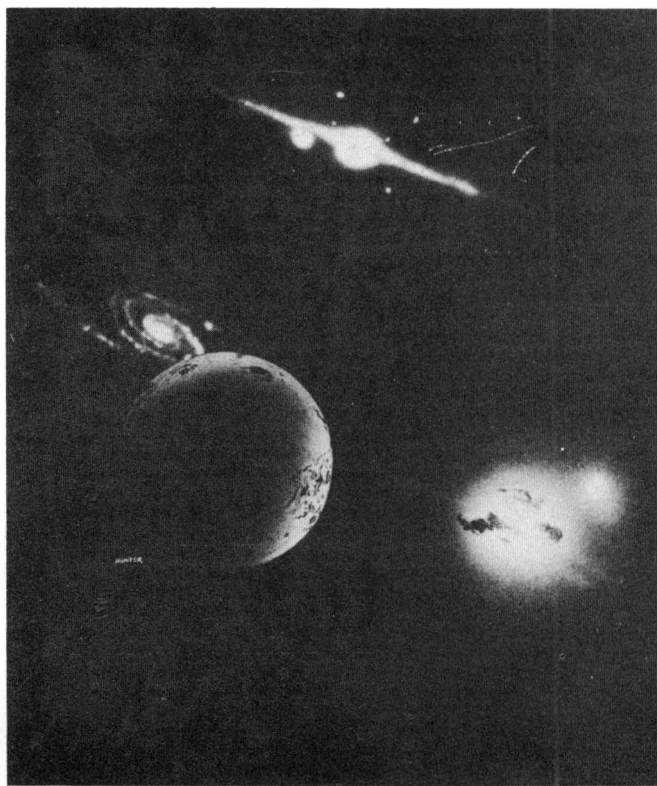


Kris Neville Weaver Wright

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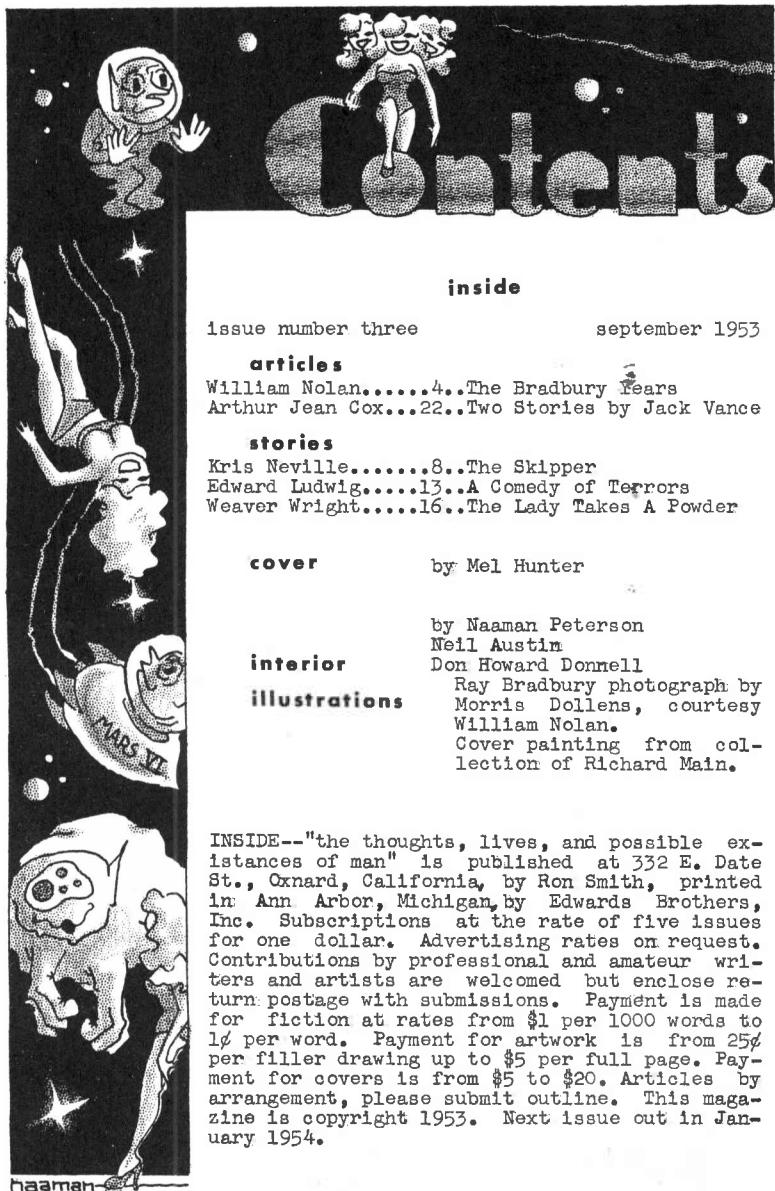


INSIDE magazine
featuring

25¢

Bradbury Years

by william nolan



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issue number three

september 1953

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by Mel Hunter

interior

by Naaman Peterson
Neil Austin


illustrations

Don Howard Donnell
Ray Bradbury photograph by
Morris Dollens, courtesy
William Nolan.
Cover painting from col-
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naaman

Editorial



WHAT IS INSIDE?

Although looks may deceive you, this is not a science fiction magazine. It is thirty-two pages of paper loosely bound together in which you might find anything that can be described as literature or art.

In the four years this publication plans to continue, we hope to feature a little bit of everything, and the only thing we promise about it is it will be good. We'll always print the best work we can obtain.

The preponderance of material and artwork in future issues, however, will be science fiction and fantasy. But that does not make this a science fiction magazine. This is merely a general magazine in which science fiction appears regularly. Clear?

We will feature science fiction in this magazine for the following reasons: (1) we like it (2) the writers we know happen to write it (3) the artists we know happen to illustrate it (4) it sells (5) it's what we know the most about.

If it wasn't for this, we wouldn't print science fiction.

So, in the old well-worn tradition, we have stated our policy. Now you know what to expect, and we hope what we print will suit your taste. As examples:

Next issue we will have another cover by Mel Hunter, who did such a fine job this time.

Also, "Alpha and Omega", a short story by Don Howard Donnell. A story about the atomic war and the end of Man by a very promising new writer. The theme must sound familiar, for it's the presentation that prompted us to buy it. A new slant, and we liked it.

Outside of this, we can't predict the contents. But there will be a few surprises come January. We'll be looking for you then to share them with us.

(Before I go, if any of you would like the first two mimeographed issues, they are available at twenty-five cents.)

ron smith

by william nolan

● The BRADBURY Years

THAT tempest in the science fiction teapot, Ray Bradbury, has sold nearly a million words of fiction during his thirteen year professional career. His total stands at 185 originals with at least a dozen new stories bought and scheduled for the coming eighteen months. Beyond initial printing well over 50% of the Bradbury output has been re-sold to magazines, books, radio, television and, recently, movies. Some titles have seen as many as ten reprintings, with the classic MARS IS HEAVEN selling twenty-five times in six languages!

In this article I intend to point out those particular stories which I personally feel represent Bradbury at his best and present a generalized picture of his growth throughout the years.

1940

Emerging from the protective womb of science fiction fandom (a period in which his stories, poems and parodies gained wide acceptance in fanzines) Bradbury achieved definite, if somewhat shaky, professional status in November of 1940 shortly following his twentieth birthday. IT'S NOT THE HEAT, IT'S THE HU-, a satirical slap at cliches, appeared in Script, a West Coast humor magazine, unable at that point of its uncertain existence to pay for material used (a fact which in no way diminished Bradbury's immense joy at seeing his name at last in professional print!) This vigorous one page short demonstrated his annoyance at a cliché-spouting society and is worthy of note as an example of a philosophy he was to pursue to much greater extent in future work.

1941

Bradbury's first actual sale occurred when Super Science Stories purchased PENDULUM, a collaboration with Henry Hasse--an extensively rewritten and vastly improved draft of one of their earlier fanzine efforts.

1942

THE CANDLE, his fifth sale, appeared in the November issue of Weird Tales, initiating a long series for this magazine. Shallow, complete with contrived climax, THE CANDLE was wholly typical of the standard weirdie, offering no hint of the unique originality which was to trade-mark his work in Weird Tales.

1943

The Bradbury talent began to assert itself in 1943, a year especially notable for KING OF THE GRAY SPACES (Famous Fantastic Mysteries) one of the first in a group of stories responsible for shifting the emphasis in science fiction from the bug-eyed-monster-scientific-gimmick tale to the emotional-human-interest type of story. Of course this is not to say that Bradbury single handedly engineered this shift. Writers like Bob Heinlein and Ted Sturgeon did a great deal toward changing ossified patterns. PROMOTION TO SATILLITE (Thrilling Wonder Stor-

WILLIAM NOLAN, RAY BRADBURY'S NUMBER ONE FAN, HERE GIVES US A VERY INTERESTING HISTORY OF THE WRITER'S WORK. CAN ANY OTHER SCIENCE FICTION AUTHOR BOAST SUCH A RECORD?



RAY BRADBURY

(morris dollens photo)

ies). another Bradburyarn of 1943, qualifies in this progres - sive category but lacks the polish and depth of GRAY SPACES.

In the realm of pure fantasy, THE WIND (Weird Tales) is easily outstanding for the year. Like GRAY SPACES it represents a radical departure, in that Bradbury began to draw upon his own dreams, hopes, and fears of childhood. And the quality of his work, gaining impetus from the utilization of genuine emotion, increased immeasurably.

1944

In 1944, however, Bradbury was still a confused and unsettled young man. He was simultaneously producing very good and very bad fiction. The type of science fiction he wanted to write met stiff resistance among editors. In fact, the only editorial encouragement and help he ever received came from the detective pulps while science fiction editors ignored his work,

bluntly advising him to conform or remain unsalable. Bowing to pressure he wrote three painfully obvious imitations of Leigh Brackett for Planet and, still unsure of his field, energetically plunged into the detective magazines with a total of seven crime tales appearing in 1944. These stories were trite, conventional vehicles, in which Bradbury forced wooden characters into unreal acts and situations.

His really original work was confined almost solely to the pages of Weird Tales. Such excellent stories as THERE WAS AN OLD WOMAN, REUNION, THE LAKE, and THE JAR saw print in Weird Tales in 1944. By harking back to the early small-town days of boyhood in Illinois, he was able to write with a conviction and authority noticeably lacking in his science fiction and detective tales.

1945

Despite a continuance of sorry excursions into the detective field (possibly the worst of these, CORPSE CARNIVAL, appeared under the pseudonym of D. R. Banet in Dime Mystery) his careful attention to mood and story structure landed him, at last, in the slicks. The poetic and moving BIG BLACK AND WHITE GAME, based directly upon an incident in his youth, appeared in The American Mercury and was immediately chosen by Martha Foley for her annual anthology, BEST AMERICAN SHORT STORIES of 1946, while his Mademoiselle story, THE INVISIBLE BOY, a brilliant study in loneliness, achieved Honor Roll listing among distinctive American short stories printed in 1945. Two other quality stories from Weird Tales, SKELETON and THE DEAD MAN, strengthened his growing reputation in fantasy.

1946

Undoubtedly the biggest Bradbury success of the year came with publication of HOME COMING in Mademoiselle. Chosen for the 1947 anthology of O. HENRY MEMORIAL AWARD PRIZE STORIES, this remarkably original and beautifully written fantasy placed Bradbury at the top of his field. Other superb exercises in terror continued to appear in Weird Tales, among them THE NIGHT and THE SMILING PEOPLE. Charm presented THE MIRACLES OF JAMIE and Collier's the nostalgic ONE TIMELESS SPRING.

With the MILLION YEAR PICNIC in Planet Stories, Bradbury staged a successful return to science fiction after a year's absence. CHRYSALIS (Amazing Stories), though overlong and lacking the concise impact of PICNIC, evidenced strong original treatment of a familiar theme. The short novel, LORELEI OF THE RED MIST (Planet) written in collaboration with Leigh Brackett (Bradbury wrote the entire last half) was largely experimental, since it represented the only space-opera he had ever tackled.

1947

Bradbury's first published book, DARK CARNIVAL, a collection of macabre gems, was released by Arkham House. At least three outstanding stories appeared for the first time in its pages--THE NEXT IN LINE, JACK IN THE BOX, and UNCLE EINAR.

I SEE YOU NEVER, Bradbury's realistic New Yorker short was chosen for BEST AMERICAN SHORT STORIES of 1948, and although two of his best fantasies appeared in smooth paper publications (THE MAN UPSTAIRS in Harpers and THE CISTERN in Mademoiselle) slick editors remained stubbornly unconvinced to science fiction. The Collier's Post reject, ZERO HOUR, caused a major stir within science fiction circles when it finally sold to Planet.

1948

This year Bradbury original sales jumped to twenty-one! His science fictional break into the slicks occurred with THE LONG YEARS in McClellan's Magazine, the Canadian counterpart of Collier's.

His forceful study in faith, POWERHOUSE in Charm, qualified

for the O. HENRY MEMORIAL AWARD PRIZE STORIES of 1948, winning third prize in that anthology. In addition, THE MEADOW, the only story he ever wrote directly for radio, won inclusion in BEST ONE-ACT PLAYS of 1947-1948.

Beginning a four year straight run in the annual BEST SCIENCE FICTION anthologies, two of his yarns were chosen for the 1949 volume--AND THE MOON BE STILL AS BRIGHT (Thrilling Wonder Stories) and MARS IS HEAVEN (Planet). Other top-grade science fiction of the year included THE EARTHMAN (Thrilling Wonder), ASLEEP IN ARMAGEDDON and PILLER OF FIRE (both in Planet). In 1948 Bradbury bowed out of Weird Tales with three shorts (FEVER DREAM best among them) ending a seven year twenty-five story association.

Detective Book Magazine carried his superb study in mental terror, TOUCH AND GO, which surely ranks with the finest contemporary crime fiction.

Two neglected classics, a fantasy and a bit of nostalgic realism, remain to round out a highly successful year: THE WOMEN (Famous Fantastic Mysteries) and END OF SUMMER (Script). Neither story has seen reprinting. Unpicked fruit for some wise anthologist!

1949

In marked contrast to earlier years (prior to 1948) when Bradbury was selling little or no science fiction, fifteen of the sixteen originals printed in 1949 fall under the science fiction heading. The one exception was THE GREAT FIRE from Seventeen, the lightly whimsical tale of moonstruck adolescence later chosen for the anthology BEST HUMOR OF 1949-1950.

A host of feminine readers were no doubt genuinely astounded to find a science fiction novelet in the reserved and selective pages of their fashion magazine, Charm, but that is precisely where the original longer version of Bradbury's THE SILENT TOWNS appeared. He had managed, by dint of unending effort, to crack a major U. S. slick with a Martian story! McClellan, in Canada, followed up their Bradbury of the previous year with another science fiction yarn, THE EXILES (under the gaudy editorial title of THE MAD WIZARDS OF MARS!). The crop of notable science fiction continued with HOLIDAY and THE ONE WHO WAITS (both from The Arkham Sampler), I, MARS (Super Science), and THE NAMING OF NAMES, THE MAN, and KALEIDOSCOPE (from Thrilling Wonder).

1950

With Doubleday's publication of THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES, a book which earned unreserved praise from critic and reader alike, Bradbury firmly established himself among leading short story craftsmen. YLLA, the lead story in the collection, appeared in McClellan under the title I'LL NOT LOOK FOR WINE.

This year also witnessed his science fictional invasion of U. S. slickdom's big two--Satevepost and Collier's. His lyric masterpiece, THERE WILL COME SOFT RAINS, preceded, by one week, the oft-reprinted TO THE FUTURE (FOX IN THE FOREST) in Collier's, while the Post gave the feature spot in their September 23 issue to his savage short THE WORLD THE CHILDREN MADE (THE VELDT).

His carnival fantasy of the tatooed giant, THE ILLUSTRATED MAN, was presented in Esquire with loud editorial fanfare.

Equally excellent non-fantasies of the year (each of them based upon incidents in his Illinois home town) included MISS BIDWELL (Charm), THE WINDOW, SEASON OF DISBELIEF (both Collier's), ALL ON A SUMMER'S NIGHT (The Philadelphia Inquirer's Today), and his suspense classic THE WHOLE TOWN'S SLEEPING (McCalls).

(Continued on Page 30)

T H E

S K I P P E R

by kris neville



LIKE HIS SHIP, THE SKIPPER WAS OLD. HE HAD LIVED WITH SPACE LONG AND HARD AND NOW HIS SHIP WAS TO DIE. AND LIKE ALL SPACEMEN, SO MUST HE.

THE Skipper spread his hands before him on the table and studied them. He turned them over and lifted them slowly toward his face. He wiggled the fingers. He let the hands drop back heavily.

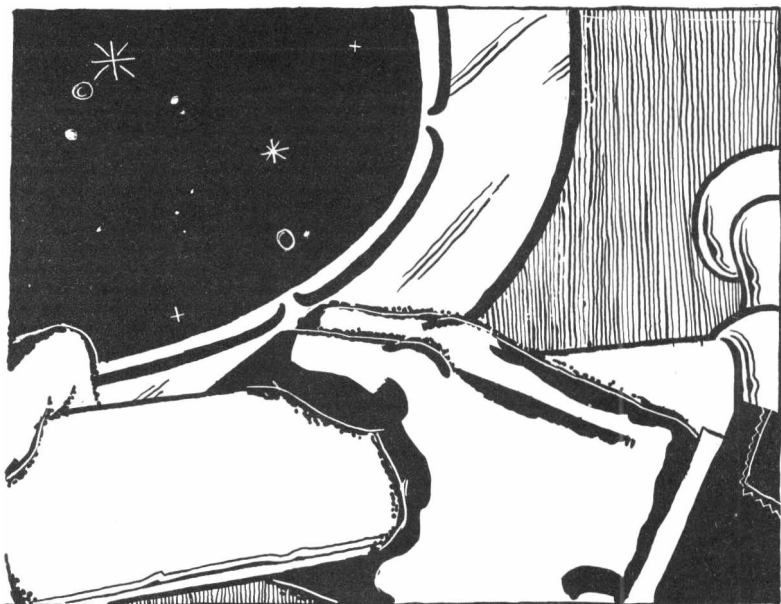
They fluttered helplessly, like two wounded quail in tall, dead grass. Gradually they quieted and slowly resolved into large, hard, hamlike, angry fists. They lay futilely on the desk top.

The hands were no longer his. They were alien things. In one tragic instant, the cold of space and the heat of tropic planets and the fires of suns pounced on them with the pent-up force of the last half century and they, by this atomic bombardment of age, were transmuted into the crisp, dead leaves of winter. He turned his face upward from them and stared at the white bulkhead before him.

He pushed downward against the table with those hands, and the veins stood out in blue profile. He propelled himself erect, his shoulders thrust forward, most of his weight on the down turned palms.

Around the Skipper were a hundred familiar objects. There beside his locker, a trunk from Antares; over to the left, a squat, ugly, pot bellied Kataun idol; above, on the bulkhead, a three dimensional tapestry from Mars; slightly below it, a shining talisman from a planet on the rim of Empire; farther left, a Hartin dark gun (The Pleno Wars) and a slender, sheathed stiletto; on the table, an intricately carved pipe. The office bulged with his possessions, and they seemed to give off a friendly warmth. They filled the tiny space with silent, nostalgic voices from far away--lost voices. They seemed to center on the tall, slightly stooped figure. With him, they seemed to merge into a harmonious unit; without him, surely, they would burst like a pricked balloon and collapse again into their individual selves.

Adjoining this office was the second of his two rooms. It con-



contained none of the pathetically priceless emblems of a wanderer's life. It was utilitarian. Only a bed, a chair, a desk, and a bureau were cramped between its four bulkheads. It was his stateroom, and its only decoration was a faded painting of the Scandinavian town where he had been born. Thrusting out from one corner was his individual shower. It was three-sided, metal, oblong--a box-like unit rearing from deck to deckhead. There was a six inch high ledge along the open side. The front was bare save for a medicine cabinet with a mirror front above the wash basin. In the back part a galvanised bucket held a heavy canvas curtain partly to one side. Through the opening, a small heap of clothing was visible, and behind them, the ugly, black circle of the drain. In contrast to the dull red of the two rooms, the deck of the shower was gleaming white tile.

The Skipper walked to the shower, unconscious of the indignity of its size. He picked up the galvanised bucket and sifted into it a little soap powder from a water tumbler he kept in the medicine cabinet. He moved slowly.

After replacing the tumbler, he filled the bucket with warm water from the shower tap. He turned off the water, put down the bucket, and knelt beside it. Into the warm, foamy suds he plunged those alien hands. The soap bubbles prismaticly caught and separated the light, like mist in the upper atmosphere of a planet does, making rainbows. He hesitated a moment, motionless, lost in thought.

The thoughts died with a tired sigh, and he picked up his socks and underwear, placed them in the bucket and sloshed them up and down, the sweet soap clinging to his bare arms up to his elbows.

After a time, he took out the clothing, filled with the clean odors of hot, soapy water, and spread them smoothly on the tile deck. He picked up a brush; he scrubbed them with the stiff bristles.

Frequently he paused in his work and watched the layer of foam break and settle caressingly into the garments; between times he continued to scrub slowly and carefully, a frown of intense concen-

tration on his face.

When he finished with the brush, he twisted each article tightly and watched the soap come fleeing out of the thin, porous fabric.

He arose slowly, resting one hand on the bulkhead; with the other he turned on the shower. After a moment of inactivity, the pipe gave a disparing gurgle, spewed out a cupful of water, and a hoarse rattle vibrated down its length, announcing that the ship's engineers had cut off the pressure.

He sighed and glanced down at the socks and underwear lying limply twisted on the tile.

He turned from the shower, rubbed his wet hands along his withered flanks, and crossed the four steps to his bunk. He sat down. Picking up his carefully folded pants, he pulled them on and then stood up, rolled down his sleeves, and adjusted his tie.

Leaving his compartment, the Skipper went swiftly down the companionway and turned into the officer's pantry. There the messman was bending over the sink, still washing the luncheon dishes.

"Do you have a bucket?" the Skipper asked.

The messman halted in mid-movement, and his head jerked up and swiveled over his shoulder. He wore a guilty look, as if the Skipper had been standing behind him for a long time, reading his thoughts. Almost instantaneously the expression relaxed and faded away to be replaced by a puzzled but obedient one.

"I'm sorry, sir, I didn't understand what you said."

"A bucket," the Skipper repeated. "Do you have a bucket, something to carry water in?"

The messman hesitated and then reached under the sink, tossing a "Just a second." over his shoulder. He found a four pound coffee tin crammed with stained rags. He emptied the rags on the deck and straightened up.

"This okay, sir?"

"Yes, that's just fine, thank you."

"I'll was it out, sir."

"Never mind. I just wanted a little of your rinse water."

The messman raised his eyebrows. "This, sir?" he asked.

"Yes. That."

"Okay," the messman said. He turned and washed out the coffee tin and then after sloshing it around in the rinse water, scooped it half full. As he carried the tin across the deck to the Skipper, it left a trail of dripping water.

"All right, sir?" he asked, and then added quickly and apologetically, "It's not very hot, now."

"It's fine. Yes, this is just the thing." He smiled and offered in explanation, "The water's off, you know." But he made no move to take the coffee tin from the messman.

"Did you want me to carry it for you, sir?"

"Eh? Oh. No, no, of course not." The Skipper reached out with his right hand. He took the coffee tin firmly. He half turned with it.



"Oh...Sir! Excuse me, but...?"

The Skipper faced him again. "Yes?"

"Sir, do you know when we stop feeding?"

The Skipper faced him again.

tightened and his hand grasped the rim of the coffee tin more firmly.

"No...No, I don't," he said sharply and then added in a milder voice, "They haven't told me yet." He drew his shoulders back a little and pulled in on his stomach.

"Oh..." The messman seemed about to return to his work, but instead he took a breath and said, "Gosh, I hate to see her laid up, but then I guess I would kinda like to get another ship." He stopped short. "Not that this hasn't been a swell ship to work for, I mean. It has; it's been all right. I meant I'd like to get a larger ship. One that goes beyond the inner planets. Make more money and get to see some place besides Marsport. Go to Saturn's moons; maybe another star. I'd like that."

The Skipper was silent.

"I talked to them over at Fort Richardson this morning," the messman continued, "and they told me I'd get a bigger ship if I just wait and finish up here. But if I quit, I can't ship again for three months. And it's rough on the surface. So that's why I wanted to know when we stop feeding."

The Skipper shifted the can and looked down at the creases in his trousers, at the high polish on his black shoes. He looked up at the messman and then looked slightly to his left.

"Yes," he said, "things are rough on the surface." He took a deep breath. "But with Space Transport, you can't ever tell. They may not even decommission this ship."

"Oh, yes, sir!" the messman contradicted hurriedly. "The sparks was over at the Signal Office yesterday and they told him it was to go to the bonfire for sure. And they promised him another job as a single operator, too. And the first mate has already got a job on the Hamilton Interp."

"I heard," the Skipper said tiredly.

"And the new second engineer got a swell offer from the MEV-Lines."

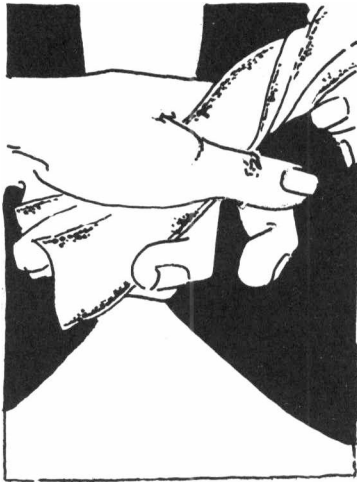
"That's fine," the Skipper said and glanced down at the can. His hand was still holding it firm and hard.

"I guess I better stop batting the breeze and get back to work, Skipper."

The Skipper nodded. "Well, thanks," he said. He hurried with the coffee tin half full of rinse water back to his compartment.

When he entered it, he heard the shower running. The stateroom was hot and steamy. "I guess the engineers turned the waterback on," he told himself.

He sat down on his bed, put the coffee tin on the deck beside him, took off his pants, folded them, and looked at them, studied them. "I better send them to the cleaners pretty soon," he muttered.





He stood. He rolled up his sleeves and loosened his tie. Bending over, he picked up the coffee tin and walked to the shower with it. He emptied it, set it to one side, caught a bucket full of clean water and then turned off the shower.

He knelt, rinsed his underclothing and socks carefully, wrung them out and dumped the water. He cleaned up the shower. After it could pass his rigid inspection, he went to his office, got a piece of twine from the lower left hand drawer of the desk. He returned with it to the shower. He tied the string across the shower front and hung his laundry on it.

He crossed to his bed again, sat down, pulled on his pants for the second time. He walked from there to the mirror over the bureau, started to adjust his tie but, noticing the shirt collar, removed the shirt instead. He folded it neatly.

He found a clean, white shirt in the drawer and drew it on slowly, enjoying the crispness of it. In front of the mirror, he wind-sor knotted a tie. Then he ran his hand over his chin, shook his head wearily and took off the tie and shirt. He walked to the shower.

As he lathered his face, he watched those strange hands of his moving in practiced rhythm.

"Still good hands. Lots of years in them," he told himself intently. But one time they nicked his face.

After finishing with the shave, he rubbed in a lotion, pleasantly aware of the fresh, youthful sting. He put on his shirt once more. He put on his coat, right sleeve, left sleeve, shrugged it into place, buttoned it, smoothed it, taking his time.

Just when he was satisfied with the hang of the coat, there was a harsh knock at the door. It roused him from his reverie before the mirror as effectively as an oxygen leak might have. He forced back his shoulders and sucked in his stomach until he looked quite military in his Captain's blues.

"Come in," he said.

The door swung inward, and the man who stood there smiling an automatic smile said, "I've come for the laundry and cleaning."

"Oh," the Skipper answered. "I hu--Well, I had such a little bit that I took it out myself this morning."

He glanced at the soiled shirt, smoothly folded.

"I guess that can wait until next time." He smiled as if at a subtle joke.

"This is the last time I'll be around before the ship's decommissioned."

"Well, in that case, I'll send it from my next ship."

"Sure. I'll pick it up then." The laundry man started away; then he paused, turned back. "Oh, by the way. What ship are you getting?"

The Skipper licked his lips. "Un. Well, they haven't told me yet."

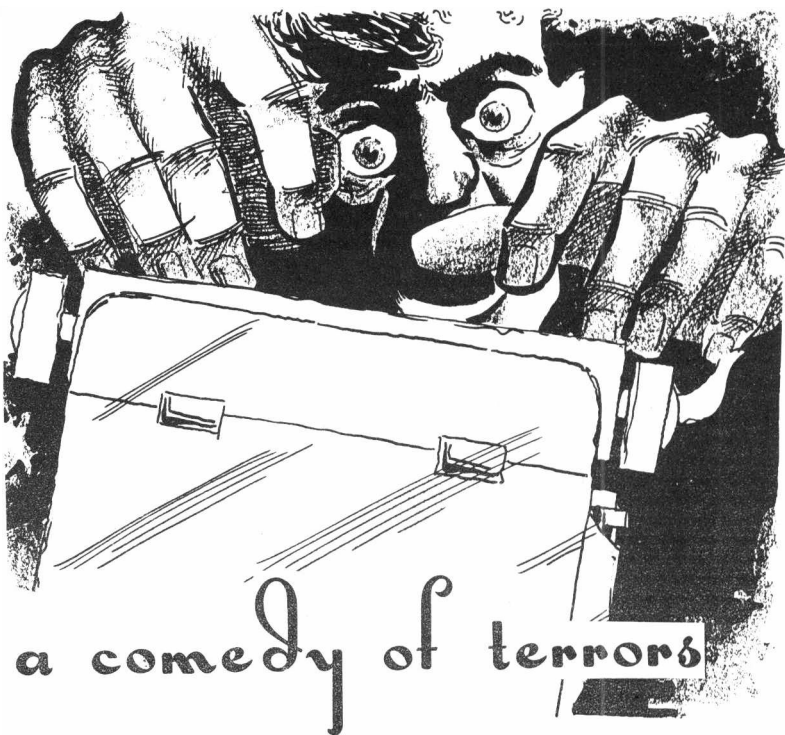
"Well, thanks. Thanks just the same. I'll see you then."

"Until then?"

"Yes, sir. Goodby." The pickup man closed the door softly.

The Skipper picked up his hat, looked at the color of it. Look-

(Continued on Page 31)



a comedy of terrors

HUMANOOGIES! WE CERTAINLY DON'T BELIEVE IN THEM. BUT, ANYWAY, WE THINK THIS MAKES AN INTERESTING FAIRY TALE. WHAT? NOW WAIT A MINUTE, FELLOWS, I WAS JUST KIDDING!

by edward ludwig

HAVE you ever heard of Humanooxies? I know you haven't, which is why I'm writing this. My story is true, and if it isn't believed, a guy named Ludwig is going to meet a fate that will make the last hours of Hitler seem as exciting as Mother Hubbard's Saturday night.

It all began just seven hours ago, at nine p.m., when I was proceeding down the hall looking for the editorial offices of INSIDE. I use the term "proceeding" deliberately because, after seven beers, to say that I was walking would be an overstatement.

I was, therefore, proceeding toward the office door when a light hand tapped me on the shoulder.

"It's nine o'clock, bud," a voice rasped. "These offices are closed. Everybody's gone home."

I turned and squinted at the two blurry figures which gradually merged into a wizened little old man who carried a mop and a bucket of dirty water.

"Closed!" I screamed, brandishing my manuscript-crammed portfolio. "But I'm a writer. I've got to show the editor my stories. There must be someone in there!"

"Sorry," the janitor murmured. "You're too late."

I leaned against the door and groaned. It had taken me two

weeks to develop enough courage to bring my stories here, and it was only natural for me to stop at Tony's for an additional supply of the liquid variety. I hadn't realized that the afternoon had swept by so rapidly.

The janitor disappeared down the hall, swinging his pail and whistling a swing version of "The Old Oaken Bucket". The heck with him, I thought. How did he know that the office was locked?

Gingerly I tried the knob. The door swung open and I stepped into the blue-black office. My heart began to pound. There was someone here after all!

I tiptoed through the office and, after bumping into a receptionist's desk, came to the door lettered Editor. A narrow line of light shone beneath the door, and the shuffle of moving bodies came from within.

I breathed a prayer and clutched my portfolio more tightly. My trembling fingers found the doorknob, and I strode into the inner sanctum, my eyes blinking in the sudden light.

The room was a shambles. Drawers of filing cabinets had been opened and pages of typewritten manuscripts were strewn about in a chaotic sea. Ink from an overturned bottle trickled rhythmically down the front of the desk before me.

A figure was seated at the desk, peering at a crumpled manuscript. Another form stood kibitzing over his shoulder.

"Hello," I said, my voice tense. "Are you Mr. Sm--"

My words spluttered into nothingness as the man at the desk raised his head, pushed back his chair, and stood erect. I staggered backward into a filing cabinet, my legs like water. Icy fear goose-pimpled down my spine. Instantly I was cold sober.

I screamed.

The two things that stared at me might have been twins. They were roundish little creatures, dressed in identical black overcoats from whose bottoms extended black, bulbous shoes. Their features were like doll faces that had melted over a hot stove. Round, blood-shot eyes were set deep within rolls of black skin that sagged loosely at the outer corners. Moist lips were thick as fingers and, like the eyes, drooped in half-moon shapes. The hook nose of the creature twitched.

"Who--w--what are you?" I stammered.

"We're Humanogles," the first Thing said, his deep voice drifting up from remote, hollow depths. "Who are you?"

"Me? M--My name's Ludwig, Ed Ludwig. I'm a writer--"

"A writer!" the creature snarled. "You're one of the guys we're after. What you got there? Stories?"

Wide-eyed, gaping, I nodded.

"What they about?"

Trembling, I withdrew my manuscripts. "This one's called 'The Screaming Sword' and this is 'The Enchanted Cockroach', and--"

"Are they about Humanogles?"

"No, they're about--"

The paw shot up again and smashed into my nose. I started to swing, but stopped as I saw the creature was crying! Tears the size of grapes oozed from massive eyes and coursed down the ravines in his fleshy face.

"Nobody knows about us," he sniffed, wiping his nose with his sleeve. "Nobody at all. We came here tonight and read every story we could find, and all you fellows write about is atom bombs and traveling through time and Martians and strange scientists. Nobody--not this guy Van Vogt, nor Temple, nor Williamson, nor Bradbury--nobody, not even Forrest Ackerman, writes about Humanogles."

"But what are Humanooogies?" I asked.

The creature stopped crying and straightened proudly.

"We're gods," he said almost reverently. "We're gods of all humanity. Some of us are good, some bad, and some just in between, like us. We get our energy and substance from the thoughts and emotions of human beings. We two are gods of smoke from your factories. There are gods of your shipyards, of your farms and ranches, of nightclubs and taxi cabs. There is a god of Saturday night, and one of hill billy music, and one of Boogie Woogie. Whenever the mind and will of men are at work, we are created."

Still confused, I asked, "But what do you do? Why don't we see you?"

"Some of us help men, some of us harm men. We may be in the gaze of a killer or in the fingers of a great pianist. We may be in the fires of a blast furnace, or in the air that gives it oxygen. We're usually invisible, but wherever men are, we're there also."

Suddenly the Humanooogie's manner changed. Little devils of hate danced in his eyes.

"We've been patient long enough, hoping that someone would discover us. Now we're mad--especially at people like you."

He paused as if to let the full meaning of his words sink into my consciousness. Then he said, very softly:

"That's why we're going to kill you."

His black, smoke-like fingers sought to encircle my throat. I lunged backward. I tried to scream, but my voice was frozen. Desperately I attempted to grope my way toward the door.

Then something clicked in my mind. I gulped, found my voice.

"Wait!" I cried. "I can help you. I can make you known to people. I can make you famous!"

The Humanooogie paused uncertainly and I took a deep breath.

"I'm a writer," I said. "I'll write a story about you, and everyone will read it and learn about you."

The creature thought a moment. Then he nodded to his scowling companion, turned back to me and muttered, "All right, go ahead. There's the editor's typewriter."

"But it'll take time," I added. "I'll have to plot the story, write it, revise it--"

The Humanooogie stiffened. He pointed to the typewriter.

"Now!" he commanded.

"Yes--yes," I murmured. "Now. O--Of course--"

So I sat at the desk for five hours, covering my pages with words, curses, and perspiration. As I worked, the two Humanooogies cleaned up the office by methods known only to themselves. In a miraculous fashion, ink stains vanished and manuscripts were returned fresh and clean to their proper places.

As the pink light of dawn filtered through the window, I rubbed tired, burning eyes and rose from the desk.

"It's nearly finished," I sighed, "--all except the last few lines. When I'm through, I'll leave it here on the desk, and maybe the editor will think it came with the morning mail."

No one answered me, and I gasped as I raised my head. The Humanooogies had disappeared.

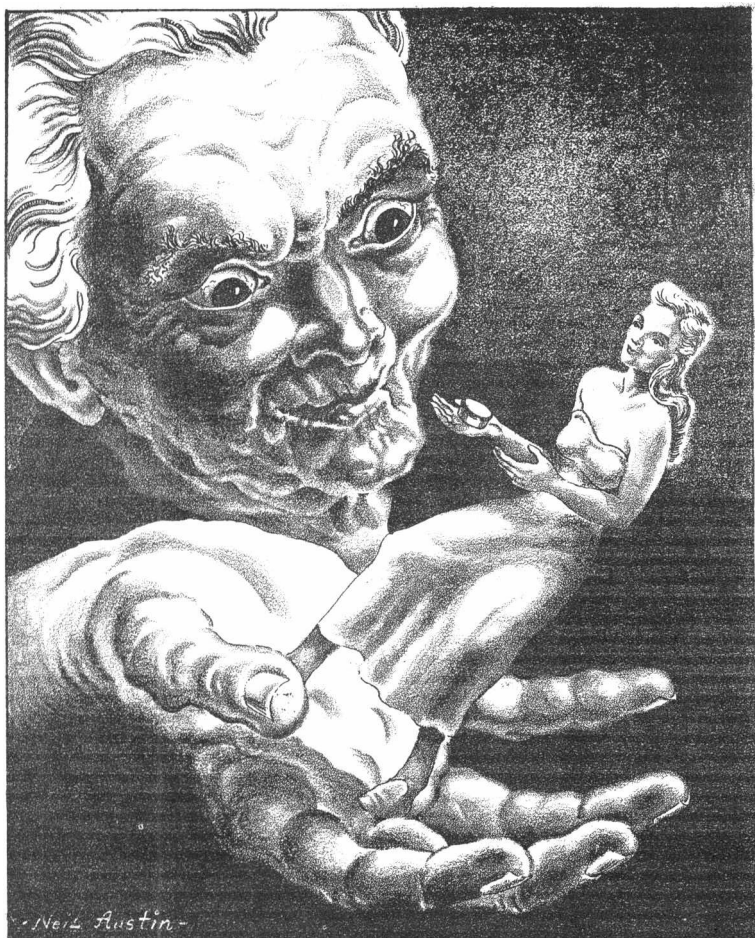
So now I'm going to wait--wait to see if my story is published and if it is believed. If it is not, I know that the creatures will return to me in the night and that my end will not be pleasant.

You. You believe in Humanooogies, don't you?

the lady takes a powder

the lady took a powder from the old
woman and lived to rue the day!

by weaver wright



THE feature picture set the stage for my weird adventure. It was "Darker Than You Dreamed", and certainly superior to the run-of-the-thrill, boy-meets-ghoul type of thing that Hollywood shamelessly, repetitiously, and profitably, my husband tells me, produces.

I had been seduced into the theater by the combination of Gregory Decker and the supernatural theme. I felt sure I had just witnessed an Academy performance in Laurel Leigh's superbly lupine portrayal of the lycanthrope who committed suicide with a silver bullet. Now I prepared to relax with the Nellie Pan cartoon.

As my mind gradually unfroze from the chilling climax, I became aware of the aroma of buttered popcorn. Whoever was sitting next to me, I thought, must have a bag.

The interior of the show had seemed stygian to my nyctalopic eyes when I first entered, and my attention had been raptly centered on the screen during the werewolf film. As I glanced surreptitiously to either side of me for the first time, I was surprised to see that no one was sitting within three seats of me, but a bag appeared to be resting on the left arm of the seat to my left.

Out of the corner of my eye I glimpsed Nellie on the screen pulling a top hat out of a rabbit's ear, and the next moment was too absorbed in the devilry of the mix to wonder over the minor mystery of the missing popcorn muncher. It was not till the prevues came on that I again became aware of an aroma emanating from immediately to my left, this time the richness of bittersweet chocolate. And, although I distinctly heard the sound of sharp teeth crunching a candy bar, I saw no one at my side. A quick look about only served to confuse me further, for nowhere nearby could I see anyone eating anything.

I wasn't nervous, I told myself, but it was getting on time when I should be heading for home to get Everett's supper. If I left now, I could avoid the crush hour.

As I slipped on my cloak and began to sidle toward the aisle, giving a good imitation of the conga, I had a queer sensation that I was being followed. Did I imagine an invisible hip nudged mine? And then I heard a silvery, tinkly laugh close to my ear!

"It's time for me to leave, too," a girl's voice volunteered in a whisper. "Wasn't Greg wonderful?"

"He surely--" I started to agree, then the aisle tilted up at a forty-five degree angle and grew a mile long, and my legs went as rubbery as bubble gum.

There was no one at my side. No one could possibly have spoken to me.

I made the exit, but only because it was wide. I knew that I was staggering.

The way my teeth were chattering while waiting for the bus, Carmen Miranda could have used them for castanets. Still shivering, I boarded the streamlined behemoth when it eventually pulled up to the curb.

The bus was not crowded. I sat by myself in a seat in the back. Color began to come back to my cheeks as I contemplated the normalcy, the safety of the bus. The bus, monarch of the boulevard, lord of the lesser cars.

The familiar, light interior of the bus. The inevitable car-cards. Then...

An invisible blotter drank the moisture from my tongue. An unseen plxie fizzed a bottle of seltzer on my scalp. And I failed the B.O. Test as sweat made my armpits soggy: I saw the leatherette cushions of the seat next to me flatten out, and I realized, as Everett later indelicately phrased it, that "some-

body's derriere sat there!"

With my ten thumbs I fumbled for my compact. I hardly recognized my own face, chalk-white, as, under the pretext of applying my lipstick, I whispered to the air: "Is someone there?"

There was a pregnant silence. Then any hopes I had entertained that this was a delusion ripped like a pair of poor quality lisle stockings when the bodyless voice replied, "You really don't mind my following you, do you? One gets so terribly lonely when one is invisible."

"Lonely...? Invisible...? I suppose I gasped in the accepted manner of the melodramactresses of the radio. "You mean you're really invisible--not a ghost?"

Then curiosity overcame my basic fear, and I continued in a lowered tone, so that I would not be overheard, "How did it ever happen? Did you get mixed up with H.G. Wells, or are you a scientist's daughter?"

"Neither!" the muffled laugh emerged from empty air. "My name's Roxana, I'm twenty-two, and quite as ordinary as anyone else. Except, of course, I'm invisible."

"You weren't born that way, surely? It would have been in the papers."

"No, I wasn't born that way. I was visible till last year. It all began on my twenty-first birthday..."

I closed my eyes, rested my head against the window and pretended to sleep as this amazing story was whispered into my ear. Hear it out. I promise I won't betray you in the end and say, "And I woke from my dream with the bus driver tapping my shoulder and saying, 'Lady, this is as far as I go.'"

Roxana continued: "The day the little woman selling cosmetics came to the door. I never would have let her in, except--well--it was my twenty-first birthday, and I was feeling very grownup and self-assured. You see, my parents were dead, and I lived with my aunt and uncle. They were very strict--never allowed me to use lipstick or nail polish, or even face powder, even when I went to high school and all my girl chums wore makeup. My aunt had given me ten dollars for my birthday, and told me that I could spend it for anything I wanted. I suppose she thought I'd buy books with it. I had a marvelous collection of fiction and non-fiction on witchcraft, fantasy, science fiction...oh, everything that was rather off-trail or unusual. 'S' funny, my aunt and uncle were terribly strict, but they didn't seem to mind what company I kept in authors; I guess because they weren't bookish people themselves."

"They just didn't want me to have boy-friends or wear makeup. I'd have given my soul for either. And it was perfectly ridiculous to prohibit them at my age."

An indignant sniff rustled dust motes in the air.

"Anyway, when this little old woman came to the door with her array of cosmetics, it seemed to me like a wonderful opportunity to assert my rights as last as a free individual and do what I pleased. My aunt and uncle happened to be out for a few hours, so I invited the little old lady inside."

"You know the old witch in 'Hansel and Gretel'? Well, she looked like a popular conception of her, only she had a pleasant, mischievous twinkle in her oddly slanted green eyes. Any misgivings I might have had about her were quickly banished when she drew forth from her valise the most enticing array of bottles, jars, and varicolored flasks."

"I remember she said to me, 'This is the first time you've ever bought cosmetics, isn't it?' I told her it was, but asked her how she knew. 'Oh, I can tell a lot about my customers, you'd be surprised,' she replied enigmatically, and then said with a sly wink, 'and I do hope you will become one of my cus-

tomers.'

"I had the strange feeling she could gaze deep inside my miserable little soul, that she sensed that I was lonely and unhappy in my unnatural, sheltered life with an aunt and uncle who could never understand me or give me the love that real parents could.

"I finally ended up by buying a box of face powder, an odd little flacon of perfume, a lipstick, and a jar of vanishing cream. The funny thing was, she insisted on presenting me with an extra-large size of the cream, and she wouldn't accept any money for it. Said something about it's being a gift from her on my twenty-first birthday. I was surprised, because I hadn't told her.

"As she left she said, 'You'd be amazed, child, what a change in your life there can be just from the proper application of my cosmetics.'

"When my aunt and uncle returned I showed them my treasures. They were not only disapproving, they were furious. My aunt immediately appropriated the cosmetics and threw them in the trash barrel.

"I rushed to my room in an unreasoning rage, and locked myself in. Then I cried and cried. It was too utterly humiliating. A girl my age being denied the use of a few harmless cosmetics at the mere whim of an overbearing aunt and uncle.

"I must have fallen asleep in utter exhaustion. I remember awakening about quarter to twelve. The house was silent. My aunt and uncle always retired punctually at 9:00.

"I was in a defiant mood. Cautiously I crept downstairs in the dark.

"At the trash barrel the spicy fragrance of the spilled perfume made me weep again at its loss as I groped among the broken bits of glass. It was hopeless to salvage the face powder; the box had burst and its contents would now be indistinguishable from the roach powder on the basement floor. I couldn't find the lipstick in the dark, but my hands closed on a jar--the unspilled facial cream. Hastily I put it in my pocket and stole back upstairs.

"In my room I cautiously locked my door, turned on the desk lamp, and by its low light began to rub the contents of the jar methodically on my face. I was in that sort of unreasonable, irrational mood when you make all sorts of crazy, impractical resolutions. With every motion of my hand I thought, 'I'll show them! They can't boss me!' In fact, I firmly resolved to run away the very next day.

"In the distance I heard a town clock boom out the hour of midnight--the witching hour. My facial completed, I walked to the mirror to satisfy my vanity visually. But the sight that met my eyes when I gazed into the looking glass left me limp with terror: I had no face! My hair was visible, and the rest of my body, but my face and neck--they just weren't there!

"I put my hand up to my face to feel the invisible part of me. It was still there. I could feel it, but I couldn't see it. And yet, I knew I wasn't partially blinded, because I could see the other objects in the room quite clearly.

"Then I noticed a portion of my hands was invisible too--just the fingertips--the part that had touched the cream. And it struck me. The corny old witch! She'd said the use of cosmetics would surprise me and change my life. Vanishing cream!

"A dream? I wondered. Well, if it were I'd enter into the spirit of things and get the most enjoyment from it. Maybe I should have felt alarmed, but I didn't. At the time I thought it was romantic, that there was some subtle magic to the air, and new adventures awaiting me.

"I undressed and rubbed myself from head to toe with the soft, soothing unguent. When I again asked the mirror's opinion. I was not disappointed: I was totally invisible!

"Free! Free to roam where I willed, unseen. Free, twenty-one and invisible!

"Then I looked at things from a more practical viewpoint. Even if I couldn't be seen, I didn't want to go around undressed. There was the weather, for one thing; and for another, I had no way of knowing just how long the effect of the mysterious cream might last. And besides, defiant though I was, I didn't want to start on my new adventures at midnight. After my childish emotional outburst I was very tired and craved a good night's rest.

"But I couldn't go to bed covered with the greasy cream, so I decided to take a shower and cleanse it off. But it wouldn't come off! I might as well have tried to erase a shadow off a wall as to make myself visible again. That didn't make me so happy.

"When I put on my nightgown, I expected to see a ludicrous sight in my mirror. I thought I'd see my nightgown apparently standing there in midair, all by itself. But it, too, cast no reflection!

"It was an inexplicable phenomenon, one of many. I eventually found that any inanimate object that comes into contact with me automatically vanishes. Clothing, food, and so on.

"Well, I left early the next morning. I didn't take much with me; I just wore an old sweater and skirt beneath my coat, and put on my most comfortable pair of low-heeled shoes. Of course my aunt and uncle instigated a search for me, but the police could never find me.

"I didn't have much money--never did have, and my aunt and uncle wouldn't let me go out and earn spending money. So, well, I hope what I'm about to say next won't shock you, but, the fact is that being invisible, and unable to work, whenever I was hungry I'd raid a kitchen in some swank hotel or cafe. They were scrumptious meals." I heard Roxana's invisible lips smack in reminiscence, "And I soon got to know which places operated under sanitary conditions, too, from the lowliest hamburger joint to the classiest restaurants.

"At night, I'd stay at the best hotels, sleeping in the unrented rooms. It's risky, of course. Twice I've been surprised by a room being rented during the night. When I jump out of bed, the sheets wave around like a ghost, and the guest nearly has heart failure.

"As for clothes or anything else I need, I just appropriate them. I hope you aren't too shocked."

Here astonishing recital seemed momentarily at an end. Pretending to awaken, I yawned, covering my mouth and commenting, "No, I can imagine many a woman in your predicament would have a wonderful time 'appropriating' beautiful clothes, jewelry, furs, expensive cosmetics..."

I felt a pressure on my arm. "I can see you don't understand," said Roxana. "It may sound like fun--but what good are fine clothing and precious jewels when they become invisible upon contact with me? And, anyway, I don't take anything unless I absolutely need it. I'm not light-fingered by nature."

"Why haven't you called your case to the attention of some scientist?" I queried cautiously.

"But that's just it! Is this in the realm of science or sorcery? Besides, I couldn't stand being a guinea pig with a doctor pawing over me and making examinations, and stories in the newspapers, and notoriety, and my aunt and uncle finding me again..."

"Oh," and again I felt a grip on my arm, "but how lonely it is! You can't know. If you've seen any movies about invisible people, or read any books, or even just thought about it sometime, you might imagine it would be a great lark. But it isn't. You wouldn't believe how difficult it is, how many problems confront and perturb you, things that never occur in tailor-made stories.

"I used to try to make friends with people, but when I spoke to them they'd be afraid and think they were having hallucinations. Sometimes I played practical jokes on drunks who'd lost their weekend, but I soon got tired of playing a female Shadow. In fact...I'm very tired of everything."

The driver called Fifth Street. "Look," I said, "I get off at the next stop, but I'd like to--"

I felt her move away from me. "I'm going to the end of the line." A tone of finality adumbrated her words like the closing of a coffin lid, causing me to shudder.

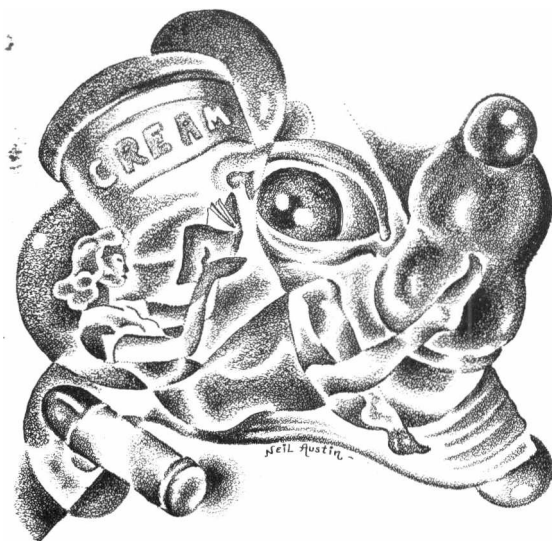
"Well...Good-bye, and good luck!" And with that banality I parted company with Roxana, the Invisible Girl.

That night I missed my compact. I was ver upset; it was the one Everett gave me on our fifth wedding anniversary. Where could I possibly have lost it? The last I recalled seeing it was on the bus. Roxana?

I found the same bus driver next day and asked him if a compact answering the description of mine had been found and reported. None had.

I put an ad in the paper. I got a phone call the first day. An elderly lady had found it, and could not deliver it to me, but she would be glad to return it to me if I would call. Out of curiosity I asked her where it had been found. The impact of

(Continued on Page 31)



ARTHUR WILL DO HIS OWN EXPLAINING AS TO WHY THIS ARTICLE WAS WRITTEN. WE ARE ONLY GLAD IT WAS! FOR WHETHER YOU HAVE READ THESE TWO STORIES OR NOT, THE THOROUGHNESS WITH WHICH THEY ARE DISCUSSED HERE WILL LEAVE YOU WONDERING: "VANCE SAID ALL THAT?"

AUTHOR'S NOTE: In the summer of last year I began "synopsizing" several stories by Jack Vance. My idea was to make a detailed study of both his and Henry Kuttner's imagery, contrasting them in order to demonstrate to certain acquaintances that the two couldn't possibly be the same person. I have decided since that that was an idle ambition and abandoned it. However, I have pieced together here some of my notes in the hope that they will provide an interesting commentary on two of Vance's stories, "Telek" and "Noise".

"Telek", a short novel, appeared in the January 1952 issue of *Astounding Science Fiction*. The story opens with Will Shorn attempting to persuade Ian Geskamp into joining a conspiracy to destroy the Teleks:

"...Consider the trend. At the outset they were ordinary citizens. They lived by ordinary conventions; they were decent people. After the first congress they made their fortunes by performing dangerous and unpleasant tasks. Idealism, public service was the keynote. They identified themselves with all of humanity, and very praiseworthy, too. Now, sixty years later. Consider the Teleks of today. Is there any pretension of public service? None. They dress differently. They no longer load ships or clear jungles or build roads; they take an easier way, which makes less demands on their time. Humanity benefits; they bring us platinum, palladium, uranium, rhodium, all the precious metals, which they sell for half the old price and pour money back into circulation...And meanwhile the old ones are dying and the new Teleks have no roots, no connection with the common man. They draw ever further away, developing a way of living entirely different from ours."

Geskamp said, half-truculently, "What do you expect? It's natural, isn't it?"

Shorn put on a patient face. "That's exactly the point I'm trying to make. Consider the trend, the curve. Where does this 'natural' behavior lead? Always away from common humanity, the old traditions, always toward an elite-herd situation." (p. 50)

Two Stories by ● JACK VANCE

by arthur jean cox

The Teleks are a group which sprung up suddenly and mysteriously within the human race. Originally they were merely a small number of peculiar men--"peculiar in that things always turned out lucky for them" (p. 66). Then a "congress" was held and there was 'a forcing', or 'a catalyst'--and the vague traits became definite, suddenly appeared as powerful telekinetic abilities: These men could fly through the air and move objects, irregardless of weight and size, by the mere exercise of will. The ability passed to their children, apparently through genetic disposition and parental training, and so they multiplied. Now, there are four thousand Teleks. Fabulously wealthy, they live in "glittering pavillions, cloud-castles, sea-bubbles" (p. 170).

Geskamp is a contractor. He is building a gigantic stadium for the Teleks, in which they plan to hold telekinetic athletic and esthetic games. It is Shorn's idea to plant a powerful explosive beneath the surface of the stadium and destroy the Teleks in the moment that they are all gathered together. Geskamp is appalled by the apparent blood-thirstiness of the idea. However, a tragic and violent happening places him, still plagued by doubts, in Shorn's camp. He is seized, questioned and murdered by the Teleks.

These incidents form the introductory phase of the story. It opens with a statement of the situation, with a possible solution--represented by Shorn--and with a doubt--embodied by the gruff, simple Geskamp. Geskamp is the spokesman for the reader's trepidations. He becomes the vessel bearing them--and then is eliminated sharply from the story.

A new phase begins. The story shifts to another scene, to other secondary characters. We are introduced to Laurie and to Circumbright, the latter a scientist, and catch glimpses of other revolutionaries. (I refer to the struggle as a revolution although Shorn calls it "a war" (p. 58), because the Teleks have grafted onto their cause, the police, and other symbols of authority.) The conspirators are thwarted, blocked at every point; there are no avenues of action open to them. Then a rare opportunity presents itself. Shorn resembles closely enough a paid informer of the Teleks, Cluche Kurgill, to take his place. He arranges a meeting with Kurgill's employer, the Telek, Adlari Dominion. (Several of the characters in the story announce the type of role they play by their names: snobbish Nollinrude, lordly Dominion, strong-minded and curt Will Shorn, and Circumbright--the round, pudgy man of knowledge. We often sense a similar flavor in Vance's names for creatures, cities, lands, and so on, in this and other stories.)



The Teleks are able to "grant" telekinetic power to others, it seems. Shorn demands this in exchange for information vital to the Teleks. He and Circumbright feel that if they can study telekinetic power at first hand they may be able to gain some advantage in the conflict. The two have discussed its nature in that curiously sardonic manner common to Vance's theorists. Circumbright concluded:

"...I incline to the Organic Theory. That is the concept that all minds and all the matter of the universe are interconnected, much like the brain cells and muscular tissue of the body. When certain of these brain cells achieve a sufficiently close vinculum, they are able to control certain twitchings of the corporeal frame of the universe. How? Why? I don't know. After all, it's only an idea, a sadly anthropomorphic idea." (p. 68-69)

But the notion isn't far from right, as events show. Telekinetic power is conferred upon Shorn. He is set down in the open, facing a block of stone placed on a table. He is told to move it by his will alone from the right to the left, then back again.

"...Mind now, the cube is part of your organism, part of your flesh, like your hands and feet.

There was a murmuring and rustle behind Shorn; obedient to Dominion he fastened his eyes on the cube. (p. 79)

Behind him a group of Teleks have gathered. As he goes through the effortless action of "trying" to move the cube of stone from one position to another, they do it with him; and...

...His mind seemed to break through a touch sphincter into a new medium, cool and wide; he saw the world in a sudden new identity, something part of himself. (p. 79)

Shorn is now a Telek, "by courtesy".

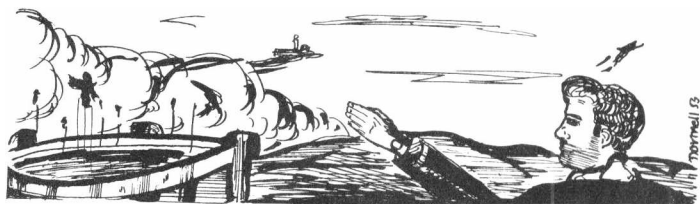
First, let us notice that Vance presents telekinetic ability (1) in terms of great power and freedom of physical movement and (2) shows it as growing out of an act of participation with others. At first thought, these two aspects of his presentation seem to be in opposition to each other. We might more naturally expect to find connected with the first--particularly, in the notion of being able to fly--a distinct sense of independence from others. On second thought, however, we recognize the presence of the feeling in the story: it forms one part of the story's conflict, the part acted out by the Teleks.

These Teleks, in contrast to their earth-grubbing cousins, possess a feeling of "power and freedom" (p. 149). Shorn spoke of them as having "no roots, no connection with the common man ..." (p. 50) and this lack of being "tied down" (p. 149) is a keynote in the descriptions of the Teleks. Relations between the common people and the Teleks are often presented in terms of elevation or in imagery associated with flight: When conversing with ordinary men, Teleks are in the habit of 'standing' several feet off the ground so that whoever is talking to them has to look up to them; the particularly distasteful Nollinrude is described as being "a young man, rather more lofty than average" (p. 47); one Telek is called "a popinjay" and another has a face which is "mercurial and lighthearted" (p. 48); Nollinrude's clothes bring to mind "the gaudy natural growth of a butterfly" (p. 52); Circumbright compares the Telek's knowledge of telekinesis to a bird's knowledge of aerodynamics (p. 66); when Shorn visits Dominion he is offered a seat which is so low that he wouldn't be able to sit in it without craning his neck in order to talk to the Telek--he

stands (p. 77); this interview takes place in the cloud-castle, Glarietta Pavillion, which floats high above the earth; a group of flying Teleks are compared to May flies (p. 170); and, conversely, Shorn and Geskamp, while carrying out a certain 'underground' activity, are compared to moles (p. 55).

After his initiation into Telek powers, Shorn returns to earth from Glarietta Pavillion. But, it might seem, only partly. For now Vance begins to develop a strange theme. Shorn's attitude toward the Teleks seems to soften. He entertains doubts about the advisability of violent action against them. He seems engrossed in his new abilities, his new sensations. There are embarrassments at odd moments he and his friends.

But the story continues: Speculation, experimentation, an important gathering, betrayal, capture and escape; and the story has assumed a new scope. Vance has developed his story in a series of steps, each step introducing us to a wider aspect of the struggle. Now, all the forces in the conflict have been



brought into focus. The conspiracy is revealed in its greatest size and the leaders are seen and the Teleks have made their most effective move to crush it; with these happenings the conflict is seen in the greatest possible perspective. The next step in the sequence has to be the resolution of the conflict.

We now see in operation a process which has appeared in several other of Vance's novels, a peculiar method of 'winding up' the story. Here is a description of the last phase in the development of "Telek" which applies equally well to "Overlords of Maxus" (Thrilling Wonder Stories, February 1951) and "Big Planet" (Startling Stories, September 1952):

The narrative becomes divorced from the protagonist; it no longer follows his life-line. Instead, a setting is concentrated upon--the reader's eye is directed to details of the physical scene. There is in progress a preparation for some extraordinary event: a gathering of some kind, an exhibition or an arrival. The atmosphere is impersonal, calm and decisive. Enter the antagonist. The story-eye pans to him. He speaks, thinks. Now, others arrive. The stage is set, the audience present. Enter the protagonist. There is a brief, sharp, weighted conflict and the story is resolved.

(This pattern is somewhat obscured in "Overlords of Maxus". The presence of two major, unconnected villains apparently made it necessary for Vance to set the process in operation twice. I think its most interesting variation is to be found in "New Bodies for Old" (Thrilling Wonder Stories, August 1950) in which the protagonist is megalomaniacally fused, so to speak, with the impersonal eye which surveys the setting at the opening of the climactic scene.)

In the case of "Telek", the setting of the final scene is the giant stadium constructed by Geskamp for the games of the Teleks. It is the day of the event, itself. Dominion appears, speaks briefly, questioningly, to the guards, dismisses them. And then the spectator-players arrive: Four thousand Teleks and

two hundred and sixty five seeming-Teleks. Shorn brings the imitation Teleks in fifty at a time, dropping them lightly from the sky along with himself.

The games start but, unexpectedly, there are no mass participation events. By ruse and direction action, Shorn takes over the master of ceremonies' booth at the close of the day. He spells out names and messages in the air--such as "Thank you and good luck, Adlari Dominion"--with a little white ball. The entire congregation of Teleks follow its movements with a large bump ball. In this group action, the non-Teleks participate. Shorn's friends "attempt" to move the ball through the air along with the Teleks. And, sharing in telekinetic activity, they become Teleks.

Two hundred and sixty five new telekinetics lifted themselves from the stadium, flew west toward Tran, disappeared into the afternoon. (p. 170)
They will confer their ability on others; eventually it will spread through all mankind.

We might discover a thesis implicit in the story: social distinctions arise between people when they no longer share the same activities, customs, traditions. This was what was happening in "Telek", and it was dangerous as the Teleks were building a new set of traditions with dominance of ordinary men as one of its basic tenets.

When Shorn acquired telekinetic powers his identity became divided. He was a Telek in point of physical ability, but he was not only an ordinary man by birth but also an active member of the anti-Telek movement. He was 'in transit'. He became whole again only when he dissolved the pragmatic distinction between Telek and non-Telek, thus resolving the distinction between his two halves.

"Noise", a short story, appeared in the August 1952 issue of Startling Stories. It opens with two men discussing the journal of one Howard Charles Evans, a record kept by a man stranded on a planet after some sort of disaster in space. Their conversation is matter-of-fact, businesslike, prosaic. It sets the background and establishes, by implication, the character of Evans as emotionally healthy. This much briefly done, the reader's attention is shifted from their conversation to the record, itself:

"I commence this journal without pessimism but certainly without optimism. I feel as if I had already died once. My time in the lifeboat was at least a foretaste of death. I flew on and on through the dark and a coffin could be only slightly more cramped. I have no clock and I can put no duration to my drifting. It was more than a week, it was less than a year.

"So much for space, the lifeboat, the stars. There are not too many pages in this journal. I will need them all to chronicle my life on this world which, rising up under me, gave me life." (p. 102)

This passage sets the mood of the story proper and gives us our first intimation of what is to follow: for we are told, in effect, that Evans has died and has been resurrected. This opening note brings to mind instantly that theme which has occupied the attention of so many poets from the Classical ages till today: the night journey from earth to the after-life. Accordingly, we can expect a description of the world upon which Evans lands in terms involving connotations of the Heavenly or Hellish.

Evans' lifeboat has landed on a meadow which has a desolate

but idyllic aspect. The meadow is bounded on either side by "tall sprays of pallid vegetation--I had best use the word 'trees'" (p. 102). On the other side of one row of trees lies a lake. He has plenty of food and a stream of pure water flows nearby. There seems to be no animal or insect life on the planet. A scarlet sun hangs in the sky.

Evans--interesting similarity to the author's name--explores the world in the vicinity of his lifeboat.

"I have heard it said that the enjoyment of beauty is magnified in the presence of others: that a mysterious rapport comes into play to reveal subtleties which a single mind is unable to grasp. Certainly as I walked along the avenue of trees with the lake and the scarlet sun behind, I would have been grateful for companionship--but I believe that something of peace, the sense of walking in an ancient abandoned garden would be lost." (p. 103)

It might be appropriate to remark at this point that Vance has an interesting attitude towards trees. He seems to associate them with tradition or with what might be called 'the traditional organism', or 'growth'--with societies based on tradition and custom. As indications of this attitude, see his use of the tree theme in "Son of the Tree" (TWS, June 1951) in which a giant parasitic tree is dramatically identified with a parasitic ruling class; see "The Kokod Warriors" (TWS, October 1952) for the use of trees as a cultural emblem--"the stele"; see "Phalid's Fate" (TWS, December 1946) in which the Phalids, a race deeply motivated by tradition, are actually a biological part of "a forest"--emerging out of it at birth and merging into it at death; for trees as culture, see "Hard Luck Diggins" (SS, July 1948). Glystra's thought in "Big Planet" (SS, September 1952, p. 42) that killing the fabulous warrior chieftain Heinzelman would be "like felling an ancient tree" gives us another glimpse of Vance's poetic identification of trees with tradition; there are other instances of such an association in his work but they are not so clear-cut as these. In retrospect, at least, it seems that the phrase, "tall sprays of pallid vegetation" gives us a very definite cue as to what to expect, especially when combined with a reference to "an ancient abandoned garden".

The dramatic development in "Noise" is, necessarily, almost exclusively in atmospheric terms. The story's structure is derived from its two counterpointing themes. The dominant theme is Evans' awakening to the unseen life around him. First, the silence and stillness of the meadow is presented. Silent except for the wind sounds coming from off the lake, still except for the mist-wraiths moving across the meadow. Gradually, these slight sounds and sights take on forms. The wind sounds become strains of music, the wraiths become objects and figures. The strains develop in clarity and volume, become melodies. Evans glimpses cities, boats, people.

Concurrently with this crystallizing chord, cutting across it, is a second pattern of events. The scarlet sun sets, a blue sun rises.

"The world was the same and yet different; where my eyes had been accustomed to red, and the multitudinous red sub-colors, now I saw intricate cycles of blue." (p. 104)

The blue sun sets and a white sun rises; there is darkness, and another sun, and another. With each solar change, Evans senses a change in the tempo of music and life around him. We might speak of each solar passage as a "movement" in the composition of the story, to use a metaphor in keeping with its imagery.

Deciding that he is sane--"a necessary article of faith; why bother to speculate otherwise?" (p. 106)--Evans concludes:

"It must be, I tell myself, that both objectivity and subjectivity enter into the situation. I receive impressions which my brain finds unfamiliar, and so translates to the concept most closely related. By this theory the inhabitants of the world are constantly close. I move unknowingly through their palaces and arcades; they dance incessantly around me. As my mind gains sensitivity, I verge upon rapport with their way of life and I see them. More exactly, I sense something which creates an image in the visual region of my brain. Their emotions, the pattern of their life sets up a kind of vibration which sounds in my brain as music...The reality of these creatures I will never know. They are diaphane, I am flesh; they live in the world of spirit, I plod the turf with heavy feet." (p. 106)

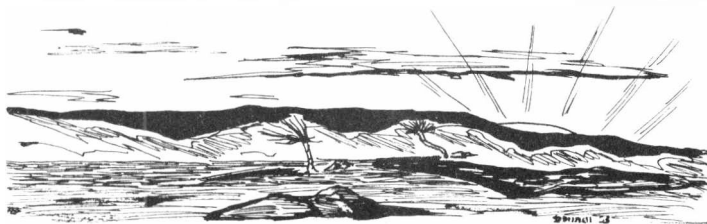
Here, in the last sentence, we find a variant on the elevation theme in "Telek". Evans' earthy grossness is emphasized in the story. "I left the path of an elephant through a patch of delicate weeds." (p. 105)

The world he sees is fantastically beautiful and colorful. Gradually, with moments of sudden clarity, it becomes revealed to him. The white sun sinks, there is darkness, the music becomes plaintive, a dying wail.

"I face the east, my back pressed to the pragmatic hull of my lifeboat. Nothing.

"I have no conception of the passage of time. Darkness, timelessness. Somewhere clocks turn minute hands, second hands, hour hands--I stand staring into the night, perhaps as slow as a sandstone statue, perhaps as feverish as a salamander." (p. 107)

Vance seems to be concerned with time in this story; or perhaps I should say, timelessness: musical tempo and 'days' of no exact duration being substituted for chronological time.



This, of course, is used to contribute to the sense of disorientation upon which the atmospheric effect of the story partially depends, but might it not also be tied up with the 'afterlife' theme: timelessness suggesting eternity?

The lake, incidentally, is shaped like an hour-glass.

Now, a green sun rises. The 'pallid' world about Evans becomes real, definite. He walks among bright booths, inspecting cloths and goods on display. The women, he discovers, possess substance. He plants himself in the path of one of the men who come striding by, discovers that the man has his face.

The yellow sun rises and the tempo of Evans' new world reaches its highest pitch: exultant, gay, triumphant, expressive in color, motion and music; but--

"What is that other sound? That far spasm of something growling and clashing like a broken gear-box?"

(p. 108)

It fades. The music swells, then fades too as the sound comes again and a ship appears in the sky.

"The ship lands.

"I hear the mutter of voices--men's voices.

"The music is vanished, the marble carvings, the wonderful silken cities are gone." (p. 108)

The journal ends. The reader's attention is shifted back again to the conversation between Evans' company representative, Galispell, and Captain Hess of the spaceship which "rescued" Evans. Hess mentions that Evans came aboard "as if his feet were dead". (p. 108) He kept to himself, pacing up and down the ship's promenade, once in a while pressing his hands to his ears. As Earth became larger and larger in the sky, Evans' agitation increased until--according to Hess:

"The noise!" he yelled. "The horrible noise!" And with that he ran astern, jumped into his life boat, cast off, and they tell me disappeared back the way we came." (p. 109)

Earth, it would seem, is the contrasting 'Hell' to Evans' 'Heaven', the dissonant noise clashing with the harmonious music of the world he discovered. The mechanical imagery with which he describes this 'noise' suggests the din of the factory and the confused turmoil of city streets, so much a part of modern life.

Galispell asks:

"...He took off back along your course?"

"That's right. If you're wanting to ask, could he have made the planet where we found him, the answer is, not likely."

"But there's a chance?" persisted Galispell.

"Oh, sure," said Captain Hess. "There's a chance."

In a way, "Noise" complements "Telek". In the shorter story we see expressed a positive interest in what was negatively presented in the novel: ostentatiousness, extravagant dress and display, autocratic manners and aristocratic appearance, extreme power and freedom of movement--all these appear in a suspicious light in "Telek".

"Suspicious", I think, is an apt word. We are made instantly suspicious of Cluche Kurgill because of the manner of his introduction:

"...The father was short, spare, with simian length to his arms. He had a comical simian face with a high forehead, long upper lip, flat nose. The son resembled his father not at all: a striking young man with noble features, a proud crest of auburn hair, an extreme mode of dress, reminiscent of Telek style. The elder was quick of movement, talkative, warm; the younger was careful of eye and movement. (p. 69)

Cluche, of course, is the son; his father is an old and loyal member of the anti-Telek movement. (The relationship between son and father here is like the relationship between Telek and common man and like that between the younger "rootless" Teleks and the older "decent" Teleks.)

I believe that something of this same sentiment, this distrust of aristocratic appearance, is also evident in Vance's presentation of Luby--later revealed as a traitor:

"...He was a man of forty who looked no more than seventeen. His skin was clear gold, his features chiseled and handsome, his hair a close cap of tight bronze curls. Shorn thought of the Renaissance Italians--Cesare Borgia, Lorenzo Medici. (p. 154)

(Continued on Page 31)

the bradbury years

Planet featured FOREVER AND THE EARTH and the poetic BLUE BOTTLE (which the editors, in extreme error, retitled DEATH WISH). His bitter attack on Southern race prejudice, WAY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE AIR, was finally accepted by Other Worlds after having been rejected by almost every editor in the field as too controversial.

At least seventeen of the twenty-three original stories printed in 1950 qualify as superior examples in the highly competitive field of the "serious" short story. Five of these later earned a place on the Distinctive American Short Stories list in Foley's BEST AMERICAN SHORT STORIES of 1951.

1951

On the heels of THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES Doubleday released THE ILLUSTRATED MAN, a mixed collection of fantasy and science fiction. His fourth Canadian science fiction original, THE ROCKET MAN, previewed in McCleans, saw first U.S. printing in this volume. It received Honor Roll listing in the same anthology that included his THE OTHER FOOT (New Story)--BEST AMERICAN SHORT STORIES of 1952.

Bradbury's longest effort, THE FIREMAN, a 25,000 word short novel in Galaxy, drew enthusiastic response as did HERE THERE BE TYGERS, a stylistically beautiful account of man's "dream world", written especially for the anthology NEW TALES OF SPACE AND TIME.

A number of excellent slick stories appeared in 1951--THE PUMPERNICKEL (Collier's) and THESE THINGS HAPPEN (McCall's). The Post went "all out" in the presentation of his BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS (THE FOG HORN) with one of the most impressive double page illustrations ever to grace their pages. And rounding out the year, Bradbury's science fiction vignette, THE PED-ESTRIAN, appeared as the first piece of fiction to be printed by that astute political publication The Reporter.

1952

With book publication in England of THE ILLUSTRATED MAN, Bradbury altered the contents to include a powerful new fantasy, THE PLAYGROUND, which must surely be counted among the best work he has done to date. (This story will make its U.S. debut in Esquire.)

The Post presented his delightful fantasy love story, THE APRIL WITCH. Today featured his haunting portrait of future frontiers, THE WILDERNESS.

In Canada McCleans previewed yet another Bradbury (in this case a "realistic"), CORA AND THE GREAT WIDE WORLD, a great story of warmth and human understanding. Perhaps his best short of the year appeared in The California Quarterly, A FLIGHT OF RAVENS, providing the reader with a soberly chilling insight into a family crushed by the pressures of big city life.

1953

Bradbury's fifth book, THE GOLDEN APPLES OF THE SUN (Doubleday) is specifically designed to appeal to a much wider audience than previous of his short story collections. It contains a large percentage of realistic work from selected sources (many "best" anthology items are included) along with scattered fantasy and science fiction tales thus constituting a representative mixture of Bradbury under one cover. Among new originals appearing in its pages, THE FLYING MACHINE, HAIL AND FAREWELL and THE MURDERER are outstanding.

Beyond this volume he has written an excellent time fantasy for the anthology STAR SCIENCE FICTION entitled A SCENT OF SAPARILLA, while The Reporter has printed a second story of top quality, SUN AND SHADOW.

As mentioned in the preface to this article, at least a dozen more new stories are sold and scheduled for publication in book and magazine form in 1953 and 1954. Two new collections of Bradbury's short stories will have been published by the end of 1954. The comparative worth of all this material, as related to superior work of past years, remains to be determined.

the skipper

ed at the hands that held it. He placed the hat firmly, with those hands in familiar motion, upon his head. He straightened his back and shrugged his coat into place.

"Well," the Skipper told his reflection, "I guess I had better move along and see them. Over at Fort Richardson."

the lady takes a powder

her answer struck me like an obstetrician's hand on a newborn babe: By the bridge at the end of the bus line. The bridge that had been baptized by the blood of a suicide the day it opened to the public! And how many despairing souls had flung themselves to destruction from it in the intervening years? A score or more, enough to damn it with the name, Suicide Bridge.

Suicide Bridge! My compact found there could mean only one thing: The desolation of her invisible state had driven Roxana to this final desperate act. What impulse had caused her to take my compact I would never know, but I would retrieve Everett's gift.

The finder answered the doorbell on the third ring. She extended my compact in her wrinkled hand. There was a jolly twinkle in her eyes.

In her oddly slanted eyes. In her green eyes.

It shouldn't have happened to Hansel and Gretel!

The Atomic Age has dawned, but the Devil is still in the market for souls! Even innocent souls that can be duped to sin.

Roxana, poor soul, took a powder. I sacrificed my vanity case for my sanity. Yes, I fled empty handed. Nobody is going to write a tragicomedy about me called "A Compact with the Devil!"

two stories by jack vance

And "In New Bodies For Old", our protagonist first conceives his distaste for the proprietors of the Chateau D'if when noting their "self-conscious and vulgar" beauty. (p. 57)

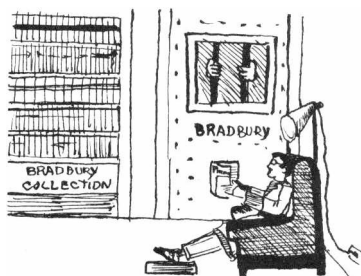
A writer in his own villain as well as his own hero. Perhaps what we see in "Telek" is a temperamental sympathy for the power, wealth, freedom cluster of qualities coming into conflict with humanistic ideals. We are justified in regarding these qualities with suspicion since, in this "imperfect world", wealth is usually purchased at someone else's expense and freedom from responsibility is matched by another's bondage. (For a perfect illustration of this feeling in Vance's own work, read "The Kirstendale Paradox" episode in "Big Planet".)

But uneasy thoughts of this kind do not apply to the Heaven-world which Evans idealizes into reality. He speculates about the boats he sees moving on the lake:

"What is their function, I wonder? Can life such as this be translated into terms of economy, ecology, sociology? I doubt it..." (p. 107)

Here, social anxieties are baseless: beauty, luxury, ease can be indulged in without restraint. There is no need to curb one's appetites in Paradise.

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