



"Lancelot! You've been petting the cat again."



"Yeah Chief, some crackpot that claims to be from outer space."

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DOORMAT WORLD

BY J. T. McINTOSH

AFTER watching the stranger drag Rosie Ashwin the length of Main Street, screaming her head off, Bill Garland, the town's Law Enforcement Officer, turned to his cronies and said: "Did you see that? I don't mind telling you, it was all I could do to stop myself going right out there in the street and telling the stranger to let Rosie alone!"

"He doesn't mean any harm," said Taft Barker uneasily. There were still a lot of people in Winsafton who preferred to ascribe anything the stranger did to mere exuberance.

"Sooner or later, Bill Garland," said Sam Basch, who didn't, "you're going to have to do something about that guy. You're the LEO."

Garland pretended not to hear that.

The stranger had Winsafton pretty near the end of its tether. Gradually he had taken complete control of the town. Now he seemed to spend most of his time thinking up new, more capricious, more outrageous ways of exercising his power.

The stranger had a perfectly good name, Ed Ramsay, but nobody in Winsafton ever used it except to his face. "Stranger" meant "colonist" these days. There were seldom enough colonists around for it to be necessary to specify the one you meant.

Few colonists returned to Earth. When they did they usually came to some town where they had family ties, where cousins, uncles, aunts, nephews and nieces still lived. But the stranger apparently had no connections on Earth, certainly not in Winsafton. Every day a dozen people asked resentfully: "What did he have to come here for, anyway?" It must have been a

rhetorical question. There was never any answer.

At first he merely pushed people around the way returned colonists always did. When he began to realize just how push-aroundable the people of Winsafton were, however, he began to make his early behavior look like old-fashioned gallantry.

He picked on the best house in Winsafton, the Goodman place, and just moved in. Well, what could the Goodmans do? They could hardly throw him out bodily. They just had to put up with him. And at first everybody but the Goodmans snickered and said it served the Goodmans right for having the showiest place in town.

People snickered even more when it became known, as such things always become known in nothing flat, that the stranger had pulled Sally Goodman into his bedroom one night and kept the door locked until next morning.

There was no jealous lover to get mad about it. Sally was well on in her thirties and hadn't been pretty even at eighteen. It seemed a good joke on the Goodmans that the stranger had not only elected to use their house as his own but also regarded their daughter as part of the furnishings.

THEY stopped snickering when the stranger casually tossed Sally aside and started

helping himself to any pretty women who caught his eye. And to anything else he fancied. After all, you never knew it wouldn't be your own wife next. Or it might even be your car or your house.

It was Hank Hawk's new Chrysler that the stranger eventually took, only two hours after dragging Rosie Ashwin into his lair at the Goodman place and slamming the door. Hawk's complaints to the Law Enforcement Officer were bitter.

"Well, we don't want to go off half-cocked about this, Hank," said the LEO cautiously. "Maybe he's only borrowed your car."

"I didn't say he could borrow it. He stole it."

"Now, you can't go around saying things like that, Hank, even about a stranger. He never even spoke to you, did he? So maybe he *thought* you wouldn't mind."

"I want my car back!" said Hank obstinately.

"Then why don't you just take it back?"

"How can I do that? The stranger knocked Bob Goodman all the way downstairs once, when he'd ordered fried chicken for dinner and got steak instead. I don't want to take any chances. I don't see why I should. You're the Law Enforcement Officer, not me."

"Sure, Hank," said Garland soothingly, "but I can't do a thing until I know a law's

been broken. As of now, all I know is, the stranger borrowed your Chrysler. That ain't against the law."

"I want my car back!" Hank screamed.

"Then *take* it back, Hank."

"You're scared of the stranger," Hank said bitterly.

"Now, there's no call to be abusive, Hank. Run along now, and come to me when you have a genuine complaint."

Hank raised his fists to heaven in frustration.

IN this way the LEO managed for a long time to do nothing whatever about the stranger and his actions. However, as time went on, Garland became uneasily conscious that sooner or later he might be forced to speak severely to the stranger. This he was reluctant to do. The stranger was all too liable to spit tobacco juice at him. It wasn't good for a LEO's prestige and authority to have tobacco juice spat at him.

Yet more and more people were starting to talk like Hank Hawk. There was, for example, the storekeeper who said the stranger now owed \$3,216.58 and had shown neither inclination nor ability to pay a cent. There was Wesley Coleman, who bumped into the stranger as Coleman emerged from his own front gate. The stranger immediately threw stones at Coleman's house, breaking every single front

window. There was the truck driver who was unable to prevent the stranger denting Hank Hawk's Chrysler against his truck. The stranger not only knocked the truck driver down, he found a can of yellow paint on the truck, tore the truck driver's pants to ribbons and poured the paint on his naked belly. Everybody agreed that this was rude.

As Law Enforcement Officer, Garland was sheriff, police chief, police force, district attorney and public prosecutor rolled into one. There was no one to whom to pass the buck. If anybody did anything about the stranger, it would have to be the LEO.

Garland was so concerned over this that he seriously considered emigrating. He got as far as reading pamphlets about sixteen of the forty-three available colonies. Then he realized something he should have seen at once. On any one of those forty-three pioneer worlds the entire population would consist of people like the stranger.

He dismissed the possibility of emigrating from his mind. There remained, of course, suicide . . .

The trouble was, the stranger got worse every day. Although he didn't appear to give a damn for anybody or anything, the pattern of his behavior showed clearly enough that from the moment he arrived in Winsafton he

had been trying things to see if he'd get away with them. When he did, he'd try something a little more extreme.

At first when he took things on credit there had been at least a pretense that he was going to pay eventually. Later he bullied people into saying they'd presented the things to him as gifts. Eventually he simply took what he wanted without explanation or promise.

His caveman tactics with women, too, started quietly with Sally Goodman, extended to young, unmarried girls who were far too timid to describe publicly and in detail exactly what had happened to them and complain about it, and gradually spread to any female the stranger happened to fancy.

THE limit was reached when the stranger arrived at a wedding and carried off the bride, pretty little Lucy Smith, the instant she became Lucy Jaffray. It was no good talking about *droit de seigneur* to citizens of Winsafton. This, they felt, was going too far.

Unable to stall any more, Garland organized a posse of all the men who had least reason to love the stranger—Lucy's father Tom Smith, Harry Jaffray, Hank Hawk, the truck driver, the storekeeper, Wesley Coleman, half a dozen others. They called at the Goodman place.

The stranger came out to stand on the porch and look at them.

He was a big man, but no bigger than Garland or the truck driver. A stronger sun than Sol had burned his face so brown it was almost purple. He was untidily dressed in an off-the-peg suit he had taken from the local tailor—without, of course, paying for it—and there was egg on his chin.

"Well?" he said, grinning wolfishly at them. His act could be as corny as he liked. Nobody was going to laugh at him.

Garland cleared his throat. "Mr. Ramsay," he said, "Winstafon is a peaceable little town. In my ten years as Law Enforcement Officer, all I've ever had to deal with, except for the Saturday night drunks, has been one case of justifiable homicide and three of theft. We're proud of this record, and—"

"Why was the homicide justifiable?" the stranger asked, suddenly interested.

"Husband shot a man who assaulted his wife. You realize, Mr. Ramsay, that if any one of six or seven men shot you dead, they'd go free."

"Six or seven!" the stranger roared suddenly, affronted. "Hell, I been here a month! It must be at least thirty."

As he yelled at them, the whole posse took an involuntary step backwards. The

stranger took a step forward. "Say, if anybody has any complaint against Ed Ramsay, he's come to the right place. Let's hear what you've all got to say."

He stepped down from the porch. The group hurriedly rearranged itself, everybody trying to get as far away from the stranger as possible. Coleman was unlucky. He bumped into the truck-driver and couldn't get any further back.

"You," said the stranger, standing so close to Coleman that their breaths mingled. "Have you got something against me?"

Coleman took a deep breath. His voice came out in a high whine. "You broke all my windows!"

"Well, it's summer, ain't it?"

"Yes, but—"

"You want plenty of fresh air, don't you?"

"Yes, but —"

"Want me to sue you for deliberately running into me and trying to knock me down?"

"I didn't deliberately —"

"I say you did. And nobody's going to disagree with me."

Coleman gulped and made no answer.

"Would you like to withdraw your complaint?" the stranger asked, clenching his large, knotted right hand and brandishing it under Coleman's nose.

"I would," said Coleman hastily. "Very much."

"Okay," said the stranger. "Your apology's accepted. Get the hell out of here."

Coleman scuttled off, his ears red, not looking back.

NEXT the stranger stepped up to the truck-driver. "Have you something you want to say?"

"I've still got patches of yellow paint on my stomach!" said the truck-driver indignantly.

"What do you want, the second coat?"

"No, I . . . No, I . . . I just wanted to tell you . . ."

"You've told me."

The truck-driver made off rapidly after Coleman.

Garland saw what was happening but was powerless to prevent it. The posse had felt strong and resolute when there were more than a dozen of them. Now as men left, one after another, those who remained became more and more uneasy and less willing to stand up to Ramsay.

"You. Who are you?" the stranger demanded.

"I'm Harry Jaffray. It was my wife you —"

The stranger chuckled. "Sure boy, I know what you want to know. Very natural." He winked, slapped Jaffray's shoulder, whispered into his ear and pushed him away.

Curiously enough, it was Sam Basch, who had never had any direct cause to hate Ramsay, who stood up to him.

"We don't like you," he said bluntly. "Go away."

"You want me to push your nose out of the back of your head, maybe?"

"No. That wouldn't make me like you any better."

The stranger looked Sam Basch over. Once Sam had been a very powerful man, but Sam was sixty-one now. He was beginning to stoop a little and he limped slightly.

"Old man," said the stranger, "you know what'll happen when I hit you?"

"No," Sam admitted.

"You do now," said the stranger, and shot out his fist like a piston. Sam Basch took it right on the belly-button, and shut up like a jackknife.

That was the end of the discussion. The three who remained picked Sam up, dusted him off, and wouldn't let him go after the stranger, who had disappeared into the house.

"If I was only thirty-years younger . . ." Sam gasped, holding his middle.

"But you're not," said Garland regretfully. For a moment of wild hope he had thought he was going to be able to pass the buck to Sam Basch (who, he now remembered, had nearly emigrated once). But Sam was too old. And the stranger was too tough.

No, there was nothing for it now but to keep out of the stranger's way and not catch him at anything. So long as

the LEO did that, he could pretend that Ramsay hadn't done anything.

WHEN the second colonist arrived in Winsafton, the town for a few hours was close to panic.

It was very rare indeed for colonists to visit Earth. The emigration regulations were strict and unequivocal. Anybody who wanted to emigrate was told bluntly that he could either go or stay, but he had to make up his mind one way or the other once for all time. And in all the colonies there was so much to do, and so much more opportunity than there had been on Earth for centuries, that few people had any time to be homesick and bemoan the fact that the emigration authorities wouldn't let them go back to Earth.

Inter-galactic travel was so expensive and demanded so much organization that no individual could actually pay for his passage, any more than any one person could pay for a country's national defense. Consequently individuals did not decide for themselves that they'd leave Earth for the colonies or return from a colony to Earth. They submitted their cases to a board which considered each case on its merits.

Since Earth was still the leading manufacturing planet Earth made most of the galaxy's spaceships. They left

Earth crammed with emigrants, and not one of them in ten ever returned. They were used thereafter for intergalactic trade, not for ferrying back malcontents to Earth.

The case of the stranger in Winsafton was therefore unusual; and the arrival of a second colonist in the same small town at the same time was even more unusual.

The people of Winsafton weren't worried for long, however. It soon got around that the newcomer was Jim Arlen, Hugh Arlen's youngest boy, who had been born and brought up in Winsafton.

That made all the difference, of course. Everybody remembered Jim Arlen, a tough but likeable youngster who had been chased out of every fruit orchard in the district at one time or other.

"Let's see," people said, scratching their heads, "young Jim must be — why, he must be thirty-five now."

"All of that," others agreed. "Time flies, doesn't it?"

It was Sam Basch, not Bill Garland, who went to see Jim Arlen at the town's one hotel.

"Hi, Jim," he said. "Remember me? I shot you full of buckshot once."

"Nobody ever shot me full of buckshot," Jim replied. "If you shot at me, you missed."

Basch sighed. "I never was much of a shot. Pity. There's somebody in town who needs shooting right now."

"You mean Ed Ramsay?" Jim grinned. "I've heard about him."

Sam Basch wanted to know one thing before he talked to Jim Arlen about Ramsay. "Why'd you come back, Jim?"

Jim was as big as Ed Ramsay, a little younger and not so heavily tanned. He still had the easy grin Sam remembered.

"It seems my father still owns a big plot of land northeast of town," Jim said. "We never gave it much thought when we emigrated. We tried to sell it, but nobody would buy. Now it seems there's some trouble over this land. The board on Zukeen sent me back to straighten out the mess and report on some new agricultural equipment while I'm here."

Basch nodded. "So you'll be going back soon?"

"In a couple of months, I reckon."

"You've heard about Ramsay? You know him, maybe?"

"Hell, no. He comes from Benvice and I'm from Zukeen. Never met anybody from Benvice. Don't know much about the place."

"The fact is, Jim, Ramsay's been terrorizing the town."

"I've heard that. I don't see how."

SAM explained. As he did so, Jim's smile became a puzzled frown.

"I don't get it," he said at

last. "You mean he did all this and nobody stopped him?"

"Nobody tried to 'cept me. He gave me a poke in the guts and that was that."

"I still don't get it. He's just one man. How can one man have a whole town licking his boots?"

"You were pretty young when you left here, Jim. You weren't old enough to look around you and do any thinking. Don't you know Earth's been sending out colonists for hundreds of years?"

"Sure, but what's that got to do with it?"

"You were a pretty tough family, Jim, you and your folks and your brother. I bailed your father out of jail two or three times, and as for your mother . . . well. We won't go into that. Point is, you were all pretty hard to handle. Tell me, Jim, are you known as a tough family on Zukeen?"

Jim grinned. "Hell, no. Solid citizens, the Arlens. Hardly ever in jail, any of us. The old man's a counselor. Even my brother hasn't been in any trouble since he shot his father-in-law, and that was five years ago."

"Well, Jim, Earth isn't like the colonies. For centuries anybody with any courage, determination or imagination has emigrated. It's still possible to make a fortune in the colonies. It hasn't been possible here on Earth since the

early twentieth century. Naturally anybody with any initiative emigrates. And this has been going on for hundreds of years."

Jim nodded slowly. "I'm beginning to see what you're getting at."

"Natural selection, Jim. People without courage, determination, imagination and initiative tend to beget children without courage, determination, imagination and initiative. 'Course, they don't always succeed. Even now, a lot of fellows like you are growing up here on Earth. That's why the flow of emigrants to the colonies never dries up. See?"

"Yes, I guess I do."

"Earth's a doormat world, Jim. People here *ask* to be stepped on. Mind, I don't say they like it. But if you apologize every time somebody wipes his feet on you, it's not surprising if you get stepped on a lot. Still, we get on all right when there aren't any colonists around. It's only when men like Ed Ramsay are here that people get stepped on. What can you expect, when there's nobody in Winsafton with enough guts to say boo to a goose?"

"I seem to remember that you were always ready to say boo to a goose."

"Maybe, Jim, but do you remember something else? I always wanted to emigrate. Only my wife wouldn't go."

Jim nodded. "I remember."

"Well, look, Jim. You were born here. But you're a colonist. You're not scared of Ed Ramsay. You can get rid of him. Do that for us, and we'll be grateful."

Jim grinned but shook his head. "Hell, Sam, Ramsay's nothing to me. He never did me any harm."

"Wait around," said Sam meaningly. "I guess it won't be long before you change your mind."

SAM was wrong. A month passed and there was no clash between Ed Ramsay and Jim Arlen. Whether by chance or by design, Ramsay avoided antagonizing Jim in any way. Although he didn't stop taking anything he wanted, from whisky to women, Ramsay did nothing new during this period. He didn't seek Jim's company either. When the two colonists met in the street they merely nodded to each other and passed on.

Meanwhile Jim Arlen was finding out for himself how it had been possible for Ed Ramsay to subjugate the whole town so that whenever he appeared, doors and windows slammed, loungers scuttled off down side streets and women ran like startled does.

Resistance had been bred out of Terrans. They weren't scared of each other, and consequently when no colonists were around they acted like

any human society anywhere.

But when somebody who *did* have a strong will said: "Do this," everybody in Winsafton—except Sam Basch—meekly did as he was told.

Out in the square on a hot day, Jim experimentally handed his coat to a man he'd never seen before. "Take that to the hotel, please," he said firmly.

The other didn't say a word. He simply took the coat to the hotel.

Gradually Jim began to understand the situation, and realize what was happening to Ed Ramsay. *All power corrupts*, someone had said, and *absolute power corrupts absolutely*. If it wasn't absolute power that any colonist wielded in Winsafton, it was something very close to it.

Seeing Wesley Coleman one day with an expensive cigarette case, Jim tried another experiment.

"That's a nice case," he said casually.

"You like it?" said Coleman guardedly.

"Sure do. Let me look at it, will you?"

Silently Coleman handed the case to him.

"I sure would like a case like this," Jim said.

He knew perfectly well that if he took it, Coleman would say nothing. He also knew that if he told Coleman to give it to him, Coleman would do so. What he wondered was if

Coleman could be made apparently voluntarily to offer him the case.

Coleman could. It took a while, and Jim had to admire the case very pointedly before Coleman said reluctantly that he could have it if he liked. Satisfied, Jim shook his head and handed it back, to Coleman's obvious relief.

That was power. If you had to break the law to get what you wanted, you might find yourself in real trouble eventually, even when the law was represented only by a spineless figurehead like Bill Garland. Among people like this, however, you didn't even have to break the law. You did what you liked and then made anybody else concerned say you had their full permission.

Ramsay was still using Hank Hawk's Chrysler, and Hank was still complaining about it to Garland. But everybody knew, including Garland and Hank, that if the L.E.O. ever brought himself to the point of charging Ramsay with theft, Ramsay would make Hank say he'd lent him the Chrysler. Or even that he'd given it to him.

Almost involuntarily, Jim found himself ordering people about. After all, when he was sitting down comfortably and suddenly wanted something, why should he go for it when there were others around? When he wanted to go out of town and look round the prop-

erty his father owned, why shouldn't he tell somebody to drive him out and show him?

He knew that Ramsay was simply waiting for him to leave before turning the screw still harder on the citizens of Winsafton. He knew also that Sam Basch hadn't been the only one who had hoped that Jim Arlen would fix Ed Ramsay for them. But now, after a month, they were getting worried. If Ramsay could avoid a clash with Jim Arlen for a month, couldn't he go on doing it for another month? Would Jim Arlen go away from Winsafton, his business completed, leaving Ed Ramsay to extend his power until the whole town literally crawled at his feet?

There had been efforts to make Jim stay longer, but he had pointed out that the only ship from Earth to Zukeen in the next two years left on August 7.

He was sorry for the Winsaftonians and from what he'd heard of him he didn't think much of Ed Ramsay. However, in the colonies your own business took all your time and effort, and you got out of the habit of meddling in other people's.

If Ed Ramsay tangled with him, okay, he and Ramsay would settle the business between them. If Ramsay didn't tangle with him, Jim Arlen had no intention of interfering.

WALKING one day in the square—which was oval—Jim Arlen became aware of something different, without knowing what it was. It took him a couple of minutes to realize that the statue in the center of the grass patch was missing. It was no great loss. The statue had been of some gloomy, long-faced pioneer who had lived long before space travel.

Turning from the empty plinth Jim saw Lucy Jaffray, who was undoubtedly the prettiest girl in town. Another experiment instantly suggested itself to him.

"Lucy!" he called.

She started, and seemed only moderately relieved to find that it was Jim Arlen and not Ed Ramsay who had shouted. She came submissively enough.

"Look, the statue's gone," Jim said.

She nodded. "It's being cleaned," she said guardedly.

"I think you'd make a lovely statue, Lucy."

"Me?"

"Yes, you, Lucy." He put his hands on her waist and lifted her to stand on the empty plinth.

"Please let me come down," she begged, blushing. Already a hundred spectators had gathered.

Jim looked up at her admiringly. She certainly made a very attractive statue. "Statues don't wear clothes,"

he said. "Anyway, girl statues don't. If you're going to be a statue, I guess you'll have to take your clothes off, Lucy."

"But I don't want to be a statue!"

"You can't help it, Lucy. You're pretty enough to be a statue, and we can't leave the plinth empty, can we? Take your clothes off, Lucy."

Blushing still more violently she unzipped her dress and dropped it to the ground.

"Now when did you see a statue wearing a girdle?" said Jim. "It isn't right, Lucy. It isn't right at all."

Slowly and reluctantly she took off her underclothes, stockings and shoes and crouched on the plinth, covering herself with her arms.

"Really, Lucy, you don't seem to have the idea at all. I don't think you've ever seen a statue. Stand straight up—that's better."

The crowd was huge now. It stayed at a respectful distance, however, and nobody snickered or said anything loud enough for Jim Arlen to hear.

Poor Lucy went white, then red, then white again. It seemed to her as if all the eyes in the world were fixed on her.

"Okay," said Jim at last, "you can come down now."

"Stay where you are," said a voice behind them.

Ramsay was looking at the naked girl with frank lust in his eyes. "I must have been

crazy," he said, "taking you home only once."

"I said you could come down, Lucy," Jim said.

"And I said stay where you are," said Ramsay.

Jim lifted the girl down, ignoring Ramsay. Ramsay spat tobacco juice and bellowed like a bull. Jim turned, and in an instant Winsafton had what it wanted—a fight between the two colonists.

LUCY picked up her things and ran. Nobody else went, however.

It was a fight the like of which hadn't been seen on Earth for centuries. Such a fight would have been impossible between two Earthmen, or between a colonist and an Earthman. Both fighters were down at least a dozen times, and no Earthman would have kept getting up.

The winner of any tough, even scrap is not so much the man who *can* take more as the man who *does* take more. Before half the population of Winsafton, neither contestant was prepared to be beaten. Both knew that the loser would be finished in the town.

Ramsay's nose was bleeding copiously, making him look much more badly hurt than he was. Jim Arlen's left eye was closing rapidly and his shirt was torn half off.

For the tenth time Ramsay rushed at Jim and both men rolled on the ground. Both

rose and Ramsay went down. Ramsay leapt to his feet and Jim went down. Now one of Ramsay's eyes was cut and Jim spat out a tooth.

For a long time there was nothing in it. Then Ramsay went down three times in a row. He was slower each time he got up. And the crowd watched him realize that although he could still take a lot more, he couldn't take enough.

The fourth time he went down in a row he stayed down. Perhaps he could have made another try. The fact was that he didn't.

"I don't want to see you in town again, Ramsay," Jim said.

"You won't," Ramsay muttered.

They had both forgotten the crowd, since everybody had kept a very respectful distance away. But at this every citizen of Winsafton let out such a yell of delight that Ramsay, still on the ground, jerked convulsively.

In a moment Jim was surrounded by hundreds of people who wanted to shake him by the hand. In the intoxicating joy of the moment, Wesley Coleman accidentally trod on Ramsay's face. . .

They heard later that Ramsay went back to Benvice.

Jim Arlen was feted for days. He was a public hero. No one who saw that fight ever forgot it. What amazed

the spectators was the dogged courage of men who could be knocked down time after time and come back for more. In the exceedingly rare physical arguments which still took place on Earth, it was always taken for granted that if a man hit the ground, that was the end of the fight. Often the first blow was the last.

Curiously enough, it was less than a week before Winsafton's attitude changed dramatically. The start of the change was when Jim made Wesley Coleman give him his cigarette case. Then Jim borrowed Hank Hawk's Chrysler, which Hank had had for four days altogether. Then, since it was obviously the most comfortable house in town, Jim moved in with the Goodmans. And finally Jim Arlen, not so polygamous as Ramsay, took Lucy Jaffray in to live with him.

He was not unaware, himself, of what had happened. *All power corrupts*, he told himself ruefully, pulling Lucy to him, *and absolute power corrupts absolutely*.

Winsafter relied desperately on one thing—Jim Arlen's spaceship blasted off on August 7.

With the warmth of Lucy against him, Jim was wondering vaguely if it might not be possible to miss his ship.

He decided it wouldn't merely be possible. It would be easy. **END**

THE BEM CALLED WINDIGO

What do you do
when you KNOW
you're insane?

“SO she ordered her brother-in-law to strait-jacket her, stun her with an axe and then set fire to her tent. While this was done, her husband and children looked on, for she had an undisputed right to dispose of herself as she chose.”

So reads one of the high points — and they are many — in an extraordinary report recently published in the *Proceedings* of the American Ethnological Society, and written by Dr. Morton I. Teicher, a dean at Yeshiva University.

Many years ago — 71, to be exact — one James George Frazer wrote down a similar brief anecdote (a suspenseful description of a priest in an olive grove, naked sword in

hand, moving about among the shadows, sleeping in secret, brief snatches, watching, watching every waking second for the man who would murder him to take his place, as he had murdered and replaced his predecessor. Explaining who, where and especially *why* this happened took Sir James a quarter of a century and twelve monumental volumes. The result was *The Golden Bough*.

Such anecdotes, out of context, are provocative in the extreme, and this kind of provocation is just what nudges the best science fiction out of the best science-fiction writers.

What these two anecdotes have in common is the note of

social acceptance they carry, for in one the brother-in-law does the dirty work while the family looks on, and in the other the murderer/victim is a priest.

BUT back to Dr. Teicher and his work. His special field is the Algonkian-speaking group of northeast American Indians — the Cree, Ojibwa, Beaver and others — and their strange and ancient monster, the windigo.

There are few, if any, drawings or sculptures of the windigo, mainly because these people have never gone in for the graphic arts. But their myths are very specific. The windigo has (rather like the Abominable Snowman) yard-long feet with only one toe and long pointed heels. His eyes are bloody and bulging, and you can hear his hissing breath for miles. His lipless mouth, jagged teeth and terrible clawed hands are used to pack the monster full of swamp moss, rotten wood and mushrooms, but only when he can't get human flesh.

Now, these Indians are not cannibals, and have a rather unusually strong taboo against the practice. Yet frequently — in 42 out of the 70 cases here documented — cannibalistic acts were committed, usually against relatives or close friends. And in every one of the cases, which must be termed "insanity",

the windigo was involved. Dr. Teicher calls them "windigo psychoses", having used the windigo element in them to tie together a whole collection of case histories which range right across the clinical spectrum, from mild neurosis to the most advanced psychopathological states. These Indians are as familiar with the presence of the windigo, and its ability to cause such a variety of disorders, as we are with the presence of a virus-group which can cause everything from sniffles to epidemic influenza. They too have their therapies. One of these is the ceremonial murder of the infected person, even before he has committed a cannibalistic act.

Which brings us to the case of the bound, axed, doomed woman in the burning tent, and the solemn husband and children who passively witnessed the scene. She had felt that she was becoming a windigo. It got worse; it got so bad that the people around her began to look like beavers; she wanted to eat them. She therefore ordered her own death.

This is undoubtedly insanity, but one must remark in passing that it startlingly lacks the "I'm all right" rationalization of so many major psychoses. She *knew* she was insane. And isn't that the traditional proof of sanity?

END