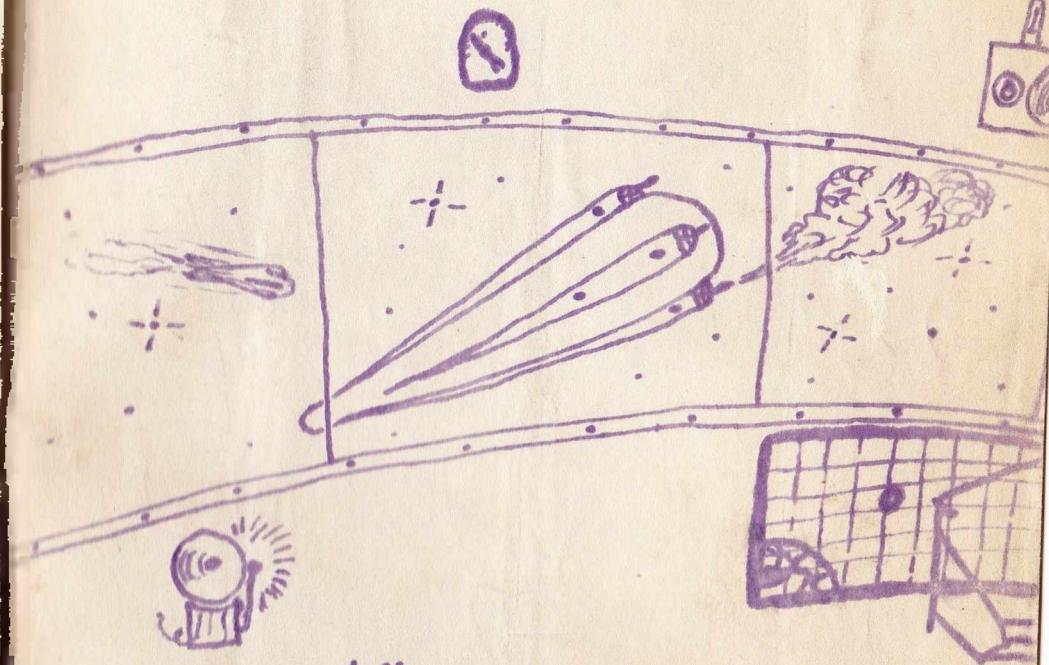


The

DEC. 1935

# THE PLANEER



IN THIS ISSUE -

"MAD VISION"  
A THROTTLE-PROVOKING PLANETEER TALE  
BY  
JIM BLISH

# PLANETEER

THE PLANETEER  
MOSAIC

Blisher-ian Enterprises, Inc., 131 Harrison St.  
New Orange, New Jersey

Vol. I

No. 2

DECEMBER, 1935

## HELPS FROM THE EDITOR'S END

It seems to me that the response to my ad in the SCIENCE FICTION CRITIC was a little unnecessarily small for a magazine with such a large circulation. Won't you try and help me out?

Next issue our new artist begins drawing our covers and another new one is waiting after our interview. Keep your eyes open for them--they are good and mistakes.

How about writing ye old a letter? Criticisms are welcome, since it is only by means of your correspondence that I can tell what you want and make suitable changes. Don't be afraid--we aren't.

It won't be long before we shift either to mimeographing, or straight to printing. We only need a few more subscriptions. We are still running on a deficit since the new artists and the added pages soak up more of the PLANETEER's purse contents than expected. A few more subscriptions will be a big help.

Wish at this point to extend my thanks to Mr. F. P. Beck, editor of the SCIENCE FICTION CRITIC, for his excellent cooperation.

Remember--next month the first of the real Planeteer Tales (startin next month, together with two new artists, and micrographing, perhaps)! Don't miss it!

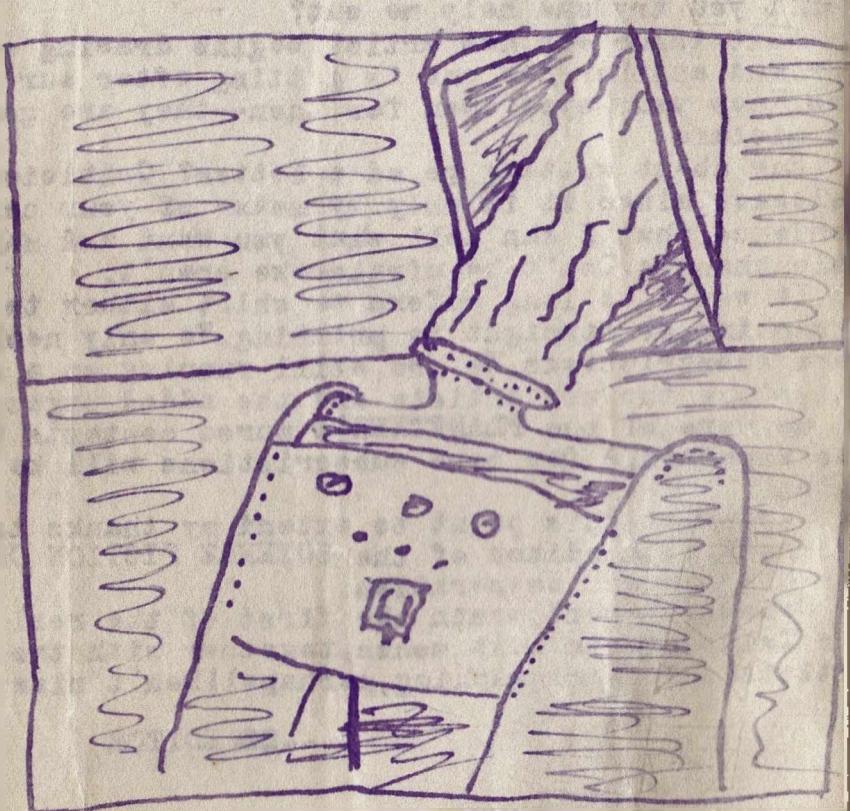
--THE EDITOR

# MAD VISION

ADAPTED FROM THE ARKHS OF THE SPACE MIRROR

61

JIM BLISH



THE GREAT GUNS BARGE TO BLAST MIRT  
AT THE "FLAMING ARROW."

The tall, dark-haired man who was at his console turned and stood stiffly silent as the heavy silence descended over the controls.

"He seems to be the chief topic of discussion," he snickered. His voice, although it had been really a nervous quiver, was biting now like a sharp edge which soon became a whooping in the jagged plains of Taron. "You can't be confused, though. It seems that one of your men has gotten himself into the fleet and mixed 'em all up. I think we're going to Maximilla."

"All right," the slight form responded evenly. In Ayeris's voice suggested an icy termite, the Planeteer's reminiscences of the slow wash of the helium gas of liquid helium on Neptune. "Let them. There aren't any objections, eh?"

"None at all."

"Well come on then, and plot our course to the intersection of the Martian Arcs, will you? I don't want to waste our appointment."

The burly rock climber stepped across the cabin deck to avoid the cables which would have circled an ordinary man, and sat down in the control seat of the Planeteer. He reached forward and began to finger, and a tiny dial commenced to shingle, the numbers on its face flicking in ever-changing combinations. The "Flaming Arrow" began to change its course...

The pilot of the Ceres-Thebes Quantum transports a dark ship cursed rapidly in Ganymede. It sounded more of a stony, nonchalance than in the lish of Martians. He stared down at the limbering bulk of the dark lighter ship he had had to follow that last section of all the way to the Martian moon, while his friends were lying in wait for the Planeteer and a battle, well, they were almost in port now anyhow--the dark in sight is a law against the black rock of the satellite.

His ship was a sort of iron scull. Low, and he could make it out as a BC type bat plane. He wondered briefly why it wasn't at Maximilla, with the rest, and started to turn back to the controls--when a flaring spook appeared in the sky, the "Flaming Arrow" blossomed into an armful of fire.

The pilot gave a gasp of apprehension tinged with fear. The suspense was agony as the flotilla closed in on the Cerex ship within the very gates of Phoenicia. There was the "Flaming Arrow", renamed "The Star" in signia, now checking its descent and circling.

For an instant he was shaken by terror, but a thrilling thought shot through him. It seemed that Planeteer hadn't seen him--think of the horrors and miseries suffered upon him if he got the full force of planetary piracy!

With the thought, his hands started forward and closed around the hilt of the heavy rocket gun, and his feet moved over the controls. The tiny ship moved suddenly, and flipping over, plunged into a death-trait into the blinding sheath beam of a machine-welder!

Radicosity and panic reigned aboard the tiny freighter--and the officers too--not surprised at the mad manner in which their only guard had been destroyed, and there was a general rush for the ship's few guns, as if the men felt that they would be safer with the comforting feel of a handle in their palms.

The guns of the city below had been blasting madly at the "Flaming Arrow", but ceased their fire abruptly as it pulled up to the Cerex transports. Several of the latter's guns were firing spasmodically, but the Zintron shells burst fully upon the tiny vessel's meteor screens, as might have been expected. The trim pirate ship lay even gloomily across the sky, and the two ships connected the two ships.

Abruptly both airlocks sprung open, and the masked figures came charging across, the Astroid leading above all. The freighter's captain was standing in doorway, gun in hand, and waited for the intruder. He arrived, was scattered in little pieces as a planned shot from the Astroid's rocket pistol planted itself in his chest and detonated. The Planeteer, sweeping the way ahead of his leader with a hand-disintegrator, led the way to the starship. Regardless of the wild shrill shots were flying around him, sufficient that the Astroid's rocket weapon could account for the gunners.

Minutes later the "Flaming Arrow" shot cleanly and fast into space, leaving a rent and gutted hull hurtling downward to the horrified lunar city.

## II.

The fleet's flagship, "Dog Star", was in a state of high excitement. The hurried message from Phoenicia just came in, and the fleet was fleeing away at speed from Maxilla toward the scene of the Planeteer's latest crime. In the tiny navigation cabin, Captain Searious sat, the crewman Navigator Maxilla, a synclastic whose only marks of alien origin were his face, his slight figure, and lack of pigment, narrowed his dark eyes and made plans...

The fleet commander stared into its central screen, his face in awe.

"Save your sentences, man!" he snarled at the calm youth he televised. "Very available ship out at Maxilla, and the Planeteer raiding. Searious! The Cerex ship! One has left alive, out of a crew of four, and the second only guarding it utterly destroyed."

Searious Haines caught himself in the act of a sneeze and put on a mask of forced humor. His voice sounded in it, disguised. The bitter嘲笑 he might have characterized his usual mode of speech.

"Go on," said the commander. "Tell it like it is. Let me at that television. I want to kill the boy."

"Wait," said Haines in a subdued tone. "I'll set you up."

In his fingers he led the fleet call number, which was not an extra number. The commander was too excited to count, but far off in the "Flaming Arrow" the Astroid clapped his hands triumphantly, and the Asteroid clapped as triumphantly. The commander began to call.

Haines laughed, and turning to him, remarked, "Suppose the Planeteer was carrying your orders?"

The commander glared. "Is that supposed to be funny?" he asked. He dropped the gun barrels onto the table and slammed them violently.

"Get out!" he snapped. "Fast!"

The Planeteer gestured to the screen. "We had better write Greg a letter," he laughed jarringly. "He's losing the old touch."

His companion stared at the long, lean cruisers pictured on the screen. "Not a chance to outrun 'em," he muttered. "They're the new cruisers."

The Planeteer seemed to start up in his seat. He twisted the power dial.

"The new cruisers!" he exclaimed. "What's the lead ship, quickly, man!"

The other's hand closed over the handle of the disintegrating rifle. "3.7--the 'Dog Star'", he growled satisfactorily. "Why?"

"Nitwit!" the Planeteer shouted, "that ship is our ticket out of this scrape!"

The Asteroid turned in surprise. "Yeah? You must have worked fast to get a new man in the fleet so soon."

"He's been there since we got incarcerated."

"Oh-Greg, eh?"

The Planeteer shook his head. "No. Remember the Ganymedian gunner that installed our rifles for us--the one who got a score even with yours in that contest?"

"Tuvqxx-jk?" the Asteroid nodded.

The Planeteer grinned. "Well," he said comfortably, "he's navigator aboard the 'Dog Star' and gets the ranges for the entire squadron."

The smoothly faired gun decks of the "Dog Star" suddenly spat fire, and the shells crashed into red flame just ahead of the fleeing ship. The pursuing squadron all at once seemed to bristle with long flashes, and the "Flaming Arrow" seemed immersed in dinitren concussions.

"That's splitting hairs," muttered the Asteroid uneasily. But the Planeteer looked confident.

The hatch leading downward into the rest of the ship banged open suddenly, and the Asteroid appeared, an unbecoming grease smear across his nose, his sleeves rolled up over his burly arms, and a cheery whistle on his lips. He was carrying a long glass tube with a bulb on the end.

The Planeteer looked up from an elaborate mechanism he was creating on the radio table, and growled, "Can't you stay quiet for ten minutes?"

"If I feel like it," the other grinned carelessly. "What are you trying to build?"

"A time televiser," the Planeteer replied quite seriously.

The Asteroid looked startled, then turned away its paroxysm.

"Don't you believe me?" asked the Planeteer.

"It sounds like rotear atmosphere to me," said his companion bluntly. "But I'll humor you. Need any help?"

The Planeteer's brow wrinkled in a puzzled frown. "I need photon tubes, light-type 67B," he said worriedly.

The Asteroid grinned and held up his glass instrument. "You're just lucky, that's all. I figured we didn't need any of that type and didn't bring any. But this ought to do."

The other studied it for a moment, scratching his head. "What in the system is it?"

The muscular spaceman grunted. "Watch!"

He pulled over a metal box and stood upon it, reaching toward the ceiling. He touched his bare bulb to one of the high tension terminals.

A fat spark leaped free the terminal to the tube, which immediately lit up and glowed a livid violet. Sparks began to play over the Asteroid's hand.

"How shocking!" exclaimed the Planeteer.

"Very!" agreed the other, stepping down and replacing the box. "I used it for testing, below."

"Well, I guess it'll have to do. Thanks."

The Asteroid stared curiously at the elaborate mass of coils and cells and condensers lying sprawled on the radio table. He shoved a finger behind the screen which raged in the center of it, and was rewarded with another shock.

He rubbed his fist in his palm reflectively. "It puts crazy, but... say, what, how, and why, anyway?" he broke out.

"It was the Planeteer's turn to laugh.

"I'm plannin'," he explained, "to get a glance at the future, to see what is going to happen to the system in general, and ourselves in particular. See?"

"Yes, but how--"

"I'm easin' to that. Remember these Ice-Beings you keep ever on Neptune?"

"I remember what you told me about them, yes."

"Well, I had a most unwanted chance to study their illusions and control cleare at hand, and after a lot of

extensive mental acrobatics, I've decided that the time element is, or at least is closely allied to, the next dimension, as Einstein did."

"So what?"

"So this machine sends a continuous stream of polarized light beams into time, in a complex curve which eventually returns them to the machine, carrying their impressions."

"You hope."

"Killjoy!"

"Well, I wish you luck--but there's two kinds!"

But despite his seeming contentment for the project, the Asteroid was not unwilling to assist his companion, and, as the days and miles flew by while the "Flaming Arrow" sped in an uncalculable orbit beyond the orbit of the Prison Planet, the time televiser grew toward completion. And then, a week later--

The two men sat breathless at the radio table and stared at the screen. Trial trip!

"How long will it take these rays to get back to the receiver?" the Asteroid asked softly, unconsciously lowering his voice a little.

"Hardly any time at all," the other replied. "I'm not sending them far into time, you know..."

He ceased to speak and ran his fingers over the controls. A tiny dial with markings in degrees spun under his hands--another, marked in miles, was quickly set and locked fast--tubes began to flicker--and with a sudden, half-dramatic gesture, he punched the projector's itch viciously.

For an instant only the rising hum of the mechanism told of any change, then the broad, oval surface of the receiver flared into brilliancy and images began to form.

The Planeteer's adept fingers seized the compensator controls and worked them swiftly. The white surface clarified.

Both men gasped and leaned forward to stare at the astounding scene which leaped into life--when it vanished! The picture which had flashed across the screen had disappeared in a whirling maze of light and after a second of blazing confusion, another took its place--only to vanish just as quickly, again to be replaced.

The Asteroid passed a hand before his eyes and jerked it away again as if angry at it for obscuring his view of the dizzy changes. The Planeteer re-

laxed staring at the apparatus in puzzlement.

"I can't understand it," he mumbled. "Only a few seconds after it appears, it--"

The other's cry broke in on him. "Look--look at that!"

A huge, single-decked rocket of unfamiliar design zoomed across the screen and away from them into the star-flecked distance, to be immediately followed by others. Bolts of blue lightning crashed about the hurtling ships, striking them down one after the other--the viewplate clouded into white obscurity, shot through with points of intense blackness... The obscurity seemed to coalesce, and a blazing, incandescent ball loomed. The Planeteer wrestled frantically with the compensator controls, and the image began to clear--when again the brilliant clouds blotted out the scene, to lift again, revealing two lines of staggeringly immense land-battleships with caterpillar treads hurling themselves at each other, tremendous guns vomiting death and destruction... The scene changed to an immense, shining city without any interval of blackness, but was immediately blotted out...

The Planeteer turned off the projector, and the hum of the mechanism ceased. An instant later the screen darkened, and the machine became once more an enigmatic mass of glass and metal, giving no outward hint that it had just looked into futurity.

"I'll never see what's to come--at least not through this televiser," he said wearily.

"What in the cosmos is wrong with it?" his friend cried helplessly.

"I'm not sure," said the Planeteer, "but I think that somewhere Einstein and I made the same mistake that of supposing time to be a stable element."

"But--but you accepted that it was capable of movement--"

"Yes, but we forgot that it was also capable of ~~time~~! Every minute things are happening all over the universe which change the future completely! This scene was the future as it might have been--warning something else as the things which control it can do!"

The Asteroid considered this in silence for a moment.

"Why not take a smaller division of the future, I asked at length. "All we really want is our destiny, anyhow, and that won't change so often

because it's so definitely specialized that few factors would enter into its changing."

"That night work," the Planeteer agreed. "It will a few alterations, or rather, miditions, but we'll fit."

And so they worked on with renewed zeal, driven by the urge that one tantalizing glimpse had given them, to add more delicate focusing and magnifying instruments to the compensators, and before the day was over they were again ready. The Planeteer manipulated the complicated controls with the assured air of an experienced time traveler, in a manner that seemed all out of place beside the Asteroid's intent look.

But the behavior of the newly reset mechanism was even more complicated than before. Various scenes in which the figures of the two men played prominent parts flickered across the screen, disappearing the very second they saw them, the speed of the fading and reappearings growing until the successive scenes were all merged into a moving blur--but the minute this happened the movement stopped with a jerk and the swift flashing of the pictures began again at its old speed (but not its old subject) and again began to accelerate.

The Planeteer shut off the machine, and without a word began to dismantle it.

"Wait a minute," the Asteroid objected. "How do you know the fault isn't with the machine, not the theor-

"I don't know," his friend responded, continuing with his dismantling, "but I can be pretty sure."

"Well, what is the trouble?"

The Planeteer carefully removed the ground-lens in front of the machine, revealing a battery of photo-cell amplifiers and lenses.

"These scenes," he explained, beginning to detach the selenium amplifiers from the bank, "disappeared the minute we saw them, because as soon as we saw them we had the power to change the future, and were therefore changing it just by seeing it. That explains its gathering speed, and also explains its stopping as soon as it began to blur--when it blurred, we could no longer see what was happening, and therefore the future was no longer changing, except, of course, for changes caused by others--if there were any in that short period."

He gestured toward the controls, and the Asteroid

reached the power cable. His friend's fingers wandered thoughtfully, freamily, over the controls.

The rockets flared into life, and the "Flaming Arrow" swung slowly and gathered speed, to rapidly become a leaping speck in the distance. Off into space it sailed, bearing with it two men who had accepted their destiny...

THE END

A Newly-Inaugurated Department...

T H E P L A N E T E E R ' S T E L E V I S O R  
Presenting the Future as visualized in the Planeteer. Follow this department! A reasonable and scientific survey of things to come.

Hand Weapons of the Period

#### No. I. THE ROCKET PISTOL

Fires small blown-steel bullets charged with nitron, an explosive mixture consisting mostly of fulmanite of mercury. Bullets are impelled by electro-magnets. Gun has a short barrel terminating in a flaring nozzle, to guard user against premature explosion of projectile, and behind the barrel is the ammunition tube, upon which are mounted the batteries. Also, beneath the tube is the butt of the pistol, which, when pulled down and released, drops a bullet into the firing chamber. Pulling the trigger charges the magnets in succession, flinging the bullet out of the barrel. The rocket rifles used aboard spaceships, etc., have shells which come timed to go off at a cert. in distance.

Next Month--THE DISINTEGRATOR

DON'T MISS

"PURSUING NOWHERE"

Next Month's Thrilling Planeteer Tale

(See announcement on next page)

NEXT MONTH—

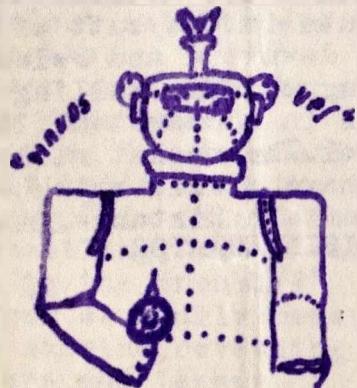
Out of nowhere, his strange, unbelieveably swift  
ship flitting out of space like a a laser-beam,  
comes the Avenger, champion of justice in the  
spaceways. To trivle, uncounted weapons split the skies  
as two diametrically opposed winds create new toys  
with which to defy the might of the other—and  
then—

Out beyond the Time Universe itself the battle  
rides, out beyond the curvature of space itself, in  
to the emptiness between spaces! Out where the  
Galaxy is only a four-dimensional, far-distant  
spark, brilliant against the starry background of  
ether!

Conceptions that will make your mind reel; ac-  
tion that will set your blood astir—battle and  
flight that will thunder in snatches through your  
head long after the January issue has been con-  
signed to the old magazines pile!

Who is the Avenger?

Answer this question for yourself as you fol-  
low the swift-moving plot of



## PURSUIT INTO NOWHERE

Another thrilling Planeteer Tale adapted  
from the records of the space patrol by  
JIM BL

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