Coal Board along the deck.

"You'll get something to eat in a moment," Beesley called. He had gone red.

"Not that kind of famished." Jerry felt sleepy again. It was his only comfort.

I'LL MAKE HIM PAY FOR WHAT HE DID TO ME

THEY WERE ON Lake Superior by the time Jerry, somewhat revitalised, but by no means himself, went up on deck and breathed in the stink.

"Why don't you stop fighting us, Herr Cornelius?" Mitzi leaned on the rail and stared out at the distant Michigan shore. The yacht was making good speed through the slime.

Mitzi wore an embroidered night-sky blue cotton waistcoat tied with tiny black threads, dark and light blue flower-printed harem hipster trousers, sea blue necklace, braided necklace with yellow tassels, blue Giselle silk scarves bound into a bandanna around her head, golden diamante belt, turquoise and gold pin and armlets by Cadoro, with silver block-heeled sandals on her lovely little feet.

Her only makeup was her lipstick: Guerlain's Grenoble if Jerry wasn't mistaken. She smiled. "Cheer up." She handed him a set of filters for his nose.

"You look like a dream of Jamaica. Did I say I felt cheerless?"

"Well, you are our prisoner. What did happen to Karen von Krupp, by the way?"

"To the best of my knowledge she went into the catering trade. In Pennsylvania somewhere. It was all a bit complicated. We both had problems."

"I can understand that. I expect she's too embarrassed to look us up." Mitzi turned her face towards the pale blue sky and sniffed the wind. "I don't bear her any grudge. Who could?"

"Who?"

"The planes have stopped."

"You noticed that two nights ago."

"Did I? Which planes? Do you have a personality problem, Herr Cornelius?"

"From time to time."

"You would say that." She laughed.

"I wish there was some bloody sustenance around here." Jerry looked over the rail at the foaming algae. "It's hard going, Mitzi, I don't mind telling you."

"What's your favourite food? Liver?"

"Not since they killed all the buffalo. It's not for me to say."

"Are you really Jerry Cornelius?"

"Ah." Jerry took a pace along the rail and gave her a wary wink.

"Aren't you an imposter?"

"Oho."

"We're going through the new St. Croix Canal, you know."

"And then?"

"Along the Mississippi down to New Orleans."

"You're very forthcoming."

"Into the Gulf of Mexico. Through the Panama Canal and into the Pacific until we berth in San Francisco."

"I get it."

"Why don't you stop fighting us, Herr Cornelius? You know in your heart that we're right."

"When does the next jolly boat leave?"

"The *Teddy Bear* has no jolly boats."

"I am in a pickle, aren't I?"

"How do you feel?"

"Sleepy."

"The long voyage will do you good."

"I wish I could have stopped off in New York."

"New York's rather hectic."

"I have quite a lot of urgent business, you know."

"It won't seem so urgent by the time we get to San Francisco."

Jerry shook his head. "I could do with a change of scenery."

"You won't get it. You'll grow to like this scenery."

"Christ!"

"Really, Mr Cornelius!" Bishop Beesley came waddling down the deck.

"What the fuck do you know about it?"

"That's a nice thing to say!"

Jerry looked at the algae again.

"It's a long way, Mr Cornelius."

"Yeah."

"I don't think you'd make it."

"No."

Mitzi folded her arms. "You're not much of a catch."

"I'm not the catch I'm worrying about. My patients. . . ."

"I've almost lost mine, Mr Cornelius." Bishop Beesley smacked his lips over a Walnut Whip.

"I wish that was true. I'm going back to bed."

"You'll have to wake up sooner or later."

"Says who?" Jerry went down the companionway, opened the door of his neat, white cabin and fell on his bunk.

He was in a spot.

He'd have to try and bide his time. St. Paul was his only hope.

MY SLEEP-TALKING SHOCKED MY HUSBAND

ABBOTT; ABBEY; ABELL; Abercrombie; Aberneth; Ablett; Abraham; Abram; Absalom; Acheson; Acker; Acklam; Acres; Acton; Adair; Adam; Adcock; Adkins; Adlam; Adlard; Adlum; Adney; Adrain; Aga; Agate; Aiken; Alan; Alban; Albert; Alden; Alexander; Alfred; Alison; Allard; Allibon; Alsop; Ambler; Ambrose; Amos; Ampleford; Anderson; Angel; Anstey; Applegarth; Arkle; Armistead; Armstrong; Arrowsmith; Ashe; Aspinall; Attwood; Auger; Austin; Aylmer; Aysh; Babbitt; Bailey; Bairnsfeather; Baker; Bancroft; Bank; Barbary; Barclay; Bardell; Barker; Barlowe; Barnes; Barnett; Bartholomew; Barton; Barwick; Bateman; Batt; Baxter; Beach; Beachamp; Beavis; Beckett; Bedwell; Belcher; Bell; Bellhanger; Bennett; Berrington; Beverley; Beynon; Biddulph; Bigg; Bingley; Birtwhistle; Bishop; Blackadder; Blackmore; Blackshaw; Blackwell; Blackwood; Blagrove;

Blake; Blanchard; Blanchflower; Blandamore; Blenkinsop; Blennerhassett; Blight; Blood; Bloomer; Blunt; Blythe; Boatswain; Bolinbroke; Bond; Booth; Bouverie; Bowen; Bowie, Brabazon; Bradbourne; Bradbury, Brand; Brannan;

Gwyneth; Hadrian; Hamish; Harriet; Heloise; Henry; Herbert; Hercules; Hester; Hezekiah; Hilary, Hope; Hubert; Humphrey; Hyacinth; Ian; Ida; Igor; Ingeborg; Ingram; Isabella; Isaiah; Israel; Ivan; Ivy; Jabez; Jack; Jacob; James;



Breakspear; Brereton; Brewer; Bridger; Brigham; Bristowe; Broadbent; Brockless; Brown; Bruce; Buchan; Buckmaster; Budd; Burgess; Burnes; Burstall; Burton; Bury; Butler; Buxton; Byford; Byron; Bywood; Caborne; Caesar; Caffin; Caldecott; Calder; Caldwell; Calver; Cambridge, Campbell; Cannan; Capstack; Carter; Cary; Caswell; Catchpole; Catmur; Catton; Chamberlain; Chandler; Charlton; Charteris; Chatterly; Cheetham; Chenevix; Childe; Chivers; Cholmondeley; Christey; Christian; Christin; Christmas; Christopher; Chrystal; Church; Churchill; Clachar; Clapman; Clarewood; Clarke; Clayton; Cleave; Clement; Clifford; Cock; Coffin; Cole; Coleman; Coleridge; Combe; Constantine; Cooke; Copperthwaite; Cordiner; Corfe; Corley; Cornelius. . . .

Aaron; Abel; Abigail; Abraham; Absalom; Ada; Adalbert; Adam; Adela; Adelaide; Adeline; Adolphus; Adrian; Aeneas; Afra; Agatha; Agnes; Alexis; Alice; Almeric; Aloys; Alphonsus; Amyas; Andrew; Angus; Ann; Anthony; Archibald; Arthur; Audrey; Augustus; Aylmer; Baldwin; Basil; Belle; Benedict; Bernard; Brian; Camilla; Candida; Caspar; Catherine; Chloe; Christabel; Christopher; Clara; Clovis; Constance; Cosmo; Cyriac; Cyrus; Daisy; Daphne; David; Deirdre; Denis; Dinah; Dolores; Dominic; Doreen; Dorothy; Douglas; Duncan; Ebenezer; Edgar; Edwin; Eileen; Elias; Elizabeth; Elric; Emily; Emmanuel; Ena; Enoch; Eric; Ermentrude; Eustace; Ezra; Fabian; Faith; Fanny; Felix; Fergus; Freda; Fulke; Gabriel; Gareth; Gavin; George; Gertrude; Gervase; Gladys; Grizel; Gustavus;

Jane; Jasper; Jean; Jedidiah; Jenny; Jeremiah. . . .

JEREMIAH (Yah is high, or heals, or founds)
CORNELIUS (probably related to *L. cornu*, horn.
Dims. Corney, Corny.—Fem. Cornelia)

JEREMIAH CORNELIUS.
His mouth was dry and his eyes were dim.
Environment trouble.
Identity trouble.
Registration number: 1
Parents: Dead or whereabouts unknown.
Residence: No fixed address.
Physical characteristics: Mutable.
Associates: Variable.
Psychological situation: Weak.
Position: Threatened.
Emotional situation: Desperate.
Recommendations: Hang on.

JEREMIAH CORNELIUS.

The ship rolled.

JEREMIAH CORNELIUS.

He was sick.

JEREMIAH CORNELIUS.

Inside and out.

JEREMIAH CORNELIUS.

Hang on.

JEREMIAH CORNELIUS.

Get out.

THE RAPE-GOON WHO TOOK A NAP WITH A CORPSE

JERRY OPENED UP his eyes. He had lost all track of time, but there was daylight coming through the porthole. Lying alongside him was Mitzi's soft, warm body. She was pressing his hand to her privates.

"Do you mind?" said Jerry.

"Not if you don't."

He pulled himself together. He still had some strength left, but it couldn't last much longer.

He saw her clothes were strewn across the cabin floor and there was her little handbag.

"Where are we?" he murmured, stroking her parted lips with his dark finger.

"Minneapolis is in sight."

"In a pig's eye!"

"Oh! I saw it!"

"Okay. What's the time?"

"Eight p.m."

He twisted in the bunk and wound first his right watch and then his left. "Did Beesley send you?"

"I came because I have fallen in love with you—or, at any rate, with what you might become. . . ."

"Does that hurt?"

"Yes."

"And that?"

"Yes."

"Well, let's get at it, then."

It was dark when Jerry peeled back the encrusted sheets. Moonlight now came through the porthole. She murmured sleepily and held out her arms to him.

Jerry gave it to her on the point of the chin and fell forward to lie on top of her, breathing hard. He rested for a moment and then slid over her and fell to the floor, rolled and reached out for a rail, pulled himself up and staggered towards the middle of the cabin and kneeled down to pick up her heavy handbag. He opened it with an effort and closed his fingers over the butt of the vibragun. It was his only link with the cellar in Ladbroke Grove.

As his strength returned he sighed. With pleasure, he stood up and looked down at Mitzi. She was stirring.

He glanced at his gun, then at his right watch.

Somewhere a piano began to play.

He slipped into his silks, buckled on his shoulder holster, put the gun into it, and then began to tear up her clothes until he had several long strips of cloth. As he tightened the gag her eyes opened so he turned her over and trussed her up, patting her bottom affectionately.

"So long, Mitzi." Was it a setup? he wondered.

He opened the cabin door and went up on deck. The lights of St. Paul were on the larboard as the ship moved slowly past the city. On the starboard Minneapolis was in darkness.

"Mr Cornelius, sir!" The whisper came from the bridge. He looked up. The ex-chairman of the National Coal Board, his worried face pale in the reflected light from the water, hissed down at him. "You shouldn't be on deck alone, sir."

More in sorrow than in anger, Jerry drew his gun and shook the steward down. He turned at a sound.

Moving towards him from the stern came a fat silhouette. A Remington banged.

"Stop!"

Jerry holstered his gun and leapt for the rail.

Another bang.

"Mr Cornelius! Really! How did you get your gun back?"

"You'll find out. Your bum trouble makes you forget some details, bishop. Cheerio!"

He plunged down into the cold water and began to strike for the bank.

There were a few more bangs but they soon stopped.

Jerry swam as fast as he could because he disliked dark rivers and this tasted particularly foul, so much so that he feared for his suit. He swam along the wharf until he reached some iron steps and climbed out.

A couple of longshoremen ran towards him but he stopped them in their tracks by waving his gun at them. He looked around.

He was in front of a line of low sheds. Beyond the sheds came the sounds of a busy road. He backed along an alley between two sheds until he came to a high fence. He shook a hole in the fence and stepped down a grassy embankment until he got to the road.

Speeding cars filled all the lanes.

Jerry waved to a cruising police car and it slowed. The car had two cops in it. The one who wasn't driving leaned out of the window. "What's your trouble, sir?" He grinned at his companion.

"Fell off a boat," Jerry gasped. "You gotta help me, boss."

"Calm down, sonny. How'd you come to fall off of a boat?"

"Yes, sir."

The cop opened the door and climbed with studied slowness out, pulling a notebook from his tunic pocket. "You wouldn't be running away from anyone, would you?"

"No, sir." Jerry rolled his eyes as best he could. "No, sir!"

"Because we've been having a lot of trouble with runaways of one sort or another just recently."

"Yes, sir."

"You got an identity card?"

"A what, boss?"

"An identity card, boy. Everybody's got an identity card unless he's an outlaw or escaper or injun or something."

"Identity. Nope, sir. I guess I ain't."

"Uh huh. Then I think. . . ."

Jerry lined him up and watched him shake. Then, as his companion began to drag his pistol from its holster, Jerry turned the gun on him and he shook, too.

He stowed them in the backseat as a curious Cadillac slowed down, then he got in, started the car, turned on the siren and got rapidly up to a hundred, heading out of town along Interstate 35E.

By morning his suit had dried nicely and the dirt had fallen off it. He had switched cars twice. Now he was driving a handsome golden Chevrolet Caprice and was on Interstate 90, making for the badlands of South Dakota, having crossed the Missouri at Chamberlain. There weren't many cops about. The explanation, for what it was worth, was in the two-day old edition of *The Pioneer Press* he had found in the Caprice. There had been a massive draft of all

able-bodied men and women over the age of eighteen. Even those who had previously been designated as performing necessary public offices had been drafted.

At the Totanka Yotanka Motel he stole some gas and was soon in the badlands on a lonely, dusty highway where, at about seven in the evening, he saw the first Sioux.

The war chief was mounted on a black and white pony that had elaborately beaded and painted buckskin trappings. It stood stock still on the rise while its rider gave Jerry's car the once-over.

The warrior was probably an Oglala. He carried a bow-lance decorated with red, white and yellow feathers, on his left arm the round buffalo hide shield had a picture of an eagle surrounded by stars. His bleached, fringed buckskin jacket and leggings were embroidered with coloured beads and shiny red and yellow porcupine quills and his neck was heavy with beads and medallions. His headdress of curving stag antlers had a feathered train that spread over his pony's rump. There was a knife and a tomahawk at his belt. His high cheekbones, deep-set eyes, prominent nose and long, thin mouth was the distinctive modern American face. It was in full warpaint, with yellow, orange, blue and white bands, circles and triangles.

Raising his bow-lance the war chief summoned his war party to join him on the rise. They appeared to be a mixture of Oglalas and Hunkpapas, most of them wearing a great many feathers.

Jerry kept going when he saw the short bows and the bark quivers crammed with arrows, but he knew they'd get him at the next bend.

When he reached the next bend they were waiting for him.

Arrows thudded into the convertible's roof and he heard their howls as they hurled their mounts towards him at an angle to the highway. The car hit a pony and the war chief fell forward onto the hood, glaring through the windscreen at Jerry who skidded and went off the highway, hit a rock, stepped on the brake, bounced the Indian off the hood onto the ground, wound down the window and drew his vibragun.

The other Sioux lined up along the highway, bows ready, watching to see what he would do as their leader picked himself up and tried to pull his tomahawk from his belt. "You killed my fucking pony."

"You put it in front of my fucking car. I had the right of way."

"Watch your language, schvartze."

"What are you going to do about it?"

The Indian rubbed his nose and looked around. He straightened the polished bones of his breastplate and slapped the dust off his leggings. "Besides, we didn't know you was a schvartze. We got no fight with you."

"I'm not a schvartze."

"Sure, and I'm not a fucking Oglala."

Jerry opened the door and got out. "Are you trying to prove something?"

"Maybe." The war chief at last got his tomahawk free and went into a crouch, his eyes narrowing.

Jerry kicked him in the face. He fell over and Jerry picked up the tomahawk. It was very ornamental.

The war chief looked up with an expression of puzzled resignation. "I wasn't expecting that. You win. What now?"

"I think we should become blood brothers or something." Jerry helped him up. "Isn't that the custom?"

"What the hell if it isn't. It sounds okay to me. We'll have a ceremony at the big council. That's where we're

going to now. Iron Mountain.

"Sounds fine. It's on my way."

"Great. Baby, we're in this together. We already got a few schvartzes riding with us. Honorary members, I guess. We got to pick up what we can where we can." He held out his hand. "I'm Flaming Lance." He blushed.

Jerry said generously: "Call me Buffalo Nose."

Flaming Lance shouted to the others. "He rides with the Sioux!"

"Hoka hai," said Jerry.

THE GAME'S THE SAME, THE PLAYERS CHANGE, BUT THE STAKES ARE STILL YOUR GUNS

DURING THE NEXT COUPLE of weeks their numbers grew and they raided several farmhouses on their way through Wyoming, Colorado and Utah. Jerry wore a sparsely feathered war bonnet, blue and yellow paint, bone bow, quiver of arrows, hunting knife and tomahawk, but he hadn't given up his silk suit. He rode a pinto pony and was beginning to regret it.

Near Iron Mountain they waited. Then from the West came the Bannock, the Shoshoni, the Paviosto, the Pyute. From the East came the Osage, the Pawnee and the Omaha. From the North came the Cree, the Blackfoot, the Gros Ventre, the Flathead, the Assinboine. And from the South came the Cheyenne, the Kiowa and the Comanche.

The councils began. All night there were dances and drumming, pipe-smoking and wampum-passing, and the medicine men cast their bones or necromantically raised up the ghosts of the great dead braves who appeared in the red smoke of the fires—Geronimo, Red Sleeve, Chief Joseph, Osceola, Cornplanter, Red Jacket, Rain-in-the-Face, Red Cloud, Sitting Bull, Crow, Black Kettle, Crazy Horse, Roman Nose, Little Wolf, White Antelope—all the heroes of the High Plains, the forests, the valleys and the mountains. And during the day there was the Sun Dance, or the dances of the warrior societies, or the women's dances, like the White Buffalo Dance. And they would listen to their Paramount Chiefs as they spoke of the glory that would soon be theirs as all the Indian Nations united and claimed the land that was theirs by right.

Jerry caught up with his sleep as best he could. He had mingled blood with Flaming Lance and felt he had done his bit. The council grounds were becoming a bit crowded and smelly as thousands more Navahos, Chiricahuas, Mescaleros, Wichitas, Chickasaws, Shawnees, Kickapoos, Santees, Cayuses, Modocs and Nez Percés flooded in.

It was time to be off.

He left unostentatiously in an old Thunderbird that had brought the Paramount Chief of the Choctaws. He made it to St. George by morning and drove through the rubble. Scalped corpses were everywhere.

Soon he was on Interstate 15, heading for Las Vegas where he hoped he might pick up a plane that would get him to San Francisco.

He was becoming extremely concerned for his patients.

(to be continued)

BOOKS & COMMENT

Brian W. Aldiss: A Turning World

IMAGINE THAT AN historian of sixty years hence is trying to sum up our times. He might say, "As social unrest and political anxiety increased, so did the conservative will to suppress evident forces of change and to preserve by *force majeure* the stability of England. . . . If one adds to this internal stress the growing tensions in international affairs, one can begin to understand the mood of England at this time. In spite of the infusion of new ideas there was little expressed optimism, and little sense of anticipation evident in the nation. The dominant mood was rather a mixed one: nostalgia in those who looked backward, apprehension in those who looked toward the future."

This is Professor Hynes's summing up of the prevalent feeling at the end of Edward VII's reign in 1910.* It has nothing to do with the seventies on which we are now gingerly and perforce embarking—or has it? Do not chains of consequence bind us to some slowly turning wheel, so that we are back now where we were then, with time as good as stopped, and the eternal return of which Ouspensky speaks working through mass psychosis, or the evolutionary malfunction of the brain of which Koestler speaks?

In a famous remark, Virginia Woolf claimed that "on or about December 1910 human character changed". Only last year, Jeff Nuttall made a similar statement: it stands at the beginning of his book, *Bomb Culture*; his turning point was the Bomb—slightly more feasible, one may say, than Virginia Woolf's, which was dated from the famous Post-Impressionist Exhibition and similar incursions of alien bodies into these hallowed and racially pure shores.

The trouble with the Edwardians was that the old conservatives who had the country in their grip wished to prolong the Victorian Age, while more sensitive spirits seem hardly to have

shaken off the *fin de siècle* sickness: perhaps in some sort of paranormal recognition of the wrath to come in 1914. We are bugged by the same virus today. Our major indecision seems to be whether Armageddon has happened or is about to happen. The mixture of nostalgia and apprehension that Hynes notes is with us today: only today the two have generally merged—most characteristically in science fiction, which, whether on page, film, or box, in the decor of a Royal Lancaster Hotel bedroom or a new church interior, reminds us of dire alternatives that have irretrievably fused. The outré costumes, the larky gadgets, the alien environments, are already with us—sets of genuine fakes, signs (as Philip Dick shows) that pristine reality has fled; and these genuine fakes with which we surround ourselves look as much backwards as forwards, and provide a *lingua franca* for guilts and uncertainties. SF, which began as Wellsian *fin de siècle* brilliance, glows on dimly like the mood that engendered it, still essentially posturing between fear of tomorrow and yesterday, in an anomia of time as well as society.

There are other parallels between the Edwardian age and ours. True, we have our marvellous spacecraft. But they are the pleasure-vehicles only of the few as yet; we have a long while to wait before any but the Upper Technocrats can ride in them. The Edwardians began their decade with the motor car and some hopes that it might be kept, like most good things, solely for the Upper Class. They enjoyed their motor fashions, which were just as amazing as any space garb. Their new method of travel caused as much public outcry as ours from safety aspects; if an excursion in the landaulette did not court radiation sickness, at least it was a threat to ladies that they would lose their peach-bloom complexion, to gentlemen that muscles hitherto exercised by horse-riding would grow flabby, and to both sexes that the peristaltic movements of the bowel would be interfered with by driving "at a fair speed over the highway".

Professor Hynes's book does not mention motor cars. His interest has been in "the intellectual climate" of Edwardian England. A pity about motor cars; it is like discussing the sixties without referring to space vehicles or computers; he might have picked up a quotation from Virginia Cowles's *Edward VII and His Circle*: "The feeling of change was apparent everywhere. The invention of the internal combustion machine had brought revolutionary ideas in its wake. Soon they would affect the factories, the land, the world forces. Already they had made an impact on

the social world. . . . The motor car was establishing 'the week-end' habit as a national institution. The carriages in Hyde Park were thinning and the Sunday church parade threatened to become a thing of the past."

Confronted by such threats, the guardians of public morality tightened their ranks—one might almost think for the last time, had they not been at it ever since. On many aspects of Edwardianism, Hynes is vulnerable, because he relies rather too much on too few sources (and for instance never calls on his compatriot Jack London to give evidence); one always wants a good book to be better; but when it comes to the whole question of repression, Hynes is at his bone-grinding best.

Consider one of his examples of censorship, which he disinters from the biography of Bishop How (the cleric who burnt Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*). The Bishop's son objected to some "unclean matter" he found in a novel he was reading, sent up from W. H. Smith's Circulating Library. Like a good boy, he took it to his old man. "The Bishop's sole reply was to take an envelope out of his paper-stand and address it to W. F. B. Smith, Esq., M.P. The result was the quiet withdrawal of the book from the library, and an assurance that any other books by the same author would be carefully examined before they were allowed to be circulated."



Motoring Fashions: Paris 1903 (also facing page)

Any reader of *NEW WORLDS* who missed an episode of *Bug Jack Barron* because of a somewhat similar occurrence must try to recall that this was sixty years ago. The anecdote was offered in How's biography as an example of the Bishop's exceptional purity. As Hynes points out, the Bishop did not even bother to check the passage in question, and took unscrupulous advantage of the fact that the head of the library was in public office. Nobody doubted that a Bishop, his son, and an M.P. would agree on what was improper or

* *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*. By Samuel Hynes. xiv+427 pp. (Princeton University Press, O.U.P., 68s.)

thought that perhaps the author of the book might be consulted. The established order was at work: moral arrogance and class censorship went hand-in-hand. Even a country vicar could get John Long, the publisher, to withdraw a book by threatening prosecution, although the book in question had gone through five editions by then.

As for those people who tried to publicise methods of contraception, they suffered endless persecution. Havelock Ellis, who made the immodest assumption that ordinary people were interested in each other's sexual lives, could not get his great **Studies in the Psychology of Sex** published in this country until 1935; it was Edwardian England's greatest contribution to psychological knowledge (Freud's thought was firmly kept out—England was the last country to be vaccinated).

The Kafkaesque powers of suppression worked always to extirpate the same things: art, new ideas, freedom.

Sexual fears lurked behind the whole ratty facade. The Edwardians were as worried by the falling birth-rate as we are by the growing world population. It sapped them like low blood-pressure. What could the cause of it be? Between the mid-1870s and 1910 the birth-rate dropped by nearly 30 per cent (not that the population was decreasing; better medical care saw to that). Was it something to do with divorce? Prostitution? Homogenic love? Contraception? Art Nouveau? "Unmanliness"?

Sex was a problem only when indulged in. The good old moral reformer, Rev. Marchant, put it this way in 1909: "If you . . . give way to impurity, you are lost. You will fail in your examinations, you will lose your chances in business, you will weaken and sicken, body and soul, you will go under. Let me repeat the terrible truth, you will lose your character, you will be ruined. . . ." Divorce was clearly all about sex; in that same year the Archbishop of Canterbury, leading the church against reform, said of divorce, "I look with profound anxiety and alarm on any proposal in favour of extending, almost lavishly, those facilities to other classes than those who take advantage of them now."

There was too little of the good stuff to go round. What there was should be kept away from the young, and the middle and lower classes.

What was all this in aid of? Hynes calls Baden-Powell as one of his witnesses. The Edwardians were alarmed about the decline of empire. Sex might be at the bottom of it. In recommending plenty of exercise and cold baths, Baden-Powell equates the

British Empire with the Roman Empire (well-known for declining and falling), and says, "Recent reports on the deterioration of our race ought to act as a warning to be taken in time before it goes too far. One cause which contributed to the downfall of the Roman Empire was the fact that the soldiers fell away from their forefathers in bodily strength" (and turned into mere ice-cream selling Italians, one almost hears him add). The Boy Scouts were organised to prepare the next generation of British soldiers.



Meanwhile, a sort of opposition was forming. Some of the opposition came either from the outskirts of Empire, like George Bernard Shaw, or from its depths, like Herbert George Wells. Change was rapping at the door. We could do worse than take 1909 again as a spot-check. Wells's novel **Ann Veronica** appeared late in the year and was attacked at length in an anonymous review in **THE SPECTATOR**. Two sentences in particular of this long diatribe are worth quoting: "Unless the citizens of a State put before themselves the principles of duty, self-sacrifice, self-control, and continence, not merely in the matter of national defence, national preservation, and national well-being, but also of the sex relationship, the life of the State must be short and precarious. Unless the institution of the family is firmly founded and assured, the State will not continue."

It becomes ever clearer why Orwell in 1984 showed love-making as the final subversion. It's personal. It has no object but itself.

The Edwardian Turn of Mind is a long book with some failings; its omissions are several, it is weak on the actual political scene, and some of it will be over-familiar to British readers. But it repays study because of the connections it makes, such as the one I have outlined above. It shows why the Post-Impressionist Exhibition of 1910 in London (arranged by Roger Fry)

caused such dismay and disapproval, so that a leading academician of the day, could write to *The Times* after seeing it and say, "For a moment there came a fierce feeling of terror lest the youth of England, promising young fellows, might be contaminated there. On reflection I was reassured that the youth of England, being healthy, mind and body, is far too virile to be moved save in resentment against the providers of this unmanly show."

It's the racial thing again. Foreign villains like Degas and Cezanne and Gauguin and that madman Van Gogh were violating English eyeballs. Already slightly old-fashioned in their own country by then, they were the token that, no matter what the forces of suppression were doing, the continent with its fresher airs was bursting in: French painters, German philosophy, Russian ballet and novels; by the summer of 1914, even rough old Scandinavian Ibsen's **Ghosts** had been licensed for public showing—just a couple of months before the "promising young fellows" of Baden-Powell and Richmond started to pack up their troubles and head for Flanders. . . .

Closing the book, I wondered how much the loss of all those lives—and they were a promising generation, as the dead poets and artists show—was due to the incorrigible British racialism of their elders; and how much of our present predicament, still largely entangled in stale Edwardian postures, is due to their unreplenishable loss, and our incurable insularity.

Joyce Churchill: The Cannon Kings

Although the cornucopia of the Ruhr disgorges peaceful products now, anyone with memories of another generation feels vaguely disquieted. The very pattern of the key centres is menacing. On a map they suggest the shadow of the giant Fenris-wolf, offspring of Loki and the giantess Angurboda and brother of the Mitgard serpent . . . Hamm is the eye, Recklinhausen the ear, Dortmund the mouth, Bochum the throat, Wuppertal and Solingen form the front leg, Mülheim and Düsseldorf the rear. Reinhausen is the tail. Gelsenkirchen, Bottrop and Duisberg trace the hunched back. And the heart is Essen.

As an historian's eye-view of Germany's industrial belt, this is a little frilly: a conceit rather than an image, strong and tortuous enough to distort rather than complement its

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subject matter. It may even constitute an attempt to wake a spectre of German militarism better left sleeping. But despite many similar presentations (and perhaps because of them) William Manchester's massive chronicle of the Krupp armaments dynasty, **The Arms of Krupp** (Michael Joseph, 63s.), is a successful if not precise and academic history. It has both the attraction of indisputable facts that are bizarre and at times gruesome, and the fascination of all documents that reveal the author as much as the subject in hand.

The Krupp family founded their steel factory in Essen in 1811: it turned out pots and pans and wasn't a very sound investment because at the time, with the exception of the British, nobody knew enough about steelmaking to make a go of it. By the time the first real Krupp, Alfred, took over in 1826, the firm was bankrupt. He was fourteen when his father died, and the responsibility turned him into a combination of neurotic and dynamo: between fits of hypochondria and autistic retreat—during which periods he comforted himself by sniffing manure—he took advantage of the railway boom and made a fortune out of steel tyres for rolling stock. He experimented with cast-steel gun barrels, and was met with derision from the military until the Franco-Prussian war, when his artillery annihilated the French at Wörth and Sedan. On the strength of the victory Wilhelm I achieved the unification of Germany, and Alfred became established as first armourer of the Reich.

Wilhelm II was served by two Krupps—Fritz, Alfred's wan, asthmatic son, and Gustav von Bohlen, a fresh bloodline drawn into the family by the Kaiser upon Fritz's death. Fritz did his best, but he preferred marine biology and pederasty on the island of Capri to the manufacture of armaments; probably because, as heir, he had been a slave to the *Konzern* since his childhood. In 1902, the Italian government investigated his orgies, the newspaper *Vörfwärts* said "(Capri), after Krupp money had paved the way, became a centre of homosexuality", and the "Krupp scandal" broke. Fritz committed suicide.

Von Bohlen entered the dynasty as the husband of Bertha Krupp, Fritz's daughter. He built the incredible cannons of WW I—Big Bertha, the 420mm mortar; the Brobdingnagian *Pariskano* which flung a 200 lb. shell some 80 miles, its trajectory reaching a zenith in the ionosphere—then went on to serve Hitler after the collapse of the Second Reich, hoarding arms and manufacturing equipment through the Weimar period and financing the "terror election" of 1933. By the outbreak of the second world war he was senile, but he outlived the Führer.



Alfried Krupp

The Third Reich was armed by his son Alfried, under whom the firm employed slave labour and raped the industry of the occupied countries, dismantling whole factories and transporting them piece by piece to the Ruhr. There is a controversy as to which Krupp held the responsibility for the horror and animal brutality of the concentration camps: Gustav was originally indicted as the war criminal, but when they found him senile, the Americans tried Alfried instead, Britain refusing to participate if they couldn't get the right man. Gustav may have been the criminal (which is unlikely in view of his age and deterioration he spent the war having hallucinations and seizures) but his son undoubtedly signed the relevant documents; and since he avoided the rope anyway, there doesn't seem much point in arguing about it. Manchester

doesn't: he places the onus squarely on Alfried's shoulders and produces a plethora of evidence to support the claim.

The irony of this period of history is that after his prison sentence Alfried regained his control of the firm under the terms of the Melhem Treaty, and despite the saturation bombing of his holdings by the RAF soon became rich again. It didn't last. *Die Firma* went bankrupt in 1966, and he died a year later.

Manchester handles his lengthy and detailed narrative with journalistic skill. A description of the foibles of Alfred Krupp demonstrates both his strong racy style and the almost sympathetic humour with which he treats the weirder Krupps:

... he comes close to that stock character in Victorian three-deckers,

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the mad genius. If he wasn't demented, he was certainly a crank. . . . Smells intrigued him; he believed some to be auspicious and some evil. Horse manure, in Alfred's view, was a particularly enriching odour. He thought its scent was inspiring and in the presence of fresh dung he became creative. Unhappily he was convinced that his own exhalations were toxic, so he tried to keep on the move. That was fine during the day. After he had retired it wasn't so easy. . . .

Alfred finally cracked that problem by having vents constructed from the stables to his bedroom.

Eventually, this style becomes tiring, especially taken along with lumps of imagery like that mentioned above: but it is vastly more entertaining than the account of the Nuremberg trials, where in letting fact speak for itself Manchester subjects the reader to a torrent of thoroughly boring memoranda and inarticulate responses on the part of witnesses: after its fiftieth or sixtieth substantiation, the horror loses its edge.

The chief fault of **The Arms of Krupp** as a work of history is—not so paradoxically—its greatest virtue as a narrative, and it lies in this conflict between direct and “inspired” reportage: Manchester has a less than objective attitude to the Krupps; he sees them as a hundred-year villainy, and is determined they shall appear so. Thus he is unnecessarily enthusiastic in his condemnation. The facts—total disregard of the treaties and conventions of warfare, culminating in pure ghoulishness at the Krupp concentration camp for babies at Voerde-bei-Dinslaken—are enough, but he wears himself out in pursuit of every minute scandal or detail that might aid his case; and having found it, goes to town on it. This personal vendetta means that quite ordinary events become coloured with menace, and that good points—such as the Krupp breakthroughs in worker welfare at the turn of the century—are minimised along the way: but it makes for extremely good reading.

James Cawthorn: A Slight Case of Tolkien

THERE MAY HAVE been a time, in the misty past of popular fiction,

when a writer was allowed to stand upon his own metaphorical feet. Defoe, after the publication of **Robinson Crusoe**, conceivably drew praise for writing like Defoe. But he got in on the ground floor, before the paperback boom. The trick today is to persuade the potential reader that the author writes like someone else. Accurate comparisons are not essential; it is only necessary to sprinkle the magic name throughout the jacket blurb, and await results. Ace Books' touchstone of the moment appears to be J. R. R. Tolkien. Name-dropping recklessly, they also throw in Jack Vance, to grace the cover of **Catch A Falling Star** (Ace Books, 50 cents). And the author? Oh, yes . . . John Brunner, who needs this kind of backing like Burt Lancaster needs another tooth.

Insofar as **Catch A Falling Star** is a quest story, a series of adventures undergone in the search for something of value, it can be said to resemble the work of Jack Vance. Here the resemblance ends. Brunner's characters live in a world first glimpsed in the outstanding short story *Earth Is But A Star*, an Earth of the incredibly distant future, where cities grow from seeds and dead civilisations may outnumber living men. When a new, bright object appears in the sky, only one man knows or cares that it may signal the destruction of Earth. Unable to arouse his fellow-citizens, he sets out upon an apparently futile search for someone, or some power, capable of turning aside a star. There have been better Brunner books, and the climax is fairly predictable, but readers will find much of interest along the way.

Stepping back into the comparatively recent past, Thomas Burnet Swann's **Moondust** (Ace Books, 50 cents) finds fairies in the foundations at the battle of Jericho. The writing is up to the customary Swann standard and the central character is wrestling, in the customary Swann fashion, with the problems of puberty compounded by entanglements with non-human females. Although Biblical Jericho, cramped, crowded and malodorous, is skilfully drawn, it does not combine convincingly with the subterranean city of Honey Heart populated by winged women living in mushroom-like houses and dominated by intelligent foxes. The fantasy element has no apparent connection with the beliefs of the period, and the two settings, historical and fanciful, are distinctly at odds. Swann fans and lovers of soft-centred fantasy will probably enjoy it.

Shirley Jackson provides a welcome drop of acid with **The Sundial** (Ace Books, 60 cents), in which a group of somewhat odd and unamiable people

inhabiting an ornate mansion await the end of this sinful world and the birth of the next. For, according to a message from the Other Side delivered to eccentric Fanny Halloran (and to be thought eccentric in the Halloran menage is a distinction not lightly won), they will be the sole inheritors of this rehabilitated planet. Shirley Jackson could create an atmosphere of fear thick enough to cut with a knife, and comedy ranging from light to black, but **The Sundial** also has its dull patches. A little too long, perhaps, to be enjoyed without some judicious skipping.

So Bright The Vision, one half of an Ace Double (60 cents), consists of four Clifford D. Simak stories largely concerned with little people, creatures or objects which interfere in human affairs with varying results. Not recommended. The other half, **The Man Who Saw Tomorrow**, by Jeff Sutton, is an interesting if rather dialogue-heavy novel of an ivory-tower mathematician driven to the assassination of an innocent man in an attempt to check a would-be world dictator who knows all the answers.

In 280 pages of solid science-fiction, **A Torrent Of Faces** (Ace SF Special, 75 cents) by James Blish and Norman L. Knight, attempts to present a panorama of life in 2794 A.D. It is good, traditional stuff of a kind which has been part of the sf scene for several decades, maintains a fairly high level of interest and is, apparently, based upon a great deal of research. Covered with scores of thousands of tightly organised cities, poised in precarious economic equilibrium, the world of the twenty-eighth century is threatened by collision with a small asteroid. Minute though it is, on the galactic scale, the falling mass will destroy beyond repair the dense fabric of civilisation. The staggering task of preparing Earth for this disaster is the central subject of this novel, around which is constructed a picture of the mores, morals and peculiarities of a vastly expanded human society. Apart from a tendency to lecture each other upon past and present aspects of that society, and to be more than normally subject to the workings of coincidence, the characters emerge as reasonable human beings not unlike the inhabitants of today's megalopoli.

Ron Goulart satirises several aspects of current society, in the guise of a fast-moving, lighthearted story of secret agents and conspirators on the planet Esperanza, a world-sized Garden of Remembrance, in **The Sword Swallower** (Doubleday SF, \$4.50). Rather short-weight for a hard-cover at this price, but a worthwhile buy if it becomes available in a paperback.

William Hope Hodgson, a native of Essex and a contemporary of H. G. Wells, wrote some of the finest novels of fantasy in the English language which, saving the notable exception of a sumptuous collection published by the American Arkham House some twenty-odd years ago, have been neglected to an almost incredible degree. A recent revival of interest in his work has resulted in a small number of paperbacks, of which the latest is **The House On The Borderland** (Panther Horror, 3/6). The 'Horror' classification and the abysmal Aldridge cover design can safely be ignored; this is a superb account of the experiences befalling the tenant of a strange, remote house located on the borderline between the rational and the bizarre, a house that has eerie counterparts on other planes of existence. In a series of journeys that have the obsessive power of nightmare, he is transported through the dimensions and to the incandescent death of Earth, pursued always by the demonic dwellers in the pits that underlie the foundations of his isolated mansion. As with the stories of Wells, time has done little or nothing to lessen the power of Hodgson's work. Buy. ■

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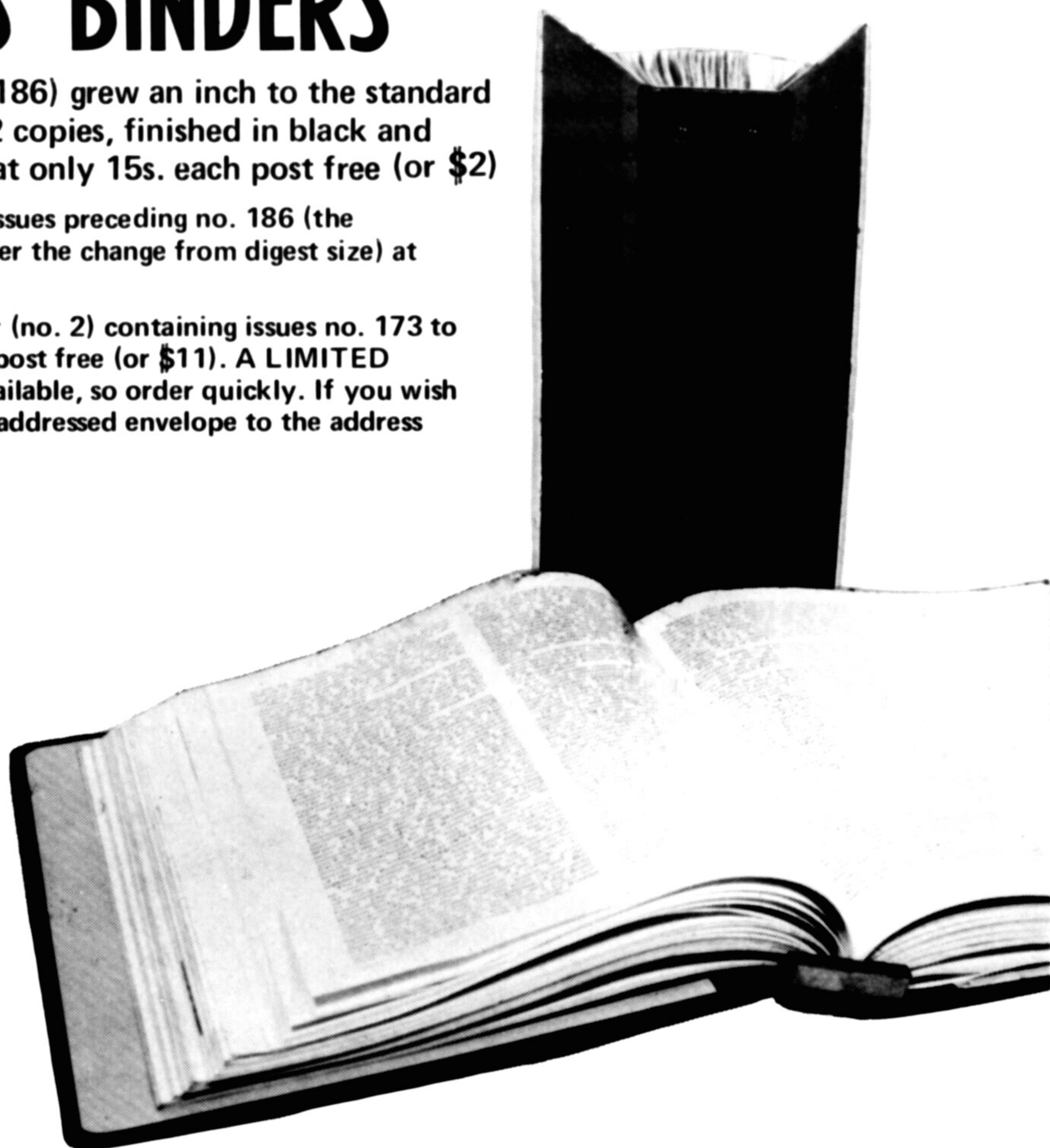
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