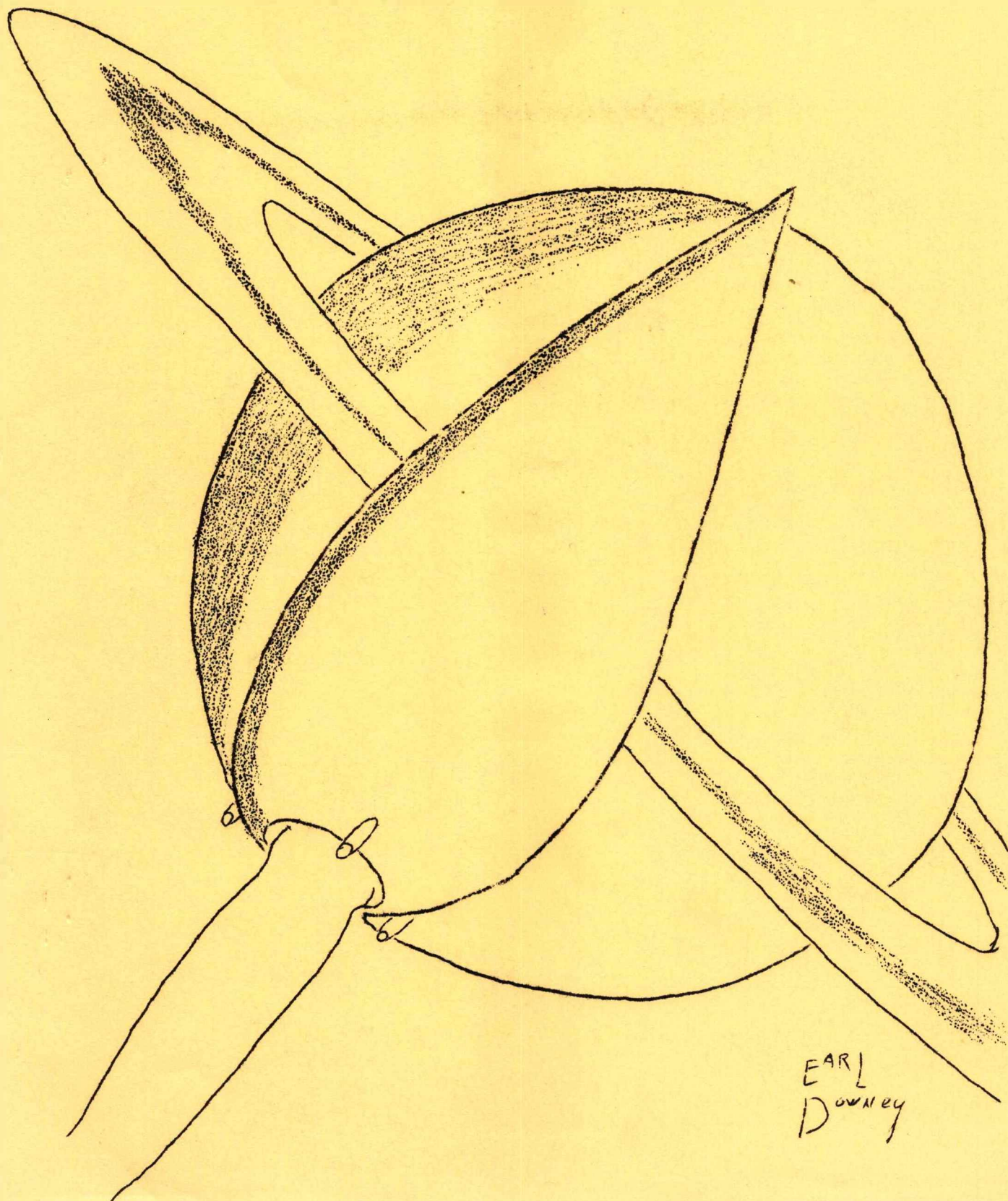


OMPALOG:

FICTION [FAN &
[FAAN



EARL
Downey

OMPALOG

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LOST -- Vince Roach

The sun rose, a blistered ulcer in the sky of low, scuddy clouds. Melvin Hardwick wiped his brow of the cold sweat he had slept in the night before. Tahroo was sweltering at night, as was every island of the mid-Pacific group Hardwick was scouring for the lost fan.

Hardwick had no clues, save the vague note found in Hayes (the lost fan)'s extravagant house, set in the low, rolling hills of tropical Borneo ... "live begins at forty" was the ambiguous message -- and Tahroo was forty degrees south latitude... no clue really, however, straws were to be grasped now. Hayes had been missing a month, and fandom had gone berserk over the terrible loss.

As Hardwick opened his eyes that morning, he had spotted a ship, and motioned it over to the little island. The dark clad captain revealed himself as Walt Willis, heading for South Gate in an old Galleon. The swaggering first mate seemed familiar, but Melvin could not seem to place his ruggedly bearded face. After an hour of discussion over the Gatecon in '58, the landing party departed in their landing boat, boarded the galleon again at the reef, and sailed off into the reddening sky. Melvin started off across the island's scorching red sands.

About half an hour later, Hardwick spotted a silver pool in the center of a peaked dune. He rushed as fast as he could toward the seeming mirage. As he neared, he became aware of a man digging a deep pit -- the pool no doubt was the reflection of the sun off the highly polished shovel ... the shovel in Forrest J. Ackerman's hands. He heralded Hardwick.

But that wasn't the pool, and the shovel wasn't really a shovel at all. Forry had a robomech at his command, slaving away at the black hole in the ground. It seemed as if someone had covered the hill of rare silt with a fine layer of sand. The object Ackerman held in his hand turned out to be a control rod for the mech ... no sweat for this boy, in his air-conditioned plastic suit. Ackerman gave Melvin a sly smile, not a word in explanation or excuse for giggling. But Hardwick finally, after convincing Forrest he was in a man hunt only, dragged the info out of him -- Ackerman had discovered an old Welcomittee Bullzine, with a treasure map attached. The treasure -- a complete collection of Amazing Stories... enough to make any fan's mouth water up a flood. Hardwick jumped eagerly at the bit about the Bullzine -- it meant Hayes had been this way. Another hour of frightful tongue battle followed, with Hardwick finally pinning Forry down, and threatening to turn off his plastic suit's refrigeration unit. This terrible blow to Ackerman's security did it. He finally admitted that he and Hayes had started out on the trek for the treasure thirty one days past on a tip from Bob Farnham and an old map found in a book store where the fanatic two were scavenging for old Weird Tales. Hardwick was astounded and perplexed -- that was two suspects to check.

Yes, Ackerman could have done away with Art to get his share of the Amazings -- or Farnham -- he was advertising for labor to crush his grapes when his supply of home brew dwindled. Let's see, thought

Hardwick, Farnham does live close, in a silver-plated boxcar over by Bali-Bali. His next stop would have to be Farnham's, but what to do to keep Ackerman from running because of fright?

But Melvin wasn't to be thwarted so easily. He carried in his Sherlock Holmes kit a robomech sensitizer and impressor. He selected the proper stud on the complex instrument, and pressed it. Ackerman's mech came to attention, while Hardwick hastily impressed the order to detain Forry after his digging was finished. Before Ackerman could regain control of his Robomech, he received a stern look from it, and realized it would be useless to attempt an escape.

It was off to Farnham's!

Hardwick arrived at the palm-sheltered grove that surrounded Farnham's abode. Half-nude native girls paraded about the gardens, carrying jugs and pitchers of liquor, while several other slaves were busy running off the island scandal sheet, printed exclusively for Farnham's use -- it was quite a little private paradise, faintly reminiscent of Hayes' mansion in Borneo.

Bob appeared at the door of his plated boxcar, half-clad with three native beauties, and turned to look up. He reddened at the sight of Hardwick and his calabask pipe, obviously embarrassed to be seen this way -- to have his reputation smeared by being seen with less than seven women at a time.

To make a long story short, Farnham turned out an air-tight alibi. He took Melvin to the back, there revealing his pride and joy -- an automatic grape squeezer, he had remodeled himself from an old pulp paper once owned by Startling Stories. Hardwick was visually disappointed in not finding his culprit -- he bade Farnham goodby, refusing a mug of home brew, to retrace his steps and apprehend Ackerman at the diggings.

On his important journey, Hardwick had all but completely forgotten what was probably going on in fandom now ... but on the way back to get Forry, he was suddenly brought back to his senses by a screaming kidnap on the beaches of Tahroo -- it seemed he'd gotten back to the island just in time!

It was John Berry, Walt Willis, and the other Britishfen, kidnapping Ackerman, with the robomech going mad over whether to yank Forry apart for trying to escape, or defending his owner. Jan Jansen was hanging from the yardarm of Willis' ship -- it was truly a sight that sent the blood pounding in Hardwick's temples. ((Haggard, anyone?)) He would have passed out, save for urgent screaming from Ackerman, and the realization that he'd be failing his job if he let Ackerman get away -- and with him, the blame of Hayes' murder.

Hardwick rushed after the ship with all his might. He reached the tangled group of fen in time to meet the end of a blunt instrument. It was blackout time for Hardwick.

Hardwick felt like he had just read every Mad since Harvey Kurtzman -- he definitely had a soft head if not sheer brain rot itself!

He was aware of the proximity of another being, yes, it was a man!

It was -- Ackerman. Before he could focus his attention on The Murderous Traitor next to him, he found himself straining to hear voices that had seemed to spring up immediately. He pressed his ear against the wall, then it struck him -- he was in the hold of the Britishers' ship, and no telling how long he'd been there, or why he was here.

Back to the voices! He could barely make them out. He recognized Berry and Dodd laughing.

"Ha, I say Ha," gumbled Dodd. "So we are coming closer to American fandom -- I'd say they were coming pretty close to our high plane."

"Rather," agreed Berry, "And they are heading for the supreme high come, 100% English fandom!" his voice reached a shrieking crescendo.

Hardwick could barely make out the mechanical squeaks of a machine being warmed up. He didn't know it was the brain molder that the British has developed during fifth fandom.

"Arthur Hayes, you will sit down, don't be afraid of the straps we're going to put over your arms, this won't hurt at all -- you will be the first of the glory fen, the first molded into the form of the Ninth Fandom -- English fandom triumphs!" Art Hayes' brain was being molded into thought becoming to an advocate of Ninth Fandom, slowly, but irrevocably. Hardwick, in the nearby hold screamed, it was lost in the slimy darkness of the dingy hold .. but he kept on screaming, screaming, SCREAMINGGGGGG!



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When I look at that blue sky yonder
Up yonder and far away
My heart is thrilling and trilling
But my head looks on to The Day.

The Day that the rockets thunder,
The Day mankind takes off,
And beyond the new horizons,
The elder gods -- drily cough.

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THE RIGHT THING

The sign on the door read Solar Association for the Advancement of Non-Humans, Martian Headquarters, James Harris: Secretary. Randolph hesitated, then shook off his uneasiness and entered.

Inside the small, crowded office a secretary looked up at him inquiringly.

"Yes," she asked, "can I help you?"

She was a Martian

"I'd like to see Mr. Harris, please."

"And whom shall I say is calling?"

"Harvey Randolph."

She buzzed the inter-office on the inter-comm and Randolph took the chance to study her. She was typically Martian. The broad forehead, high cheek bones, purplish hue to her skin. Her hair was a lovely scarlet which was not unusual to her race. Her dark, mysterious eyes fitted perfectly with her small, up-turned nose and tight, thin lips.

She reminded him of Sarel Paren.

They look so human, he thought to himself. So human, and yet just enough different to make relations between the races strained. Strained, he added with a bitter smile, was not the right word for it.

"You may go right in, Mr. Randolph."

She smiled prettily at him as he thanked her and went into the inner office.

Jim Harris rose as Randolph entered. "Well, Mr. Randolph, I'm glad to have you here." They shook hands. "Won't you sit down?"

Randolph took a chair next to Harris' crowded desk. The top was covered with reports and papers of all kinds.

"How can we be of assistance to you, Mr. Randolph?" asked Harris when they were seated.

"Mr. Harris," said Randolph, coming right to the point, "I want to marry a Martian."

There was a dead silence for a moment. Then Harris muttered quietly, "God help you, Mr. Randolph, God help you."

Again there was a pause. Then Harris stood up and walked slowly to the window. "Do you know what such an action would mean, Mr. Randolph?"

"I think so."

"I hope so."

Again the silence.

"Are you determined to go through with it?"

"Yes, I am."

"And the girl?"

He nodded.

"Regardless of public opinion?"

"Yes."

Harris turned around and looked strangely at Randolph. "Do you own a gun, Mr. Randolph?"

"Yes, I do."

"Get rid of it. It will do no good. You wouldn't last a minute against a crowd if you were armed. We're fighting this battle on other grounds."

"We, Mr. Harris?"

"We! Mr. Randolph."

Randolph relaxed and gave a sigh of relief. Here was help.

Randolph hurried through the shadows of the dirty buildings. The smell of people who hadn't washed in too long a time stuck in his nostrils.

People, he thought. Martian people. My People. He felt a swell of pride within.

He hurried on through the Martian slum until he found Sarel's door. She lived in a run-down building which had originally been a warehouse, but which had been turned into a Martian tenement building (at a profit to the owners) when the rocket port had been moved to a nicer part of town. Now the whole area was given over to the Martians. It was the city's worst slum area.

Randolph knocked on Sarel's door and waited impatiently for her mother to answer. He had news which wouldn't keep.

Kara Paren opened the door and greeted Randolph with a big smile.

"Come in," she said.

"Wonderful news, Mrs. Paren. Where is Sarel?"

The elderly Martian woman pointed toward the inner part of the apartment.

He hurried in.

She was waiting for him with an expectant glow in her eyes and cheeks. He kissed her and felt his heart beat faster than it had with many an Earth girl.

"Well?" she asked as he released her.

"We're in," he said.

"In?"

"They're on our side. They'll help us. They'll stick with us all the way down the line." He smiled broadly. "We can't loose now."

Mrs. Paren entered now and brought all the children, Sarel's brothers and sisters. Mr. Paren had been killed in a labor strike two years before and had left his wife with eight children to support. Randolph was their first spark of real hope. They hadn't liked him at first, but in time he had won their hearts as he had Sarel's. Now they all flocked around him, anxious to hear his report.

"Did you see Mr. Harris? What did he say?" asked Kara Paren.

by

NEAL F. WILGUS

"Settle down and I'll tell you what he had to say." They sat around him, some on the floor, others perched on chairs or the edge of tables, nine impatient Martians listening eagerly to this strange Earthman whom they had accepted as one of their own.

"He questioned me closely to see if I was sincere," began Randolph, "and when I satisfied him on that score he really dug in and got to work. He said the SAANH would back us all the way if we would agree to work on their level. That is ~~what~~ we must be willing to accept the status of outcasts without complaint if necessary. We must be ready to face death at the hands of prejudiced Earth people without returning the hate they pour on us. It looks rough, but the only protection we can depend on is legal aid from the SAANH and the mercy and goodness of our enemies. Harris already wrote ~~to the~~ to the central offices for support and advice. We're all set up."

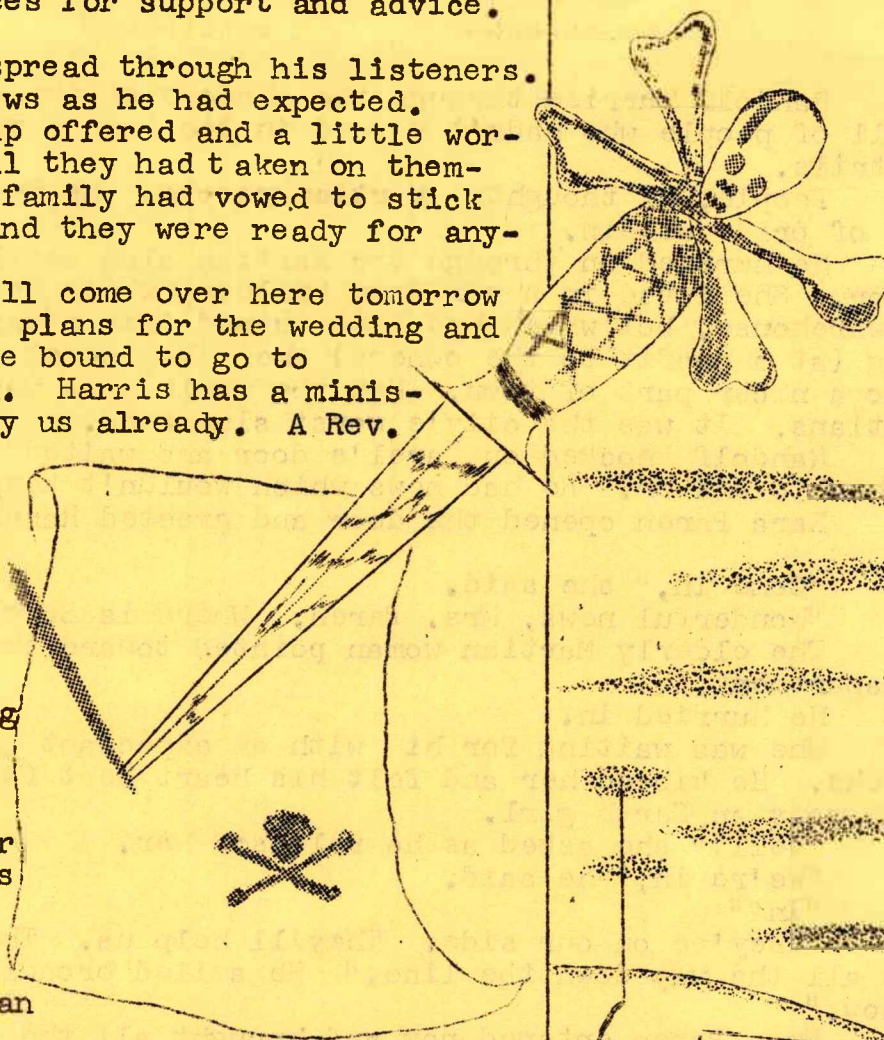
A ripple spread through his listeners. They accepted the news as he had expected. Overjoyed at the help offered and a little worried about the ordeal they had taken on themselves. The little family had vowed to stick together, however, and they were ready for anything, he was sure.

"Harris will come over here tomorrow night and we'll make plans for the wedding and legal defense. We're bound to go to court with the thing. Harris has a minister lined up to marry us already. A Rev. Samuel Johnson. He seems to be in on this thing with us all the way. Harris told me that the SAANH people have been praying for a test case like this to come up for a long time. There's been a lot of race mixing already, of course, but none of it so far has been legal. This case will set a precedent. If we win this, there's no telling how far we can go with the thing."

The group started talking excitedly and Kara Paren said, "Mr. Harris will be here tomorrow? Good, we'll have a party for him. We'll invite the whole neighborhood. Mr. Harris is well known to the people here. He had many friends among the Martian people. Just as you do, Harvey," she added with a smile.

He smiled back and the warm feeling inside him flamed up with gratitude.

"We'll have a great party tomorrow," he said.



When Randolph arrived home that night he had a message waiting for him. It was from his brother.

"Dear Harvey" it began, "I hear you had a talk today with Jim Harris of the SAAMH. I don't advise such things. I know it won't hurt your business, but it will greatly damage mine. Please have some consideration for the family name."

So, he thought as he tore the note up and threw it in the trash. Now I'm the family black sheep. Oh well, this is just the start, I guess.

Randolph's brother, Bill, was in politics, and naturally couldn't risk having his name connected with anything unpopular. Harvey was becoming more and more unpopular. First he had quit a very good job with Wilson Export in their Martian office just to head a drive for underprivileged Martian kids. The children of one whole section of town were going without a meal each day because they couldn't afford to pay enough to keep a lunch counter going at their segregated school. Randolph had headed the drive to raise enough funds to buy the school a lunch counter and staff it for the next year. The drive was successful beyond his wildest dreams, but it left him very unpopular with many people. Especially his brother.

The school drive had lead directly to his meeting Sarel, however, and he was very willing to be slightly unpopular in exchange for her acquaintance. She had been hired as a cook at the lunch counter and he had met her while leading a visiting group of social workers through the school. He had returned the next day, invited her out to lunch, gone to her home the next Sunday for a meal, and been violently in love with her ever since.

* After the school drive he had been working with the Martian Parent Teachers Association at very meager pay. This lead to more disfavor with the general public and his brother's harsh note.

His brother's message, however, wasn't the only one waiting for Randolph that evening. After he had turned in for the night he heard a banging at the door and a buzzing of the bell. He hurried to the door, but he saw only the disappearing back of his visitor. He was about to go back inside when he saw a note left by the strange midnight prowler. It was stuck to the door by a weird pin with a ghastly skull and cross bones head.

A threat so soon, he wondered as he pulled the pin loose and opened the note.

"Dear friend," the note began, "we fear greatly for your health and wish to see you safely off on the first rocket in the



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morning. Your friend Mr. Harris is the victim of a disease which we hope will spread no further. We would not like to have to use drastic measures to end the plague. We urge you to close all transactions with him and leave the area immediately."

There was no signature.

A rather well worded note to get out of town, he thought. Well, I like it here and plan on staying a while of you gentlemen don't mind. Thanks for your concern.

He retired again, but not without some thought for the welfare of Sarel and her family and the helpful Mr. Harris.

Harris was in good shape the next night at the party, however and if he had received any threats he gave no sign of it. Randolph waited for a moment to pull him aside and show him his own. Harris received it calmly and said nothing. He seemed used to such things. He pocketed the strange pin with the note, gave Randolph a reassuring smile and led him back to the party.

Harris was indeed well liked in the neighborhood. All the Martian people there seemed to have received a personal favor from him and all held him in high esteem.

After a supper fit for the richest merchant on the planet and a gay time of dancing, games, and small talk, Harris got the attention for the crowd and quietly announced the plans of the young couple. It wasn't much of a surprise to most of the people of the neighborhood, but some of the older folks shook their heads and looked somewhat shocked.

"I know," Harris went on after the announcement, "that you'll all pitch in and help us in this wedding. We haven't set the date yet, but when the time comes we're really going to need lots of support. So we'll be getting in touch with you as the need arises."

The party dragged on for an hour or so after that, but slowly thinned out and by midnight all the guests had gone home.

"Now," said Harris, "we can get to our planning. Randolph, have you showed this note to all the group?"

"No, I haven't had the chance."

"What note is that?" asked Sarel.

Harris shoved it to her. Her face paled as she read it and passed it on to her mother. A silence fell over the whole group as they read the note.

"Harvey" Sarel said, "you should have told us." She looked worried.

"This is what we must expect from now on," said Harris. He took another note from his pocket and passed it to Randolph. "I also have had contact with your friends."

This note was shorter and more to the point. In no uncertain terms it told Harris to withdraw from the whole deal and get out of town. Again there was no signature.

Randolph read it silently and passed it to Sarel. She was ready for this one. She seemed to have pulled herself together and be ready for anything. Randolph was proud of her as he watched her tighten her lips as if preparing for battle.

"We're in for it now," Harris said. "We can expect just about anything from this outfit. They're a Ku Klux Klan type of gang known as the Knights of the Order. They're our biggest organized opposition. They work on the unorganized, ignorant public." He didn't seem to be worried about the affair.

"Are you ready," Harris ~~xxx~~ continued, suddenly changing pace, "to give up everything because you know this is right?"

They nodded.

"Are you ready to die for it?"

Randolf looked at Sarel, "Yes," he said soberly.

"Without striking back? Without malice?"

Randolf ~~xxxx~~ paused, "Why add that?"

"Believe me, it's necessary. If you fight back then they're justified in killing you. Then they're right. But if you try to cooperate, but refuse to retaliate, then they are in the wrong and are bound to loose in the long run. And it is the long run we're working for. Even if they kill us all they have lost. They will have proved themselves wrong."

"What good will that do anyone? We'll be dead."

"But those who follow after us will be watching. They'll know. And they'll win, because they'll know we were right."

Randolf paused again. He glanced at Sarel. She nodded. She agreed with Harris. So did Kara Paren. So did most of the Martians on the block. They were Harris' friends and they shared his philosophy. For the first time Randolph realized just how big the stakes of this game were. It wasn't just his life and Sarel's he was playing with. It was the fate of a whole race of people. His action set the tempo for race relations for some time to come.

"I don't know if I can live up to it," Randolph said at last, "but I'll try it. I'm willing to die for what I believe and hold no grudge. If you are, Sarel," he added, glancing at her.

She smiled at him and he was more and more sure Harris was right in his non-violent approach. Her love was worth suffering ~~xxx~~ death. Harris must be right.

Harris took him home after the party that night and both were silent on the way, thinking of what was to come.

What, after all, could Harris or the SAANH do? They could help some and give moral support, but the real action was up to Randolph and Sarel. Both men knew that.

"I want to thank you for your help," Randolph said as they stopped in front of his apartment building.

"Harvey," Harris replied, "I just wish there was something I could do. I'm glad you came to us, but I feel tied down. We'll back you, of course, but other than that we're helpless. The real job is up to you."

"Just knowing you're on my side is enough, Jim. I don't think I could do otherwise."

"You'd make it, I'm sure," Harris smiled in the dark and they were both silent for a moment.

"Jim," Randolph asked, almost as a child asking its mother the secret of life, "does it have to be this way? Why can't people let us alone, let us get married, why all the fuss?"

Harris' hand was reassuringly on his sleeve in the dark. "I don't know, really, Harvey. Seems like that's the way people are. After centuries back on earth, we finally learned to live with men of different colors. Then we came over here and had to start all over again. It's a slow process, but in the long run we'll win. We'll win over them by making them our friends." He was silent a moment, then he added, "Got to start somewhere. You're the test case. After this we'll move slowly toward reconciliation between the races. We'll loose a lot of

good people on both sides, but in the end we'll win. In the long run we'll all win."

There was the friendly silence again and then Randolph said, "We are glad for your help, Jim. Before this we were almost without hope."

Harris smiled. "There's always hope," he said.

They shook hands and just before Harris drive off Randolph said, "Jim, whatever happens, take care of Kara Paren and the kids, will~~y~~ you?"

Harris nodded soberly.

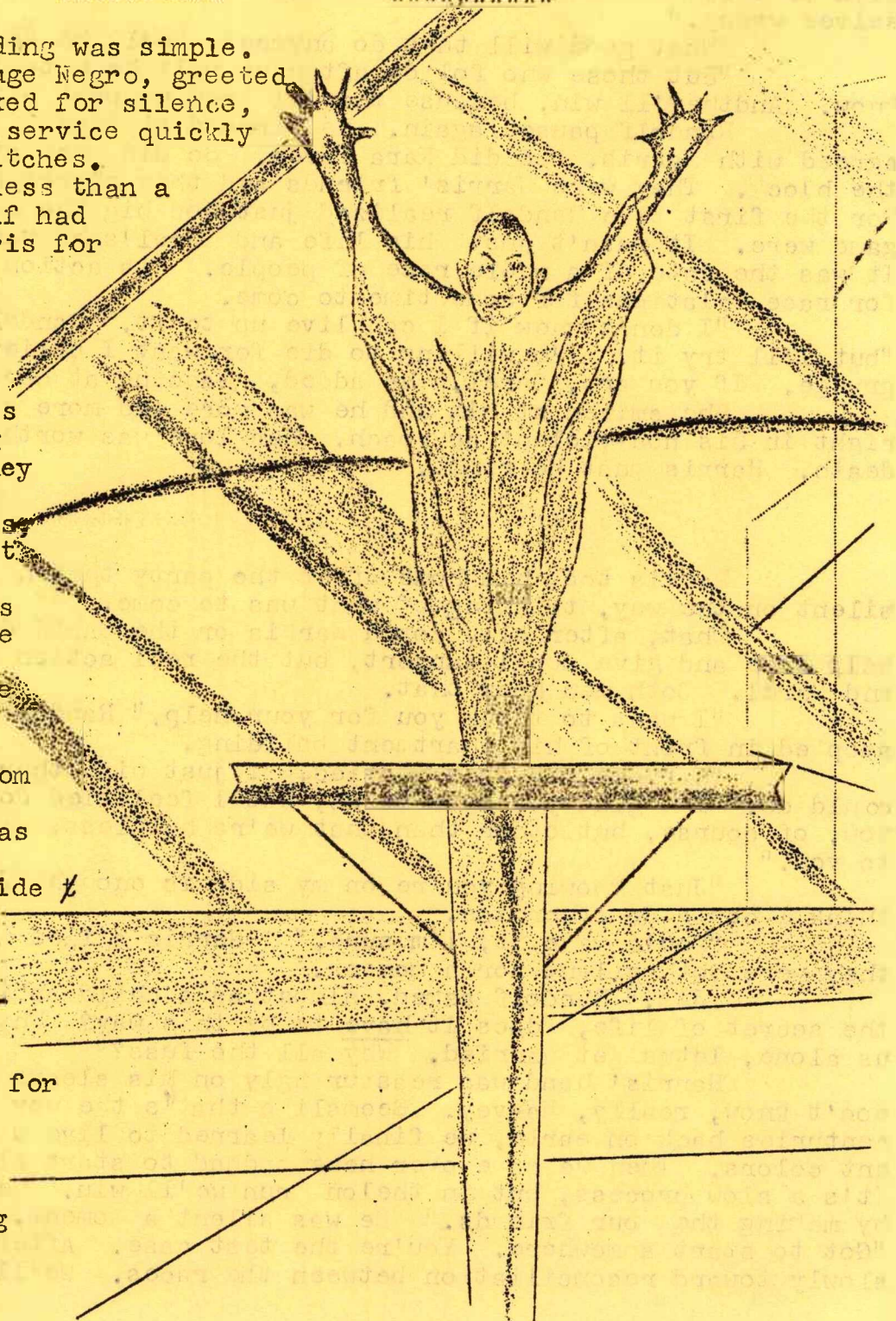
The wedding was simple. Rev. Johnson, a huge Negro, greeted them lovingly, asked for silence, and conducted the service quickly and without any hitches.

It was less than a month since Randolph had first gone to Harris for help.

Only the immediate family was present. Sarel's family, that is, Randolph's would have nothing to do with it. They stayed a safe distance away. Harris, of course, was best man.

The press was waiting outside the little church and the police were hurriedly moving the people past, keeping a crowd from gathering.

As soon as Randolph and his bride stepped outside the door there was an angry roar from the passers by and a very formal looking gentleman stepped forward, held out a warrant for their arrest and motioned for them to come with him. They were under arrest for breaking the intermarriage law which had come in with the segre-



gated schools when the Earth man had come to Mars.

Randolf sighed deeply, waved goodbye to Jim Harris and Rev Johnson, took his new wife's hand and followed the government man.

This, he thought, is just the beginning.

And it was indeed just the beginning. They separated them, of course, as soon as they reached the prison. Randolph felt sick as he kissed Sarel goodbye, thinking that he might never see her again. That neither might live through the ordeal to follow. He thought fleetingly of Kara Paren and wondered what the crowds would do to her. He thought

also of his brother and wished fervently that he could see Bill again, to explain how he felt Bill, of course, wouldn't understand. After it was all over he might, but not now. It would take some tragic events before that would happen.

Harris was his first visitor. The SAANH man was serious and saddened when he visited, but he managed to cheer Randolph up with visions of a victory and freedom which both knew were remote if not impossible. They weren't just fighting the courts and laws. They were fighting the people and the odds were greatly against them. They might, however, be opening the way to other couples, and Randolph consoled himself with that. It did little to ease the pain of separation.

The newsmen, of course, had their chance at him. They flocked around him, asking questions and tak-



ing pictures. Then came the lawyer the SAANH had hired for the case. He was a cheerless soul, exact and to the point.

"You haven't much chance of winning, you know," he said, looking at Randolph with a critical eye.

"We can appeal." Randolph had little hope.

"Probably loose that, too. Then again," he added sadly, "there's the great possibility of a mob taking things over. The crowds are really upset about this. First case of the kind to go to court. Wouldn't be the first lynching over it, though."

Randolf felt a cold chill run through him as he heard these words. He hadn't let himself think about that. He fervently wished the cold little lawyer hadn't brought it up. It was more than a possibility, of course.

The time wore on and the day of the trial drew near. The newspapers told Randolph of the rising public opinion on the issue. It had become a political issue, of course. Poor Bill, Randolph thought, as he pictures his brother's future in politics.

Mobs were demonstrating in front of the building. The guards were doubled, but the crowds outgrew this by far. Night time was their favorite time. They surrounded the building nightly and called for his blood.

The papers told of Jim Harris' leaving three days before the trial was scheduled. The SAANH had withdrawn him and closed their offices on the planet because of the demonstrators. They could do nothing else. Randolph knew Harris had stayed as long as he could -- longer in fact that was safe for him. Only the SAANH lawyer remained, and he protected by government guards.

Somehow the SAANH had spirited Kara Paren and her children away and they were now safe from the crowds which had destroyed their apartment and attacked the school where Sarel had worked. It was only a matter of time, the papers said, before the people broke in and took Randolph and his wife. Only a matter of time.

The night before the day the trial was scheduled all hell broke loose. The crowds reached record size, the leaders demanded Randolph's head and the milling mob attacked the lower floor of the prison.

Randolf could hear the noise and the guards brought him word from time to time.

He paced the cell and tried to recall Harris' words about doing the right thing regardless of circumstances.

The right thing, he said to himself, are we doing the right thing? Is it right for Sarel and I to marry? Can it ~~be~~ possibly be wrong?

He thought of her calmly reading the second note the night of the party and of her accepting the possibility of death. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ She loved him. Of that he was sure. How could it be wrong if she loved him? He tried to understand, but could not. Do what's right, regardless of consequences, Harris had told ~~him~~ them. He had done the only thing he could do. He loved Sarel and she loved him. Regardless of race, color, or social background. This love was right. All else was unimportant.

"You must be willing to die without retaliation," Harris had

told him. But must he? Would he make the crowds right in killing him if he fought back? Must he sit there and die without lifting a finger?

He thought of Paka, Sarel's younger sister. She had years to grow yet. Suppose she fell in love with an Earth man. Would his unresisting death be helpful to her? Would his decision to die for the right thing determine the chances of thousands of future young lovers? Would it break down the rigid segregation which ruled supreme on the planet at the moment?

He cursed the question that plagued his mind. Was Harris right? Should he die with no hate in his heart? Could he?

The noise grew louder and the guards became more and more restless. They could imagine the crowd streaming up the stairs, tearing at those who protected this hated man. They prayed for the long night to end.

Harris was right, of course. Randolph knew it as he paced his cell. He and Sarel didn't matter so much in the long run. They were expendable. But the future generations whom they represented weren't. The principle they stood for wasn't. They were right and if they must die for being so they must do so willingly, with love in their hearts. Love for each other, love for those for whom they stood, and love for those who stormed them and destroyed them.

Had he the courage? Could he die without fear? No, the fear was there, but with it was something else. With the fear came the understanding and the courage that transcended the fear.

The shouting rose and again he thought of Sarel. He knew she would face it bravely. He hoped he could. To die for what you know is right. For the right thing. This was all important. Could he do it?

He did not know.

Perhaps he must now try it.

He faced the night boldly and ignored the fear. Ready for whatever might come.

-- Neal F. Wilgus



