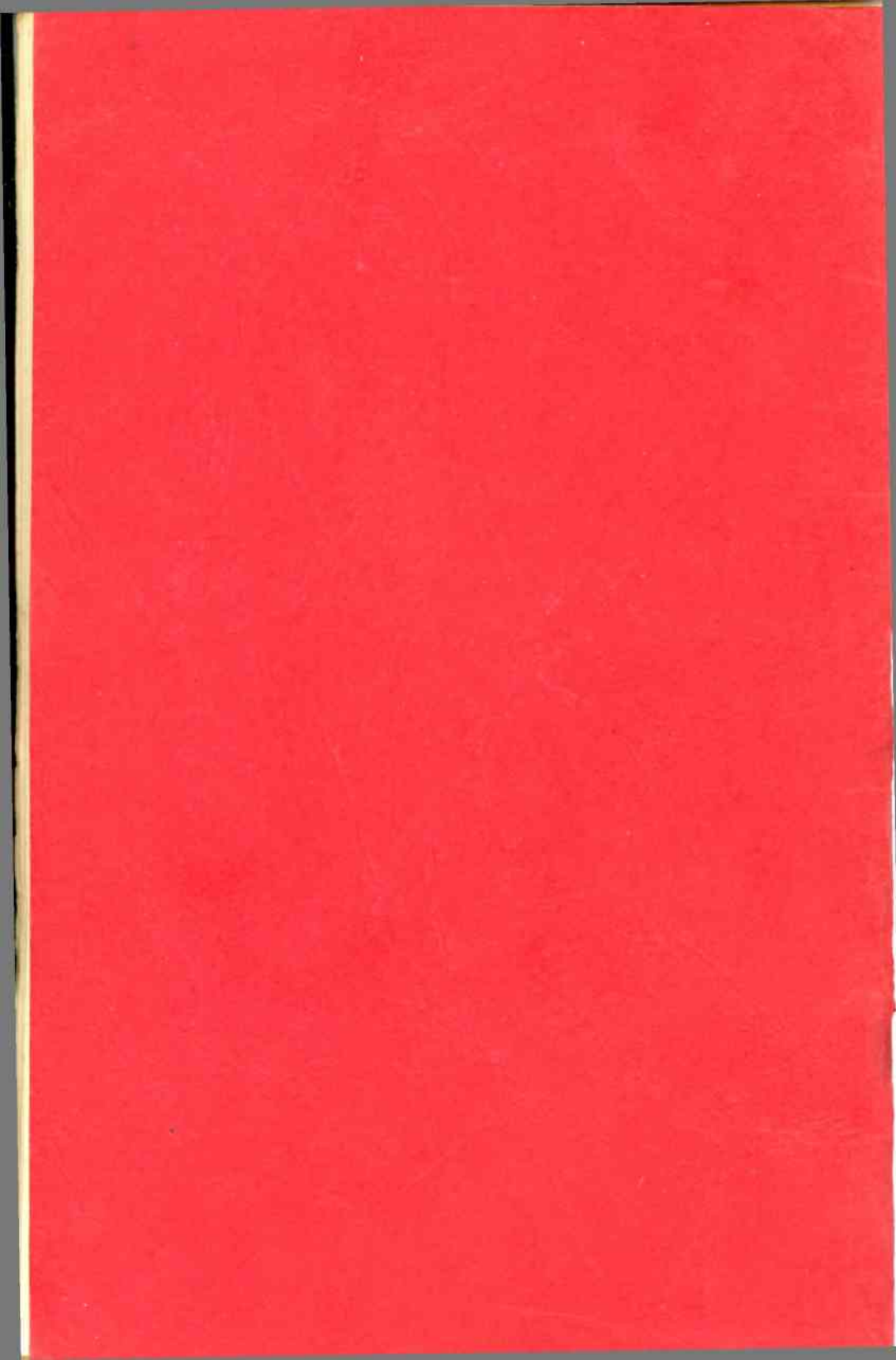


THE
FINAL
WAR

KELLER



THE FINAL WAR

Artists:

D. Bruce Berry	I
William Kroll	II
Ralph Rayburn Phillips	III
Con Pederson	IV
John Grossman	V
Ken Brown	VI
John Cockroft	VII
Miles Eaton	VIII
O. G. Estes	IX
Donald B. Day	X

Text:

DAVID H. KELLER, M. D.

FERRI PRESS
Portland, Oregon
1949

FOREWORD

Following a contest for art supremacy, ten drawings were selected by the members of the Portland Science Fantasy Society to be reproduced on postcards. Each artist worked independently; there was no attempt at any central thought.

On receiving a set of these cards, Dr. Keller thought a story could be told they would amply illustrate. With the encouragement of the PSFS he has written this tale and presented it to them.

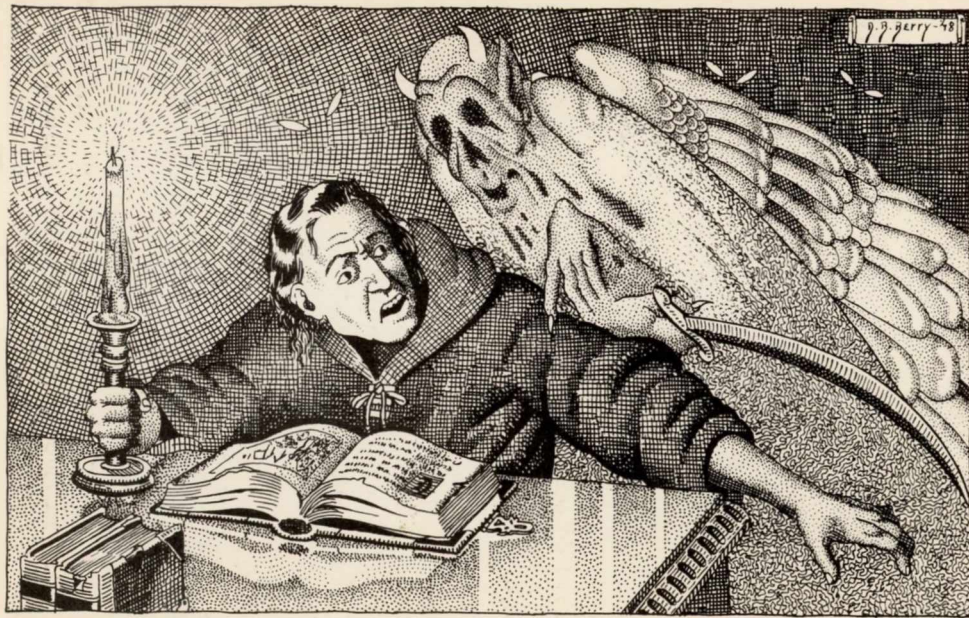
It is believed that this publication is a sport in s-f or any other literature. Two ideas are new: writing a story after the illustrations were prepared and the fact that the illustrators worked independently and with no knowledge of what the others were drawing.

The author wishes to thank the artists for their courtesy in allowing him to use their pictures to illustrate his story. It is to be hoped that they will be pleased with the combination.

Very Sincerely,

David H. Keller, M. D.

Underwood,
December 2nd, 1948.



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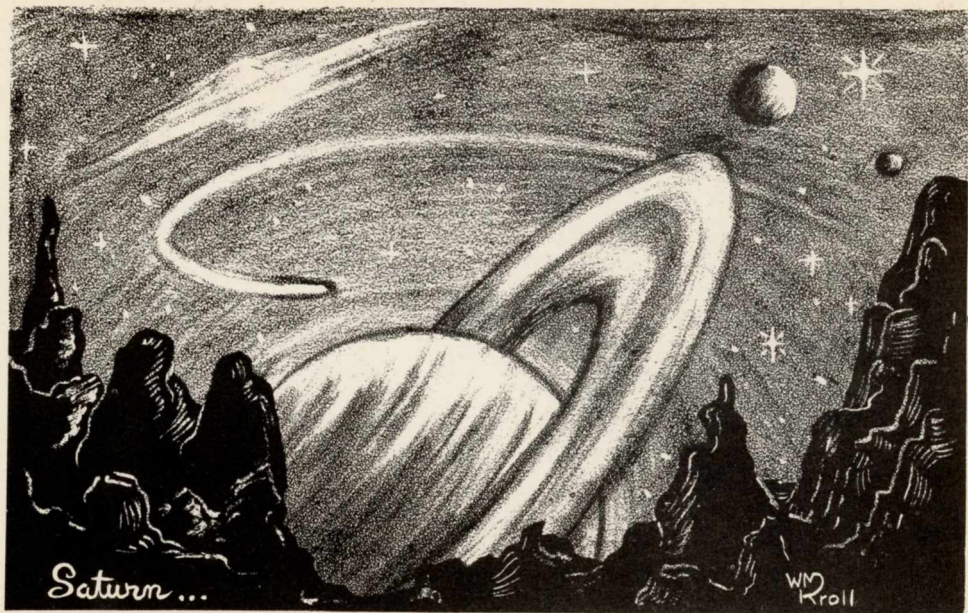
THE FINAL WAR

I

Thompson sat in his lonely library reading a very old book. Written on vellum pages, it was bound with the tanned skin of a chinaman killed by a magician in Gobi. The oriental liver had failed to unlock the past or give any information concerning the future. The skin, however, bound a book that was destined to save mankind.

The scholar had often read this very ancient tome, in what had been, so far, an useless effort to unravel its secret. Tonight, in the middle of the book he suddenly saw the solution to the mystery. He read on thru the night with increasing fear grasping his soul in its icy clutches. At last he realized the terrific import of the message, hid so long in the old folio. The candle, fanned by the breath of impending doom, flickered over his shoulder. Death hung in hovering terror.

"The world and everything in it will be destroyed!" Thompson whispered. "I alone realize the danger. I am the only one who can save mankind. But I am only a dreamer. The scientists must help me. They only can win this final war."



FANTASY
ART
SET
WILLIAM
KROLL

II

That night Thompson read of Saturn, the distant, mysterious, threatening planet; a land of lofty mountains and of chasms so deep that falling rocks took years to reach their final resting place.

He read of caverns carved in the rock by millions of hopeless slaves who prayed for nothing but death to end their torment; of tunnels illumined by the cold light of gigantic glow worms, each chained to a pillar, who fed on mushrooms mixed with phosphorus; of cities inhabited by very ancient races.

The book described these beings, not men, but living things with shapes that could only be imagined by the opium eater. Foul and unclean monsters who loved and worshiped a God from the beyond.

This God, malign, powerful, mighty in wrath, terrible in intelligence, brooded thru an eternity of time with only one desire; to conquer the earth, make slaves of the bodies of men and take their souls to a place of everlasting torment.



Ralph Rayburn Phillips

FANTASY ART SET

III

Thompson continued to read. Finally he wrote a transcript of one page; wrote with a hand that trembled. Even as he wrote, he doubted his translation of the ancient code.

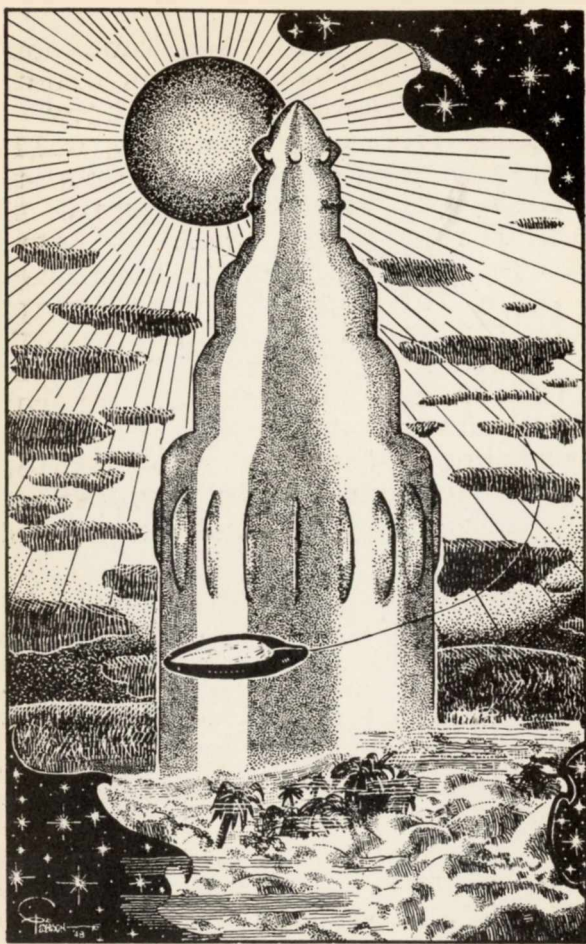
"Ruling Saturn does not content Great Cthulhu. The beautiful people of Venus have perished; the men in the building of underground cities, the women in laboratories from horrible genetic experiments. The scientists from Mercury toil making new forms of destruction while the armies of Mars are prepared for conquest of other worlds."

"Cthulhu has many shapes but usually assumes that of a gigantic toad, with hypnotic eyes, poisoned claws and an intelligence which defies earthly mind to understand. The lesser Gods on Saturn are all controlled by this great God. At the appointed time he will visit the earth and make of it a desert. Let all who read beware! He will come with spaceships, mechanical armies, poisons and obscene weapons. If all these fail, he will, in the end, transform himself into a beautiful woman, and, thru her seductive beauty enslave the bodies of men and torture their souls."

The candle flickered.

"At least," Thompson muttered, "We have been warned."

THE FINAL WAR



FANTASY ART SET

Con Peterson

IV

The Earth-men accepted Thompson's warning. The United Nations erected a large experimental laboratory in the Arizona desert. With thick walls, it rose, an enormous cone, towards the threatening sky from out of which the invading forces would come. Astronomers kept a twenty-four hour vigil searching for enemy space-ships. Scientists watched the spectrum for new elements from Saturn. Biologists perfected deadly cultures and prepared antiserums which would protect in germ warfare. Chemists found explosives more powerful than the atomic bomb. Air ships, rocket propelled, were built.

But a final invention was perfected by Jenkins, based on a suggestion made by Thompson. This was so novel in its form, so subtle in its proposed use and so powerful, that the two men hoped, if all else failed, their invention would win the final war.

Various groups aided in the construction of this new weapon, but each made only a part. These parts were put together, vitalized, made into a perfect whole by Jenkins, watched and instructed by the dreamer, Thompson.

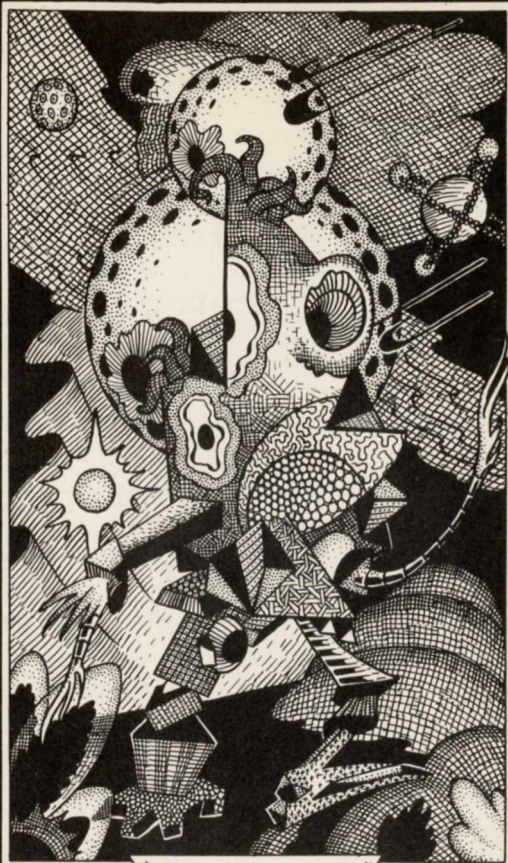
"It is the hand of Destiny," cried Jenkins, but Thompson replied,

"I would call it the hand of God!"

Meantime, all was activity on Saturn. There the Great Cthulhu had brought to perfection his machine men. With metal bodies, electrified brains, these scientific workers could perform in their cavern laboratories tasks that would have been impossible to the greatest scientists on earth.

Back of them, controlling their every activity, directing their inventive genius, was the mysterious power of the Great God. Up to this time, he had made all his dreams come true. His history showed that a war begun was a war won. Only Earth remained to be conquered. Living from the beginning of time, confident that he would never die; he was impatient to conquer the last of the planets. Day after day, night after night, he drove the machine men who worked tirelessly toward their goal. Biological chemists perfected a new and terrible form of war.

"I will destroy their cities!" Cthulhu boasted to the lesser Gods. "I will make their earth a waste place. Finally, in their despair they will lose the power to resist and will seek only death, not realizing that I will take their souls and torture them in many obscene ways thru an eternity of years."



"DIMENSION DWELLER"
BY JOHN GROSSMAN

FANTASY ART SET

John Grossman

VI

The machine men finally completed the space ship, which, hurtling thru the void of the skies would finally land on earth and complete its mission of destruction. Skillfully made, rocket propelled, every part of its journey had been carefully planned. Not a detail had been overlooked. The hypnotic, all-powerful intelligence of the Great God had so completely dominated the machine men that the final result, the death carrying ship, was a masterpiece of devilish imagination.

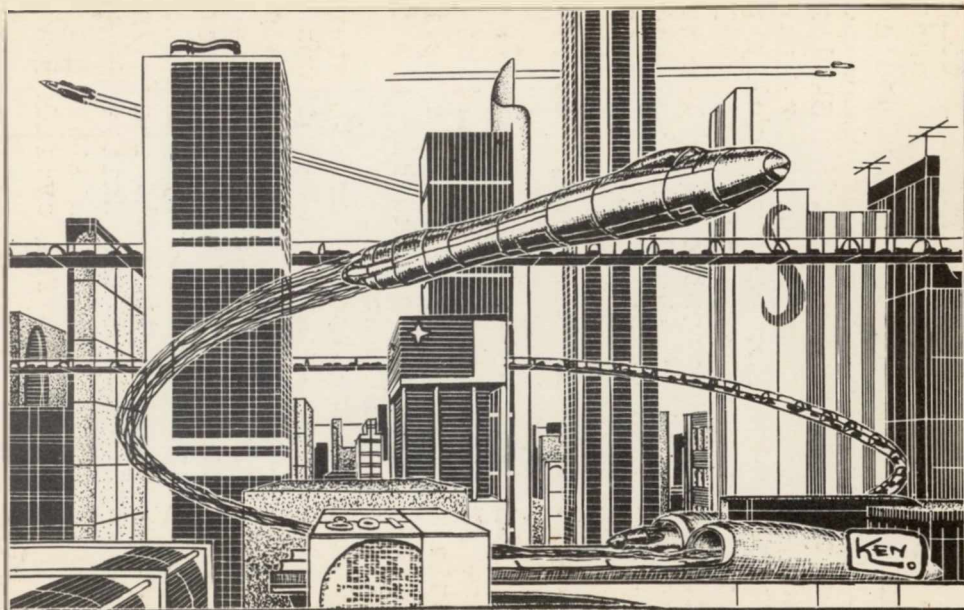
It carried no crew. Once it was shot from the tube, it would go directly to the Earth even as a splinter of iron flies thru the air and fastens to a giant magnet.

Cthulhu trusted no one to start it on its flight. At the appointed time he went to the tube which housed the ship and for the last time went over every detail of its construction. Once again he correctly charted its course so that it would land in the rich corn belt of the United States.

Finally he pushed the starting button and the beautiful cylinder started off.

"Those pitiful Earth-men will now have something to worry about," he cried to the lesser Gods.

"Great is Cthulhu!" they shouted.



FANTASY ART SET

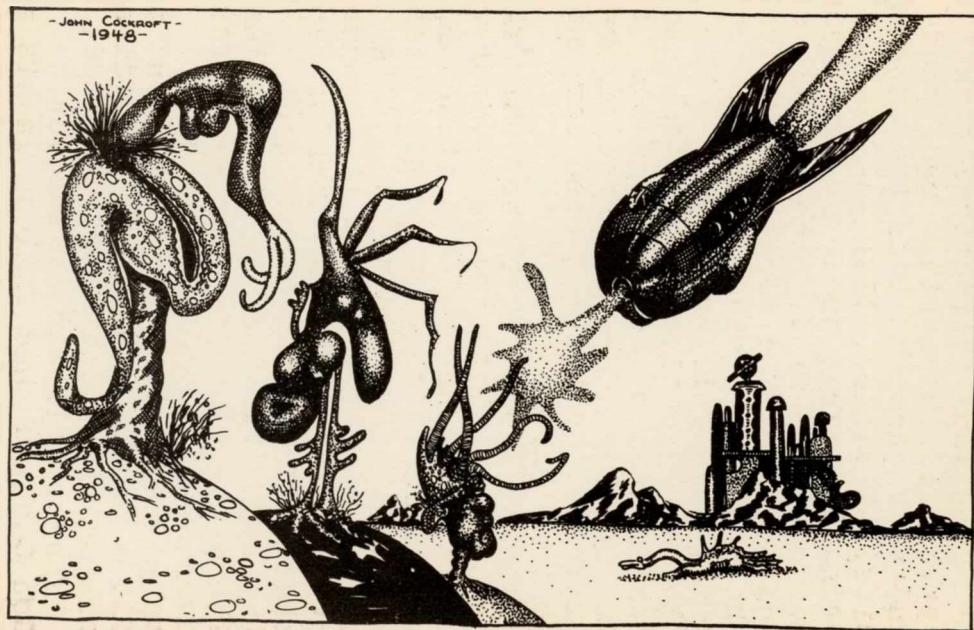
KEN BROWN

VII

The long cylindrical rocket ship approached the earth, encircled it, and then pausing over the upper Mississippi Valley, disintegrated, showering its cargo upon the black earth. Borne by the wind, the small seeds scattered over a large area, fell on the ground, germinated at once and in a day were full grown. The male plants, rootless, crawled into the female plants and impregnated them. In another day the ripened ovaries exploded, scattering seed for another generation.

These plants were not only flesh-eaters, but exhaled a vapor which killed all who breathed it and a juice that burned and rotted the flesh of all that contacted them. By the millions they spread from the country to the cities, bringing death so rapidly that it could not be avoided. Only the dry, lifeless desert was immune. There the airships, prepared for any eventuality, had been placed. Now they went into action with their flame jets. Patiently, methodically, the deadly plants were cremated.

Finally all were destroyed. The God Cthulhu had failed in his first assault. The cities were destroyed, but the best of humanity lived on to fight.



FANTASY
ART
SET
John
Cockroft

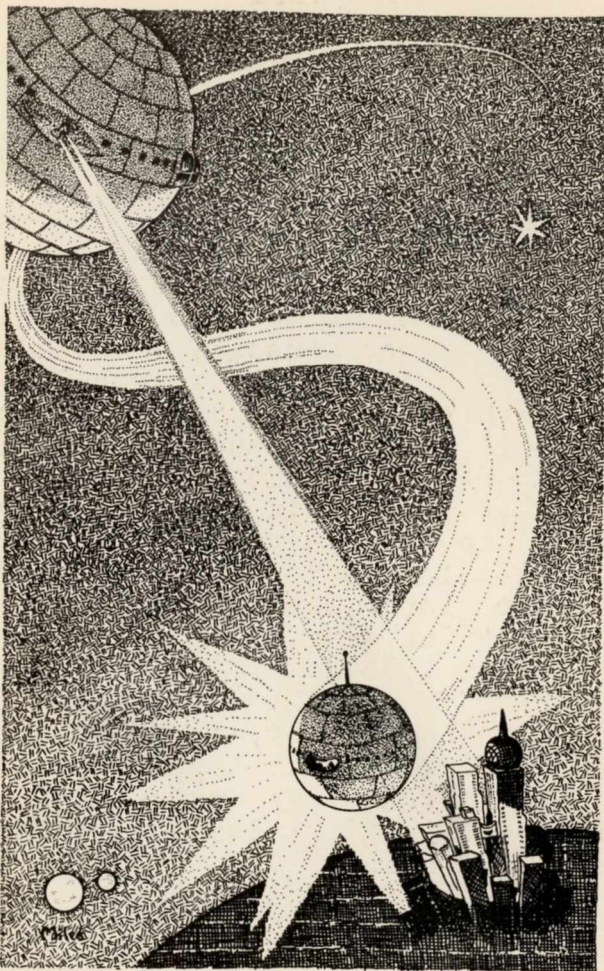
VIII

Cthulhu prepared for an assault which he felt would be the final step to victory. He was sure that he knew the souls of men, their secret desires, their fatal weakness. This time he would use, not a modern instrument of war, but the oldest known to all life on every planet. He was so confident of success that he decided to go by himself, unattended by even his most favored lesser God—go to Earth and, singlehanded, use his magical power in such a way that no mere Earth-man could resist him.

He had his machine men make a globular ship with a single opening. When the circular door was open, a much smaller globe could descend to earth on a guiding beam of light.

In this globe, the Great God sped earthward on what he was certain would be a journey ending in victory.

The Giant Toad hopped out of the small globe near the ruins of an Utah city. With giant leaps he rushed to Arizona. There in a desert of volcanic rocks and dead cedars, he underwent a metamorphosis revealing his primitive bivalency. Now the toad was gone, being replaced by a male and female such as man in his wildest dreams had never seen; or once seeing would have died of pure horror.



FANTASY ART SET

Miles Eaton

IX

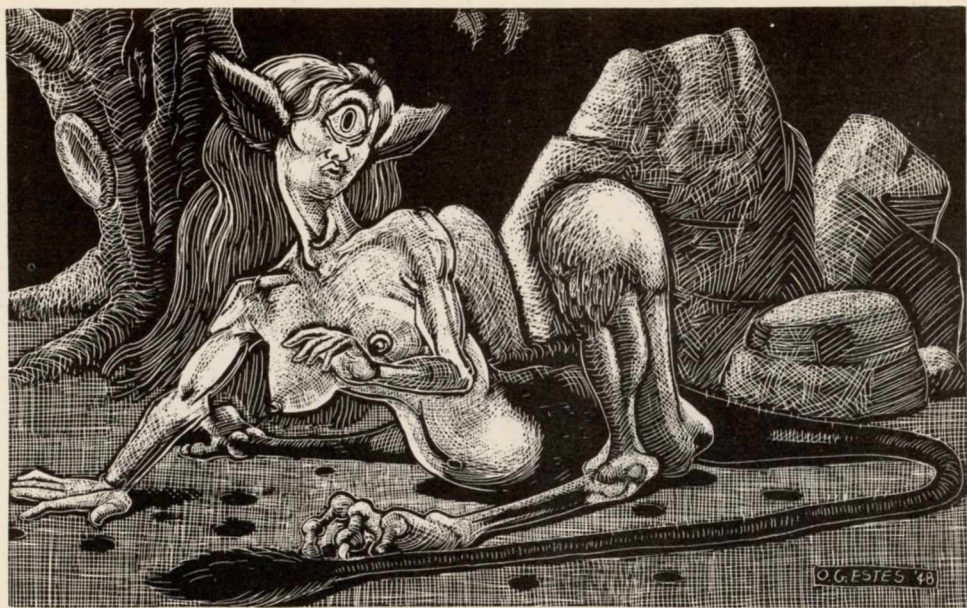
Male and female they lived for the appointed time in the desert. The female, with one eye, a long tail, human hands ending in long claws; would, when alone shake her mule ears and call loudly for her mate. He had the calves of a man, the thighs of a bear, the torso of a bull and the head of a devil. Hearing his mate call, he would gallop to her, roaring his impassioned love song. In every way he was the kind of a male that this kind of a female appreciated.

They were in love!

Thus they lived in a garden of Eden. They satisfied each other but when the female realized her delicate condition, the male knew the honeymoon was over and hid his head in a rock hole and died. His soul, the half of the God from the Beyond, simply passed into the new life that the female was bringing into the world. She gave birth to a baby and then she too died. Now the God was once again united in this deadly menace to the world, a beautiful woman.

Standing there alone in the desert she realized her power. What man could resist her charms? Once in her power she could make him a slave. Thus women have always treated men and now Cthulhu, as the Super-Woman, would show men that they were simply little animals to be twisted around her delicate fingers, sucked dry of blood and their souls sent to Hell.

THE FINAL WAR



FANTASY

ART
SET

O · G · E S T E S

Thompson had anticipated the Woman. The final pages of the old book had prepared him. With Jenkins' help he had made a trap. There was only one question. Would it work?

The Woman glided over the desert. Her beautiful face glowed with the expectation of victory. Her lovely fingers twitched in anticipation of tearing the bodies of all men. With in her, the Great God glowed with satisfaction as he thought of all the ways in which he would mutilate their souls. He did not realize that the beautiful body he had made to dwell in had, in one little convolution of her brain, curiosity and a desire for love.

Suddenly the Woman saw a gigantic hand rearing out of the sandy desert. It was a very masculine hand with short, stubby, powerful fingers. The back was covered with hair; the palm was soft.

"What a beautiful hand!" exclaimed the Woman. "I could rest in that hand while the finger tips carress my lovely body." She crawled into the hand and cuddled on the soft palm.

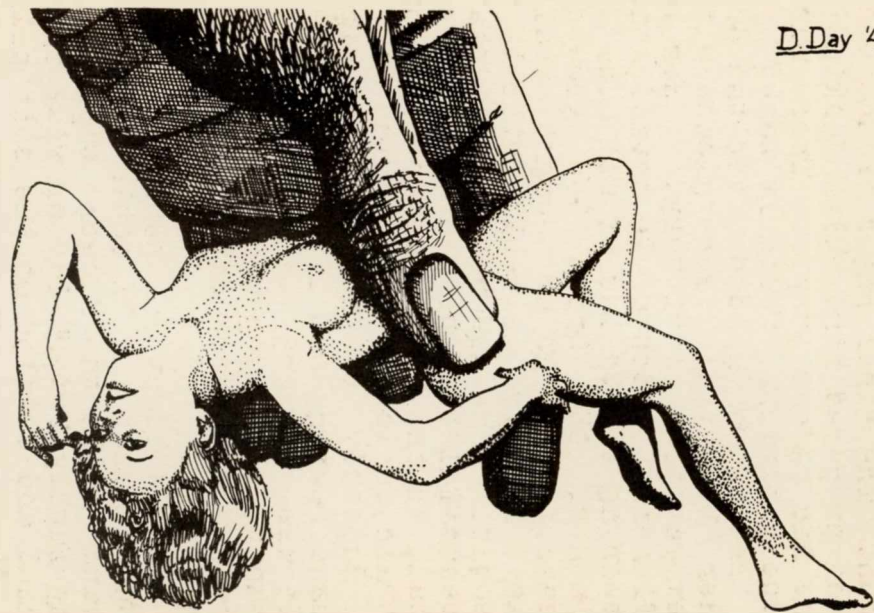
"Love me, you wonderful masculine hand," she commanded.

The fingers and thumb closed on her, slowly crushing her to death.

Cthulhu screamed. Now on earth he had no place to live. His failure was complete. There was nothing for him to do but return to Saturn.

Man had won the war. Humanity was safe. A finer civilization rose on the ruins.

THE FINAL WAR



D. Day '48

FANTASY
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