

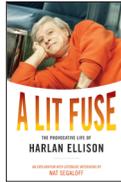


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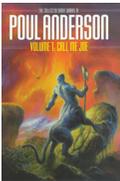
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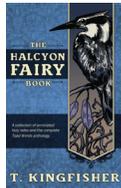
The Effectives



All the Lies That Are His Life

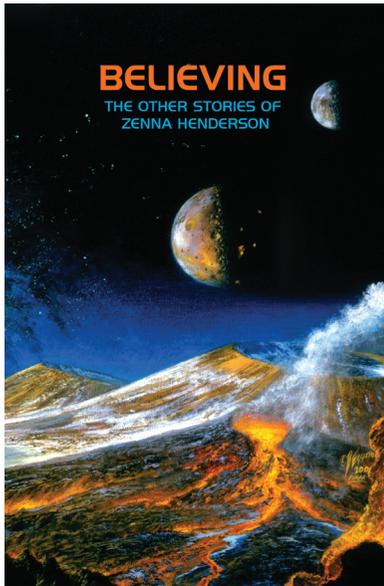


Call Me Joe



Bluebeard's Wife





Believing

The Other Stories of Zenna Henderson

by ZENNA HENDERSON

EPUB: nesfa.org/book/believing-2/

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Story Selected:

The Effectives

Zenna Henderson is best known for her stories of The People, published in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* from the early 1950s to the mid-1970s. The People, a group of human-appearing aliens, escaped the destruction of their home world only to be shipwrecked on Earth, where they struggled to hide their extra abilities.

During the same period, Henderson published an equal number of non-People stories. Like the stories of The People, they range from comforting to unnerving. Fans of The People will recognize the same underlying belief in the goodness of people and other beings as they struggle for a chance at a better future.

Zenna Henderson

Zenna Chlarson Henderson (1917–1983) was born in Tucson, Arizona. Although she became a teacher because the nearest state school was a teacher's college, Henderson later stated she'd rather earn her living teaching first grade than any other way. She would make time to write before school and at the end of the day. All her writing exhibits a warmth, gentleness and a sense of the worth of human and non-human beings. "Henderson provides a warm, emotional voice, prefeminist yet independent, examining issues of identity, loneliness, nostalgia and caring." —Publishers Weekly
"Miss Henderson tells her tales with a tender, gentle magic." —The Kirkus Reviews

Edited by Patricia Morgan Lang

Jacket art by Bob Eggleton

Jacket design by Matt Smaldone

The Effectives

Such things happen, inevitably perhaps, since both seek isolation, but the sign post at the junction of the Transcontinental and the narrow secondary road seems a contradiction in terms:

AWAY — 8 miles
EDRU 14 — 12 miles

The association of these two groups is so unlikely that the picture of the sign post is always turning up in magazines, newspapers, and TV views under Laugh-a-Bit or Smile-a-While or Whoda Thunkit?

Away—in the remote possibility that someone does not remember—is the name chosen by one of the fairly large groups of people who choose to remove themselves, if not from the present age, at least from the spirit of it. They locate in isolated areas, return to the agricultural period wherein horses were the motive power, live exclusively off the land, foreswear most modern improvements, and, in effect, withdraw from the world. There are degrees of fervency ranging from wild-eyed, frantic-bearded, unwashed fanaticism, to an enviable, leisurely mode of living that many express longing for but could never stand for long. These settlements, and their people, are usually called Detaches.

EDRU 14 is, of course, Exotic Diseases Research Unit #14. Each unit of EDRU concerns itself with one of the flood of new diseases that either freeload back to Earth from space exploration or spring up in mutated profusion after each new drug moves in on a known disease. Each unit embodies the very ultimate in scientific advancement in power, sources, equipment, and know-how.

In this particular instance, the Power Beam from the Area Central crossed the small acres and wooded hills of Away to sting to light and

life the carefully-fitted-into-its-environment Research Unit while the inhabitants of Away poured candles, cleaned lamp chimnies, or, on some few special occasions, started the small Delco engine in the shed behind the Center Hall and had the flickering glow of electricity for an evening.

Despite the fact that EDRU 14 was only across a stone fence from Away, there was practically no overlapping or infringing on one another. Occasionally a resident of Away would rest on his hoe handle and idly watch an EDRU 14 vehicle pass on the narrow road. Or one of the EDRU 14 personnel would glimpse a long-skirted woman and a few scampering children harvesting heaven knows what vegetation from the small wooded ravines or the meadows on EDRU 14's side of the rock fence, but there was no casual, free communication between the so-unlike groups.

Except, of course, Ainsworthy. He was the only one at EDRU 14 who fraternized with the residents of Away. His relaxant was, oddly enough, walking, and he ranged the area between the two locales in his off-duty hours, becoming acquainted with many of the people who lived at Away. He played chess—soundly beaten most of the time—with Kemble, their Director—for so they call their head who is chosen in biennial elections. He learned to “square dance,” a romping folk-type dancing kept alive by groups such as the one at Away, and sometimes brought back odd foods to the Unit that Kitchen refused to mess with. But, after a few abortive attempts to interest others at EDRU 14 in the group at Away, he gave up and continued his association with them without comment.

The disease, KVIN, on which EDRU 14 as well as EDRU 9, 11, and 12 was working, was a most stubborn one. Even now very little is known of it. It is believed to be an old Earth disease reactivated by some usually harmless space factor that triggers it and, at the same time, mutates it. Even those who have experienced it and, the few miracles, recovered from it, are no help in analyzing it or reducing it to $A = \text{the disease}$, $B = \text{the cure}$. $A + B = \text{no further threat to mankind}$.

The only known way to circumvent the disease and prevent death is the complete replacement of all the blood in the patient's body by whole blood, not more than two hours from the donors. This, of course, in the unlikely event that the patient doesn't die at the first impact of the disease—which most of them do. Even replacement would often fail. However, it succeeded often enough that each Regional hospital kept a list of available donors to be called upon. This, of course, was after the discovery of CF (Compatible Factor), the blood additive that makes typing of blood before a transfusion unnecessary.

In spite of all possible precautions practiced by the Unit, at unhappy intervals the mournful clack of the Healiocopter lifted eyes from the fields

of Away to watch another limp, barely breathing, victim of the disease being lifted out to the Central Regional Hospital.

Such was the situation when Northen, the Compiler, arrived at EDRU 14—loudly. A Compiler would have been called a troubleshooter in the old days. He compiles statistics, asks impertinent questions, has no reverence for established methods, facts, habits or thoughts. He is never an expert in the field in which he compiles—and never compiles twice in succession in the same field. And very often, a Compiler can come up with a suggestion or observation or neat table of facts that will throw new light on a problem and lead to a solution.

“I don’t like questions!” he announced to Ainsworthy of the lunch table his first day at the Unit. “That’s why I like this job of playing detective. I operate on the premise that if a valid question is asked there is an answer. If no answer is possible, the question has no validity!”

Ainsworthy blinked and managed a smile. “And who’s to decide if an answer is possible or not?” he asked, wondering at such immaturity in a man of Northen’s professional stature.

“I decide!” Northen’s laughter boomed. “Simplifies things. No answer—forget it! But if I think there is an answer—tenacity’s my middle name!”

“Then you obviously think there is a clear-cut answer to the question that brought you here,” said Ainsworthy.

“Obviously—” Northen pushed back from the table. “This is an inquiry into a *real* problem, not one of those airy nothings—And to forestall another obvious question I’m always being pestered with—I consider that I am only one biological incident in a long line of biological incidents and when I die, the incident of me is finished. I have no brief for all this research into nonsense about soul and spirit and other lives! One life is enough! I’m not greedy!” And his large laughter swung all faces toward him as he lumbered up to the coffee dispenser with his empty cup.

Ainsworthy reflectively tapped his own cup on the table top, repressing a sudden gush of dislike for Northen. It was thinking like his that was hampering the Beyond Research Units. How slow! How slow the progress towards answers to the unanswerables! Was it because Believers and Unbelievers alike were afraid of what the answers might be?

Northen was back.

“You were at the briefing this morning?” he half-questioned as he sat down massively, his bulk shaking the table.

“Yes.” Ainsworthy inspected his empty cup. “Something about the odd distribution of cures of KVIN, or, conversely, the deaths from KVIN.”

“That’s right,” Northen inhaled noisily of his coffee. “As you know, a complete blood replacement is the only known cure. Only it doesn’t work all the time. *Which* means,” he wagged a huge forefinger triumphantly,

“that replacement is *not* the answer! At least not the whole answer. But that’s not the question I’m currently pursuing. I want to know why there is a geographical distribution of the cures. KVIN is a fairly scarce disease. We’ve had less than fifty cases a year in the fifteen years we have studied it—that is, the cases reported to and cared for at a Regional. There have been, undoubtedly, more unreported and untreated, because if a patient is out of reach of a Regional hospital and immediate treatment, he’s dead in four hours or less. But we’ve had enough cases that a pattern is emerging.” He hunched closer to the table and Ainsworthy rescued his cup and the sugar dispenser from tumbling to the floor.

“Look. A gets a dose of KVIN on the West Coast. Quick, quick! San Fran Regional! Replacement. Too bad. Dead as a mackerel. Now look. B and C get doses at Albuquerque. Quick, quick! Denver Regional! Replacement. B lives—C dies. Personal idiosyncrasies? Perhaps, except without exception *all* A’s die. Half of B’s and C’s live!

“*And* D gets a dose at Creston. Quick, quick! Central Regional! D *always* recovers! Same technique. Same handling of blood. Same everything except patients. So. Different strains of KVIN? After all, different space ports—different space sectors—different factors. So, E picks up a dose on the Coast. Quick, quick! *Central* Regional. Replacement. *Recovery!*”

Northen hunched forward again, crowding the table tight against Ainsworthy.

“So transport all the A’s and B’s and C’s to Central? Not enough blood supply. Bring in more from other Regionals. *It won’t work at Central any better than where it came from!* So—See? An answer to find and definitely in this area. Now all I need is a case to follow through to get me started.”

It had fallen to Ainsworthy to escort Northen about the Unit, to acquaint him with the area and answer any questions he might have concerning procedures and facilities. The two were in the small public lounge one afternoon, pausing between activities while Northen groaned over his aching feet and legs.

“I’m used to skidders,” he boomed. “Faster, more efficient, less wearing on the legs! Just step on, toe the switch—swish!” He gestured with a massive arm.

“This Unit is really too small for skidders,” said Ainsworthy. “Occasionally we use flitters out in the grounds, but only a few bother. Most of us enjoy walking. I do especially, since it’s my relaxant.”

“Really?” Northen peered in astonishment at Ainsworthy. “Imagine! Walking by choice!”

“What’s your relaxant?” Ainsworthy asked, remembering his manners.

“Blowing up balloons,” said Northen proudly, “until they break! Bang! Wham!” His arms flailed again. “There’s satisfaction for you! They’re fin-

ished! Gone! Destroyed! Only a rag of rubber and a puff of carbon dioxide left! And I did it!”

“Pleasant,” murmured Ainsworthy, automatically falling into polite phraseology, wishing Northen’s eyes would not follow so intently every face that passed, knowing he was waiting for someone to collapse from KVIN.

He wasn’t long disappointed. As they toured Lab IIIC a few days later, one of the lab assistants, Kief, carefully replacing the beaker he had been displaying, took tight hold of the edge of the table, drew a quavering breath, whispered “Away!”, and collapsed as though every bone in his body had been dissolved, his still-open eyes conscious and frightened.

In the patterned flurry that followed, Northen was omnipresent, asking sharp questions, making brief notes, his rumpled hair fairly bristling with his intense interest and concentration.

The Healiicopter arrived and, receiving the patient, clacked away. Ainsworthy and Northen, in one of the Unit vehicles—a mutation of the Jeep—swung out of the Unit parking lot and roared down the road to Central Regional, Northen struggling with the seat belt that cut a canyon across his bulk.

Northen peered at his notes as they bounced along. “How’d this Kief person know he had KVIN?” he asked.

“Don’t know exactly,” said Ainsworthy. “It varies from person to person. Clagget—the one before Kief, said a big brightness seemed to cut him in two right across the chest and then his legs fell off. Others feel all wadded up into a sticky black ball. Others feel as though each cell in their bodies is being picked away as if from a bunch of grapes. I guess it depends a lot on the person’s imagination and his facility with words.”

“And when he said ‘Away’ just before he collapsed. That was part of this picking away idea?”

“No,” Ainsworthy felt a surge of reluctance. “Away is the settlement next to our Unit—a Detach.”

“A Detach!” Ainsworthy smiled slightly, his ears battening down hatches against Northen’s expected roar. “Don’t tell me you have any of those—!” He bit off the last part of his sentence and almost the tip of his tongue as the Jeep regrettably bucketed up over a hump in the road.

“The people from Away are our main source of donors for replacements,” said Ainsworthy over Northen’s muttered curses. “In fact, they’ve adopted it as a community project. Regional knows it never has to look farther than Away for an adequate number of donors—as long as the cases don’t come too close together, which, so far, they never have.”

They had arrived at the turn-off to Away and jolted off the fairly good Unit road to the well-maintained dirt road to the settlement.

“Surprises me that they’ll give anything to the world. Thought they gave it up along with the Flesh and the Devil!” grunted Northen, lipping a little.

“Maybe the World, but not the people in it,” said Ainsworthy. “The most generous people I know. Unselfish—” He fell silent against Northen’s barely contained disgust.

“Why’d we turn off here?” asked Northen. “Thought we were headed for Regional.”

“No telephones,” said Ainsworthy, swinging between the stone gateposts of the drive to the Center. “Have to alert them.”

He was gratified that Northen fell immediately into the almost silent role of observer and kept his thoughts to himself.

Kemble met them at the door. “KVIN?” he asked, reading Ainsworthy’s sober face.

“Yes,” said Ainsworthy. “It’s Kief. You probably heard the Healiocopter. Who’s available?”

“Providentially, the workers are all in from the fields.” Kemble stepped back inside the Center, and, tugging the bell rope that hung just inside the door, swung the bell into voice. Ten minutes later he spoke from the Center porch to the crowd that had gathered from the stone and log houses that, with the Center, formed a hollow square of buildings backed by the neat home vegetable gardens, backed in their turn by woodlands and the scattered areas where each family grew its field and cash crops.

“KVIN,” said Kemble. “Who’s available?”

Quickly a sub-group formed, more than twice as many as were needed if all were accepted. The others scattered back to their individual pursuits. Kemble gathered the donors together, briefly, speaking so quietly that Northen rumbled to Ainsworthy, “What’s he saying? What’s going on?”

“They always pray before any important project,” said Ainsworthy neutrally.

“Pray!” Northen crumpled his notebook impatiently. “Wasting time. How they going to get to Regional? One-hoss shay?”

“Relax!” snapped Ainsworthy, defensive for his friends. “These people have been personally involved in KVIN lots longer than you have. And they’re going nowhere.”

Kemble turned back to Ainsworthy and accepted calmly the introduction to Northen, reading his attitude in a glance and smiling faintly over it at Ainsworthy. He excused himself and called, “Justin, you’re coordinator today.”

Most of the interior of the Center was one huge room, since it served as meeting and activity center for the settlement. Under Justin’s direction, closet doors were opened, cots were unfolded and arranged in neat

rows down the hall. Equipment was set up, lines of donors were formed, and everything was in readiness by the time the Bloodmobile clacked out of the sky and pummelled the grass in the hollow square with the tumult of its rotors.

One by one the donors were given essential checks by means of a small meter applied to an ear lobe, and were accepted or rejected with quick efficiency.

Northen stood glowering at the scene of quiet activity. "Why can't they go to Regional like any other humans?"

"Any particular reason why they should?" asked Ainsworthy shortly. "They're a willing, never-failing source, and have been since our Unit was established. Why shouldn't we cater to them? It doesn't jeopardize any of our operations."

For a moment longer they watched the quiet rows of cots and their intent occupants, then Northen, with a grimace of annoyance, turned away. "Let's get to Regional," he said. "I want to follow this through, inch by inch."

"But there's got to be a difference!" Red-faced and roaring, Northen thumped on the desk in Isolation at Regional. "There's *got* to be! Why else do KVIN's recover here?"

"You tell us." Dr. Manson moved back in distaste from Northen's thrust-out face. "That's your job. Find out why. We've researched this problem for ten years now. You tell *us* what we have overlooked or neglected. We will receive with utmost enthusiasm any suggestions you might have. According to exhaustive tests from every possible point of reference, there is no difference in the blood of these donors and any donors anywhere!" He did a slight thumping of his own, his thin face flushed with anger. "And KVIN is KVIN, no matter where!"

"I don't like it," Northen growled to Ainsworthy a few days later, "Kief's convalescent now, but *why*? I've been drawing up another set of statistics and I don't like it."

"*Must* you like it?" asked Ainsworthy. "Is that requisite to valid results?"

"Of course not," growled Northen morosely.

"What statistics?" Ainsworthy asked, interest quickening. "A new lead?"

"It's true, isn't it, that the only blood donors used for KVIN replacements are those from Away?"

"Yes," nodded Ainsworthy.

"That's a factor that hasn't been considered before," said Northen. "I've queried the other Regionals—and I don't like it. There are no Detach donors involved at San Fran Regional. At Denver Regional, half their

donors are Detaches.” His thick hands crumpled the papers he held. “And curse’n’blastit! All the Central Regional donors are Detaches!”

Ainsworthy leaned back and laughed. “Exactly the ratio of deaths and recoveries regionally. But why are you so angry? Will it kill you if a Detach has something to do with solving our difficulty?”

“It’s that those lumpheaded-sons-of-bowlegged-sea-cooks at Central swear there’s nothing in the blood of any of these Detaches that’s any different from any other donors! And the benighted-fuzzlebrains at Denver swear the same!”

“Hoh!” Ainsworthy leaned forward. “No answer?” he chuckled. “Maybe it’s an invalid question. Maybe no one recovers from KVIN!”

“Don’t be more of a fool than you have to,” snapped Northen. Then automatically, “Your pardon.”

“It’s yours,” Ainsworthy automatically responded.

The two sat in silence for a moment, then Northen pushed himself slowly to his feet. “Well, let’s go see this—who’s he? The Away fellow.”

“Kemble,” said Ainsworthy, rising.

“Yes, Kemble.” Northen knocked his chair back from the table as he turned. “Maybe he can give us some sort of lead.”

Kemble was in the fields when they arrived so they had a couple of hours to kill before he could talk with them. They spent the time in touring the settlement, each aspect of which only deepened Northen’s dislike of the place. They ended up at the tiny school where girls, long-braided, full-skirted, and boys, barefooted for the warm day and long trousered in the manner of Detaches, worked diligently and self-consciously under the visitors’ eyes.

After they left the school, Northen snorted. “They’re no angels! Did you see that little devil in the back seat slipping that frog down into the little girl’s desk drawer?”

Ainsworthy laughed. “Yes,” he said. “He was very adroit. But where did you get the idea that Detaches are supposed to be angels? They certainly never claim such distinction.”

“Then why do they feel the world’s so evil that they have to leave it?” snapped Northen.

“That’s not the reason—” Ainsworthy broke off, weary to the bone of this recurrent theme harped on by those who dislike the Detaches. Well, those who took refuge in such a reaction were only striking back at a group that, to them, dishonored their own way of life by the simple act of withdrawing from it.

Kemble met them in a small office of the Center, his hair still glistening from his after-work wash-up. He made them welcome and said, “How can I help you?”

Northen stated his problem succinctly, surprising Ainsworthy by his being able to divorce it from all emotional bias. "So it comes down to this," he finished. "Are you in possession of any facts, or, lacking facts, any theories that might have a bearing on the problem?"

There was a brief silence, then Kemble spoke. "I'm surprised, frankly, at these statistics. It never occurred to me that we Detaches were involved in KVIN other than purely incidentally. As a matter of fact, we have no connection with the other Detach settlements. I mean, there's no organization as such of Detaches. Each settlement is entirely independent of any other, except, perhaps, in that a certain type of personality is attracted to this kind of life. We exchange news and views, but there are no closer ties."

"Then there wouldn't be any dietary rules or customs—"

"None," smiled Kemble. "We eat as God and our labors give us food."

"No hallucinogens or ceremonial drugs?"

"None," said Kemble. "We approach God as simply as He approaches us."

Northen shifted uncomfortably. "You're Religious." He made it a placard for a people.

"If the worship of God is so labeled," said Kemble. "But certainly, Detaches are not unique in that."

The three sat silent, listening to the distant shrieking laughter of the released school children.

"Then there's nothing, *nothing* that might make a difference?" sighed Northen heavily.

"I'm sorry," said Kemble. "Nothing—"

"Wait," said Ainsworthy. "It's remote, but what about your prayer before various activities?"

"Prayer!" snorted Northen.

"But that's our custom before *any*—" Kemble broke off. He looked from Northen to Ainsworthy and back to Northen. "There is one factor that hasn't been considered," he said soberly. Then he smiled faintly, "You, sir, had better assume your most unemotional detachment." Northen hunched forward, scrabbling in his bent and tattered notebook for an empty page.

"Go on," he said, his chewed pencil poised in readiness.

"I had forgotten it," said Kemble. "It has become so automatic. Each of us donors, as our blood is being taken, prays continuously for the recipient of that blood, with specific mention of his name and illness if we know it. We try to keep our flow of intercessory prayer as continuous as the flow of blood into the containers."

Northen had stopped writing. His face reddened. His mouth opened. Ainsworthy could see the tensing of the muscles preparatory to a roar and spoke quickly. "Do you know if this is a practice among other Detaches?"

“We got the idea from a Denver Area settlement. We discussed it with them by correspondence and, if I’m not mistaken, we came to the same conclusion. It makes a purely impersonally thing into a vital personal service. They, as well as we, give intercessory prayer along with our blood.” He stood up. “And that, Mr. Northen, is the only factor that I can think of that might make a difference. If you’ll excuse me now, gentlemen, there are things to be done before milking time.”

“One minute,” Northen’s voice was thick with control. “Can you give me a copy of the prayer?”

“I’m sorry,” said Kemble. “There is no formal prayer. Each fashions his prayer according to his own orientation to God.”

“Well, one thing,” Northen sagged in exhaustion over his desk at the Unit. “This can be settled once and for all. The next case that comes up, we’ll just make sure that no one prays anything while they’re giving blood. That’ll prove there’s nothing to this silly idea!”

“Prove by a dead patient?” asked Ainsworthy. “Are you going to let someone die just to test this theory?”

“Surely *you* aren’t feather-frittered-mealy-brained enough—” roared Northen.

“What other anything have you found to account for the recovery of KVIN’s at Central?” Ainsworthy was impatient. He left Northen muttering and roaring in a whisper over his notebook.

About a week later, Ainsworthy was roused out of a sound post-midnight sleep by the insistent burr of the intercom. He half-fell out of bed and staggered blindly to answer it. “Yes,” he croaked, “this is Ainsworthy.”

“No prayer—” The voice came in a broken rumble. “Not one word. Not one thought—”

“Northen!” Ainsworthy snapped awake. “What is it? What’s the matter?”

“I’ve got it,” said Northen thickly.

“The answer?” asked Ainsworthy. “Couldn’t you have waited until—”

“No, KVIN,” Northen mumbled. “At least someone is sawing my ribs off one by one and hitting me over the head with them—” His voice faded.

“Northen!” Ainsworthy grabbed for his robe as he called. “I’ll be right there. Hang on!”

“No praying!” said Northen. “No praying—This’ll prove it. No—promise—promise—”

“Okay, okay!” said Ainsworthy. “Did you deliberately—” but there was no sound on the intercom. He stumbled out the door, abandoning the

robe that wouldn't go on upside-down and wrong-side-out, muttering to himself, "Not another case already! Not this soon!"

"He couldn't have deliberately infected himself," protested Dr. Given as they waited on the heliport atop the Unit for the Healiocopter. "In the first place, we're not even sure how the disease is transmitted. And besides, he was not permitted access to any lab unaccompanied at any time."

"But two cases so close together—" said Ainsworthy.

"Coincidence," said Dr. Given. "Or"—his face was bleak—"an outbreak. Or the characteristics of the disease are altering—"

They both turned to the bundled up Northen as he stirred and muttered. "No praying," he insisted in a jerky whisper. "You promise—you promise!"

"But Northen," protested Ainsworthy, "what can you prove by dying?"

"No!" Northen struggled against the restraint litter. "You promised! You promised!"

"I don't know whether they'd—"

"You promised!"

"I promised." Ainsworthy gave in. "Heaven help you!"

"No praying!" Northen sagged into complete insensibility.

Ainsworthy was standing with Kemble, looking around at the brisk preparations in the Center at Away. The Delco plant in the little back shed was chugging away and the electric lights were burning in the hall and floodlighting the area where the Bloodmobile would land.

"It'll be difficult," said Kemble. "We are so used to praying as donors, that it'll be hard not to. And it seems foolhardy to take such chances. I'm not sure whether morally we have the right—"

"It's his express request," said Ainsworthy. "If he chooses to die to prove his point, I suppose it's his privilege. Besides, we really don't know if this is the key factor."

"That's true," Kemble agreed. "Very well, I'll tell the donors."

The waiting group looked back blankly at Kemble, after the announcement. Then someone—a girl—spoke.

"Not intercede? But we always—"

"I know, Cynthia," said Kemble, "but the patient specifically does not want intercession. We must respect his desires in this matter."

"But if he doesn't believe it'll do any good, why would it hurt him? I mean, our praying is our affair. His beliefs are his. The two—"

"Cynthia," said Kemble firmly. "He has been promised that there will be no intercessory prayer on his behalf. We owe him the courtesy of

keeping the promise. I suggest to all of you that in place of interceding for the patient, you choose some other important need and intercede in its behalf. Or just blank your minds with trivialities. And Cynthia, you might use your time to assemble arguments pro and con on whether it is necessary for a person to know he is being prayed for, for prayer to be efficacious! I think Theo is going to give you a lot of trouble on that question as soon as we're through here!" The group laughed and turned away, offering all sorts of approaches to both Theo and Cynthia as they drifted out to wait for the arrival of the Bloodmobile. "It's hard to suspend a habit," said Kemble to Ainsworthy, "especially one that has a verbal tie-in with a physical action."

When Northen finally came back to consciousness—for come back he did—his first audible word was "Prayer?"

"No," said Ainsworthy, shakily relaxing for the first time since the long vigil had begun. "No praying."

"See! See!" hissed Northen weakly, "it wasn't that!"

"Take satisfaction from the fact, if you like," said Ainsworthy, conscious of a pang of disappointment. "But you still have no answer. That was the only new angle you had, too."

"But it wasn't that! It wasn't that!" And Northen closed weary eyes.

"Odd that it should matter so much to him," said Dr. Manson.

"He likes answers," said Ainsworthy. "Nice, solid, complete answers, all ends tucked in, nothing left over. Prayer could never meet his specifications."

"And yet," said Dr. Manson as they left the room. "Have you read the lead article in this month's *Journal of Beyond Research*? Some very provocative—"

"Well, it's been interesting," said Ainsworthy as he helped a shrunken Northen load his bags into the Jeep preparatory to leaving the Unit. "Too bad you didn't make more progress while you were here."

"I eliminated one factor," said Northen, hunching himself inside his sagging clothes. "That's progress."

"These clothes! Don't know whether to gain my weight back or buy new clothes. Go broke either way. Starved to death!"

"But you haven't answered anything," said Ainsworthy. "You still have the unexplained geographical distribution *and* the presence of the Detaches in the case."

"Eliminate nonessentials and what's left will be essential *and* the answer," said Northen, climbing into the Jeep.

"But what have you got left to eliminate?" asked Ainsworthy.

“Curse n’blastit!” roared Northen. “Stop needling me! If I knew what to eliminate, I’d be eliminating it! I’m backing off to get a fresh start. I’ll put these KVIN units out of business yet. And you’ll be eliminated!” And pleased with his turn of phrase, he chuckled all the way down the Unit drive to the road.

Ainsworthy felt a little disappointed and sad as the turn-off to Away swung into sight. He had an illogical feeling that, in some way, his friends had been betrayed or let down.

He braked the Jeep suddenly, throwing Northen forward against the seat belt that no longer cut a gash in his bulk.

“What now?” Northen growled, groping for his briefcase that had shot off his lap.

“Someone flagging us down,” said Ainsworthy, with a puzzled frown. “A Detach woman.”

He pulled the Jeep up into the widening of the Away road where it joined the Unit road.

The woman from Away stood quietly now by the clump of bushes that bordered the road, her skirts swept back a little by the small breeze that moved the leaves.

“Can we help you?” asked Ainsworthy.

“I—I must speak to you.” The woman was examining her clasped hands. She looked up timidly. “If you’d like to come over in the shade.” She gestured to a log under the overhang of a huge tree just off the road. Ainsworthy looked at Northen, Northen scowled and they both flipped open their seat belts and got out.

“I—I’m very interested in your research on KVIN,” the woman said to Northen as the two men gingerly found seats on the log. “Oh, I’m Elizabeth Fenway.” Northen’s eyes flicked with sudden intentness to her face. “Yes,” she said softly. “You’ve heard of Charles Fenway. He was my husband. He preceded you in your job. He died of KVIN at the San Fran Regional. I was there with him. We were both born and grew up here at Away, so I brought him back here and stayed.”

Ainsworthy intercepted Northen’s astonished look and smiled, “‘Can any good come out of Nazareth?’” he quoted.

Northen reddened, shrugged inside his oversized clothes and fingered his notebook.

“When Charles was at San Fran Regional,” Elizabeth went on, “just before he died, he had started checking out a new lead to KVIN that he had just turned up—the odd geographical distribution of deaths from KVIN.”

Northen’s eyes snapped to her face again.

“He was going over the list of donors, to see if the key could be there when he died, in spite of replacement.” Elizabeth smoothed her hands down the sides of her skirts. “He hadn’t even had time to write up this latest development. That’s why you had to retrace his steps. I had an idea of what you were doing when we heard you were at the Unit.” She looked sideways at Northen. “I wondered how you were going to react when you found your research lead you into such distasteful company. You see, your opinion of us at Away and of anything religion-oriented is well known at Away. That’s why we complied without much protest with your wishes concerning our intercessory prayers.

“But I—” Her voice failed her and she clasped her hands tightly. “I had gone on with Charles’ statistical work, following the lead he had uncovered. I—I found the factor of the Detaches, too. I—you and your work have been in my prayers since you took over Charles’ job.” Her voice failed her completely and she blinked and turned her face away. For an uncomfortable moment she struggled for composure. Then, in a sudden outburst of words, she said, “I couldn’t let you die! The others couldn’t have let you, either, if they had known! You can’t just stand by and let another person die when you can save him! So I prayed! I interceded for you the whole time my blood was being drawn!

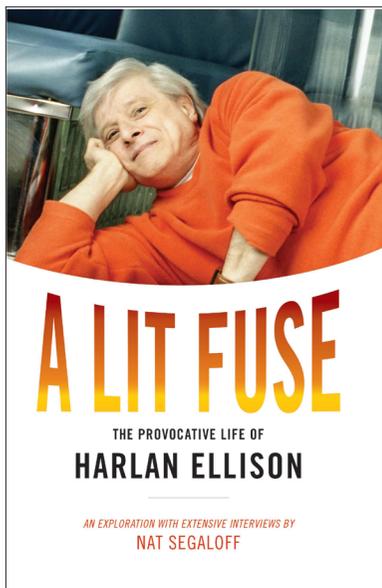
“I’m sorry! I’m sorry if I’ve done violence to your principles—or to your research, but I had to tell you—I prayed!” Then, with the barest sketch of the mannerly dip of the knees to the two men, she was gone, back through the woodlands to Away.

“Well!” Ainsworthy let out his astonished breath. Northen was sitting, his face blank, his notebook crushed in one hand. Then slowly he straightened it out until he could open it. Laboriously he dampened the stubby point of his battered pencil in one corner of his mouth. Then he crossed out a few lines, heavily, and wrote, forming the words audibly as he recorded.

“One prayed. Was extra blood obtained as precaution? Was hers used in my replacement? Proportion of prayer necessary to be effective—if it is the effective factor.”

He paused a moment, looking at Ainsworthy. “Is prayer subject to analysis?” Then he bent to his notes again.

“Is—prayer—subject—” ✎



A Lit Fuse

The Provocative Life of Harlan Ellison

by NAT SEGALOFF

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Chapter Selected:

All The Lies That Are His Life

An unguarded, uncensored, unquiet tour of the life of Harlan Ellison.

In late 2011 Harlan Ellison—the multi-award-winning writer of speculative fiction and famously litigious personality—did two uncharacteristic things: he asked biographer Nat Segaloff if he'd be interested in writing his life story and he gave Segaloff full control.

Segaloff conducted exhaustive interviews with Ellison over the course of five years and also spoke with many of his friends and enemies in an effort to get inside the man and pin down the best-known “Harlan stories.” Their wide-ranging discussions cover his bullied boyhood, his storied marriages, his fabled lawsuits, and his compulsive writing process with more depth and detail than has ever before appeared in print.

Along the way the reader is treated to an analysis of the Connie Willis controversy, the infamous dead gopher story, allegedly pushing a fan down an elevator shaft, and the final word on *The Last Dangerous Visions*. What emerges is a rich portrait of a man who has spent his life doing battle with his times and himself, always challenging his readers to reach for a higher plane and goading himself to get them there. It's funny, wise, shocking, and—well, it's Harlan.

Nat Segaloff

Nat Segaloff is a writer, producer, and film historian. He has written the biographies of Arthur Penn, William Friedkin, and Stirling Silliphant, and produced documentaries on Stan Lee, John Belushi, Larry King, and Shari Lewis & Lamb Chop. He is co-author of the play “The Waldorf Conference,” about the origins of the Hollywood Blacklist (in which Harlan Ellison acted) and, in addition to *A Lit Fuse*, has also completed a memoir, *Screen Saver*.

Edited by David G. Grubbs

CHAPTER 7: ALL THE LIES THAT ARE HIS LIFE

HARLAN ELLISON GETS TWO SHOTS at each piece he writes: once when he finishes it and another when he writes the introduction. “Any number of writers now include introductions to their stories,” he said in *The Harlan Ellison Hornbook*. (Naturally, it was in an introduction.) “But when I started doing it back in the Fifties, it was looked on as an egomaniacal intrusion ... I think it’s necessary to commit such material to print ... It creates, I believe and I hope, a bond between the artist and the audience.”¹

Ellison’s introductions are, if you will, akin to the “making of” documentary that adds resonance to a movie on home video. They add insight into what compelled him to write the piece and how it affected him. They allow him to keep the primary work lean and focused yet answer questions that might have proved distracting in the main narrative. If the device seems at odds with the form, one is reminded of Walt Whitman’s plea, “Do I contradict myself? Very well, then I contradict myself. (I am large, I contain multitudes.)”

Ellison’s multitudes hide his secrets. Not the one he won’t reveal, but all the rest, like the doubts and the mistakes and the just plain dumb things he’s done over the years. Sometimes they inform his stories; sometimes they guide his life, and sometimes they just make him squirm. “I always knew I had the stuff,” he says without modesty then mitigates it with, “and yet I thought ‘they’re gonna find me out.’ And that’s why I tell everything, why I leave nothing unsaid, why, in my introductions, I tell the most embarrassing things about myself. I don’t mind when someone in an audience will say, ‘You’re an asshole.’ I will

1 “Installment 6: Interim Memo,” *The Harlan Ellison Hornbook*, New York: Penzler Books, 1990.

say back to them, 'You're absolutely right. Not only am I an asshole, I am the heir to the throne to the Kingdom of Asshole.' I know the stupid things I have done in my life. Every really major disastrous error that I've committed in my life has worked out to my advantage, every one of them."

Coming into professional prominence in the Beat era of the 1950s and blossoming in the sybaritic 1960s, Ellison had countless opportunities to make mistakes. It was a time of free love, street life, drinks, drugs, and bad clothing. He avoided the most corrosive of these excesses, the ones that Allen Ginsberg would later say destroyed the best minds of his generation.

"I can't stand the taste of alcohol," he says, explaining his lifelong teetotalism. "I can't drink beer. Wine has no taste at all to me. Champagne has got a mildly nice little tinkle for one sip, but that's about it. There was very little if any drinking in my house. I think I saw my father drink once in his lifetime if that. I don't think I ever saw my mother, except for maybe a glass of sacramental wine during Rosh Hashanah. So I already had a healthy disrespect for it." He also never used drugs, despite writing for a readership that did. "I once tried magic mushrooms way back in the day when it was legal, when you could import them from Texas," he says, recalling the incident at a Greenwich Village loft during his New York period. A lot of bikers, poets, folkies, and political radicals hung out, and someone produced a small quantity of peyote. "I understood it was to be good peyote," he says. "You had to boil it up with Hawaiian punch to drink it. Otherwise, you couldn't hold it down. The most anybody could hold it down was maybe twenty seconds before they vomited. They give me a glass as big as a mug, six inches tall of Hawaiian punch. And they said, 'Come on, peyote, try it. Whoa, man, give you a hell of a buzz, whoa. Boy, you'll see all the things you never saw in your life, whoa, whoa, whoa.' And now I'm thinking, 'Okay, seemed like a good idea at the time.' This is before [Timothy] Leary, this is before LSD, this is before any of this shit. We're talking 1954–55. They're wise people who are telling me, guys like Bill Donaho, and I liked these guys. Donaho was a great big fat Buddha, and all these young girls would come around him and drape themselves around him like Jabba the Hut, and he knew everything; he was a cornucopia of knowledge.

"I was standing near a front window facing out on Hudson Street. I'll never forget facing to my right, and I said, 'Ok.'

"They said, 'Now, be careful. The most you can hold it down will be maybe 20 seconds.'

"I said, 'I gotcha.' They brought over a big wastebasket which was filled with vomit and rinds of things that people had been eating. And they said, 'Go ahead!' Everybody's watching me to see what I'm gonna do, and I swig it, two swigs it took to get it down. I held it a minute and a half. I held it a minute and a half, and then I [vomited] into the wastebasket, and I thought I was gonna die. I thought I would die I was so *verklempt*. I was so miserable. I thought, honest to god, there were rakes going up and down inside me, taking off the flesh and then piling it in the center, and then somebody saying, 'Take it away!' And I would vomit again. And I felt nothing else except just as sick as I could be, and headachy and miserable in every fucking fiber.

"I looked out the window. They said, 'What do you see? What do you see?' And all I remember seeing were the street lights that were now multicolored, they were stroboscopic in rainbow colors. That lasted for thirty seconds and then they went back to being street lights. And I said, 'I don't see anything. I don't know anything.'

"They said, 'What do you think of the universe?'"

"I said, 'I dunno. I'm pretty sure there's no god. It's a creation of man. Other than that ...' And that was the end of it. The evening went on just as before. Never got off." Telling the story, Ellison sounds almost disappointed at having missed the sort of experience that fueled so many others.¹

"Ted Sturgeon was a huge one for drugs," he says. "LSD, psilocybin, marijuana, everything. I don't know whether he used hard drugs or whether he used cocaine and meth or anything like that, but Ted was always using marijuana and was a big supporter of it. I would be sitting next to Ted on a sofa, and they would pass me a joint about the size of Lithuania. I would be holding this thing like a man holding a four-hundred pound clarinet in his hand. I didn't want it, and Ted would take it away from me and he would say, 'Naw, Harlan doesn't use.'"

Like many friends over the years, Sturgeon stayed for a time in Ellison's house. His behavior, to say the least, was disruptive, and Ellison wrote about it.

1 His stand against drugs, however, is resolute: "Basically, fuck dope," he wrote in his 950-word foreword to Paul Krassner's 1999 *Pot Stories for the Soul* (New York: High Times Press, 1999). "No offense, dude, but fuck dope." Adds Krassner, "When I was putting together the book, there were pieces in it either by or about Hunter Thompson, Ken Kesey, and Wavy Gravy. I sent to about 150 writers ... among the ones I invited to do a story for it—it had to be true—was Harlan. And he wrote back a kind of hysterical anti-pot—he felt ornery, ornery is his middle name, but the good side of ornery because he's outspoken and uncompromising—so I thought it would be hysterical to have an anti-pot story serve as an ironic introduction in a book that's in favor of it. He liked the idea, and I sent him a hundred dollar check. He refused it and asked for a ten dollar check. That was such a gesture on his part because he didn't have to do that."

“He walked around naked and answered the door when an Avon (cosmetics) woman came to the door. Ted was there with his dick hanging out, and Ted was well-hung. I talked about him making paella in a pot on the stove with his bare hands. He was scratching his ass and his nuts and then mixing it with his hands. Talked about him very, very openly and everybody was shocked at my revelation. That I could talk about the great god Sturgeon this way because everybody else that was writing about him wrote about him not knowing him, or they knew about him in the old days, or they knew about him at a distance. He knew more about love than anyone else. In fact, it was said of me in a book, ‘Sturgeon knows everything there is to know about love, Ellison knows everything there is to know about hate.’ Thank god I was not Ted Sturgeon.

“Ted was a great writer in his time; he was a great writer long after his time. In many ways he is still one of the great American writers, nonpareil. A lot of what he wrote was pulp. A lot of what he wrote was exactly what I was writing; he wrote for the buck. Ted always had money problems. He went from wife to wife, from woman to woman. He died nowhere near as well-known as he should’ve been. He was the apex, the best writer of his time, he was one of the giants. And I wish to take none of that away.”¹

For decades, Ellison Wonderland has been variously a home, a haven, a hideout, and a playground for people other than those named Ellison. It has also been a destination for numerous disaffected, youthful fans who found in Ellison’s evocative writing a kindred spirit who, they believed, would take them in if they turned up on his doorstep. He has always been careful not to have anything to do with such castaways, cold as it may seem, and continues to request that his address, including in photos, not be disclosed.

Fellow professionals, however, are a different matter. His home has served as a touchstone for visiting writers and public figures, all of whom feel secure inside its soundproofed walls. Robin Williams was safe here from marauding fans; he and Ellison spent hours playing with toys and pewter soldiers, which are billeted by the hundreds in the Wonderland. Richard Dreyfuss rested there after a 1982 car accident. The two had met when Dreyfuss was in the comedy troupe, *The Session* (whose members included Rob Reiner and Albert Brooks), and bonded in the late ’60s when Dreyfuss was doing civilian duty as a Conscientious Objector during the Vietnam War.

Robert Culp was another kindred spirit. The two met when Ellison visited the set of “*Demon with a Glass Hand*” in the Bradbury building in downtown

1 Theodore (Ted) Sturgeon (born Edward Hamilton Waldo) 1918–1985.

Los Angeles and saw Culp reading a book on archeology. As the pair talked, they realized they were both collectors of Big Little Books, and Culp invited him to his home. “He had a circular staircase, and going up that circular staircase, he had his Big Little Books.” This was just before Culp’s breakthrough in *I Spy* (1965). “He was one of the very best screenwriters I ever knew, absolutely in the first rank. And they made him a star instead. He was as bright as a nova. Not a day goes by that I don’t miss him.”

One of Ellison’s most solid friendships was with Robert Blake, whom he met in the early sixties before the intense actor shot to stardom in *In Cold Blood* and *Baretta*. The years and other events have separated them. “Bobby Blake is one of the smartest people I know,” Ellison says. “He was my friend during days when he was a great actor and he was working for *The Richard Boone Show*.¹ He used to hide out at my house, and we would shoot pool because he hated Richard Boone and he didn’t want to work. We were very tight and then, poof!, gone. His marriage went, poof!, gone, and his friendships went, poof!, gone. I guess he’s blown himself off every good chance he’s ever had. He’s a guy that can’t get out of his own way, and yet I have enormous affection for him. I haven’t seen him in thirty years. When he got into his trouble, he cut himself off from everybody.”²

Another brilliant but off-center person whose life intersected with Ellison’s was Spike Milligan, the man behind BBC radio’s *The Goon Show* and who inspired most British comedy that followed, such as *Monty Python*.

“Spike Milligan’s one of the few people that ever awed me,” Ellison says. “I was staying at the Portobello Hotel in London with a number of very, *very* famous people, most of whom I didn’t know were famous at the time, like the British writer Jean Rhys, who wrote *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Elderly lady. We would sit every day by the fireplace, and I would discuss the manuscript that I was correcting, and she would talk about her books, and I didn’t really know until I [learned from] the concierge that she was Spike Milligan’s mistress. One day I launched into a Milligan [impression], and she said, ‘would you like to have dinner with Spike one night?’ We went to dinner, and he was unbelievable. We would be talking along, and he would suddenly launch into

1 Lasting only fifteen episodes in the 1963–64 season. *The Richard Boone Show* was an anthology series with a repertory cast. In addition to Blake and Boone, it featured Jeanette Nolan, Harry Morgan, Lloyd Bochner, Guy Stockwell, Ford Rainey, and Bethel Leslie.

2 On March 16, 2005, Blake was acquitted of the May 4, 2001, murder of his wife, Bonnie Lee Bakley, but on November 8, 2005, he was found guilty on civil charges brought by Bakley’s three children and ordered to pay \$30 million in damages. The civil verdict was upheld on April 28, 2008. Although he declared bankruptcy, Blake has been paying restitution to his creditors.

a routine. Hilarious to the extent that food would come out of my face. We had dinner a few times, and I got to know Milly.”

Ray Bradbury—the dean of speculative fiction writers—was another matter. “I met him and became personal friends with him so quickly that I never had time to be awed by him. Ray Bradbury was ‘Ray Bradbury’ before I met him. When we met, he was already on his way to worldwide fame, but we sat as equals.” Bradbury was famous for not driving, so Ellison did the ferrying. “When he was booked somewhere, I wound up on the stage with him or following him or preceding him on the same day.” The two men used to program the Writers Guild Film Society. They also used to hang out at the Pacific Dining Car with Leigh Brackett and Ed Hamilton where Ellison, to the horror of his colleagues, would order his steaks well-done, a lingering effect of his mother’s cooking. “We were mutually admiring compatriots,” he says. “I was a few years behind him professionally, but I used him as a great model. He fought against the term *science fiction* all his life, same as I. Never got rid of it.” The relationship began to fray in later years as Bradbury became consumed by his own celebrity. Nevertheless, when he died in June 2012, Ellison was crushed.

Isaac Asimov, fourteen years Ellison’s senior, is the friend Ellison misses most. It began in typical Ellison fashion, which Asimov described in his autobiography, *I, Asimov*, as taking place at a World Science Fiction Convention. He recalled the young Ellison as having the appearance of someone who worshipped him, and yet, when they were introduced, as Asimov wrote:

Ellison said, “Well, I think you’re —” he began, still in the same tone of voice, and for a split second he paused, while I listened and the audience held its breath. The youngster’s face shifted in that split second into an expression of utter contempt and he finished the sentence with supreme indifference, “— a nothing!”¹

Fortunately, Asimov understood Ellison’s iconoclasm, and a decades-long friendship was born. Concluded Asimov years later, “I enjoy a public set-to

¹ Isaac Asimov, *I, Asimov*, New York: Doubleday, 1994. When Asimov earlier wrote of the encounter in his “Foreword 2—Harlan and I” introduction to *Dangerous Visions*, Ellison added an “Impertinent Editorial Footnote” countering, “I didn’t say, ‘—you’re a—nothing!’ I said, ‘You aren’t so much.’ I grant you, the difference is a subtle one; I was being an adolescent snot.” Remark on the disparity between Asimov’s heroic tales and his avuncular physical appearance, Ellison says, “I have never been disappointed by an Asimov story, and I have never been disappointed by Asimov the man. But, on that occasion, my dreams were somewhat greater than the reality, and the remark was more reflex than malice.”

with him ... It's a game with us. In private, though, there is never a cross word between Harlan and me, and if I tell you he is warm and loving, pay no mind to anything else you've heard. I know better, and I am right."¹

"Isaac Asimov was one of the greatest men I ever knew," Ellison says, still marveling like a fan, "and he was a friend of mine. We would sit for endless hours. We never wrote a story together, but we were simpatico. I loved him. He was very old world Jewish. Whenever we walked up the stairs with a young woman, I made sure to walk behind her so Isaac wouldn't grab her tush. He didn't mean anything by it—times were different—but that was Isaac. He hated when I called him Ike in print."

Asimov felt similarly close to Ellison and noted in his memoir, "Harlan is not the kind of person he seems to be. He takes a perverse pleasure in showing the worst side of himself, but if you ignore that and work your way past his porcupine spines (even though it leaves you bleeding) you will find underneath a warm, loving guy who would give you the blood out of his veins if he thought that would help."²

The concept of the writer as fanboy goes in the other direction, too. David Gerrold grew up knowing of people like Ellison and Harry Harrison, but he didn't meet them until the July 1968 FunCon in Los Angeles. "Here's Harry Harrison standing talking to a group," Gerrold says, "and suddenly this leprechaun comes running across the lobby and leaps into Harry's arms shouting, 'Unca Harry!' I said that's gotta be Harlan. After a while I calmed down and walked over and said, 'Hi, I'm David Gerrold, and I wrote the Tribbles script for *Star Trek*.' He said, 'Good job. That was a good script.' That was my baptism. It was so nothing. David Gerrold finally meets Harlan Ellison, you figure this is gonna be big! Important! No. Just 'nice job, kid.' But we started to move in the same circles, and I realized something about Harlan very fast: I would never get in the last word with this man. My job is to let Harlan be Harlan. This is a fanboy thing. I get to stay in a room with the science fiction gods like Fred Pohl, Harlan Ellison, Isaac Asimov, Theodore Sturgeon, and all these incredible human beings. I'm getting a private performance like I'm getting a private audience with the Queen of England." Before long, Ellison and Gerrold became friends.

Ellison's allegiance to friends presumes reciprocal loyalty. It is almost a sacrament. He may have acquaintances by the score, but an Ellison friendship

1 *I, Asimov*, New York: Doubleday, 1994.

2 *I, Asimov*.

is hard-won and indelible. “Most of the people we call ‘friends’ are merely passersby to our lives,” he has written, “acquaintances with whom, for a short time we have something in common ... friends are those into whose souls you have looked and therein glimpsed a oneness with yourself. They are part of you, and you are part of them. They own a piece of you. And when it goes sour, it makes you want to go blind.”¹

One recipient of Ellison’s loyalty was Robert J. Sawyer. When Sawyer ran for President of SFWA (Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America) in 1998, he promised to hold a referendum that would tighten membership rules. When he followed through on his campaign promise, the result was a firestorm between actual published authors and those whose membership was based on politics. It got nasty.

“We didn’t have the term *cyberbullying* back then,” Sawyer recalls, “it was a new phenomenon, but that’s what it was. Harlan found time to call me every week to ask, ‘How you doing? Hang in there.’ I will never forget that. There were people who had been my friends and colleagues and peers who simply ducked when all of the missiles were flying and would not be seen with me, would not call to say a kind word. I vividly remember, in all that six month period, the phone ringing exactly once; only one writer friend besides Harlan picked up the phone. But Harlan was there.” Sawyer resigned halfway through his tenure, but the next year (1999) at Readercon, when Sawyer entered the hall during Ellison’s keynote presentation, Ellison called for a standing ovation in support of his fellow author.

Similarly, David Gerrold discovered Ellison’s compassion. “In 1969 I hit bottom emotionally. I was in probably the worst emotional state a human being could be. There was really no one to talk to, so I picked up the phone and I called Harlan. He stayed on the phone with me for an hour, and he just listened. The fact that he listened to me as a human being ... that was the tipping point for me. [I thought] if I could have that kind of connection with Harlan, I think I’ll be okay because he wouldn’t have wasted time on me if he did not respect me on some level.”

Ellison’s friendships are varied. One, Don Epstein, was a fraternity brother at Ohio State University whose dream of being a doctor was thwarted by the University’s “Jewish quota.” Years later Ellison and Epstein reconnected, except by then Epstein had had a nose job and had changed his name to a

1 “Fair Weather Friends, Summer Soldiers, and Sunshine Patriots,” *Los Angeles Free Press*, March 29, 1973, reprinted in *The Ellison Hornbook*.

more Gentile one. And he still wasn't a doctor; he was an undertaker. Ellison ached for him.

Steve McQueen was a friend long before he was a superstar. Like Ellison, McQueen had a deeply troubled youth; you might say the two of them lived a Mark Twain childhood. "He used to call me Huckleberry. I got a signed picture that says 'Huckleberry.' He saved my life. He literally saved my life." It was while they were shooting a television interview segment on the California desert and, during a break in filming, decided to drive off together over the sand dunes—with McQueen at the wheel, of course. "We only had one hat [between us]. This was a dune buggy that his company made, and we got five miles out, and it broke down, and we had to walk back five miles through a hundred and thirty-five, hundred and forty degree heat, and we kept changing off the hat. And I collapsed. I went down, and Steve put me on his back and carried me, fireman's carry, carried me out the last mile and a half."¹

Ellison has a photograph of himself and McQueen taken that day. It hangs on his wall with a catalogue of others who have meant the world to him: Charles Beaumont, Robert Bloch, Arthur C. Clarke, the creative team of the new *The Twilight Zone*, and Bruce Lee.

"I will tell you as much as I care to tell," he says of his relationship with Lee. "There has been so much talk about Bruce, and he was such a private person that anybody who ever passed him on the street has written a book. Bruce Lee was one of the great icons of the twentieth century, and I saw him do things that were physically impossible. Sometime during '61 or '62 I had become interested in the martial arts because I had come out of [Army] basic training and I had some muscle. I had learned basic judo and jujitsu, but this was before karate, tae kwon do, aikido, all the rigors. But I did have some fighting skills."

As Lee did with other students such as McQueen, James Coburn, John Saxon, and Stirling Silliphant, he sometimes came to their homes and at other times had them come to his facility. "I remember once working in a very beautiful bonsai garden. A small square within walls, bonsai trees everywhere, rocks. I was training at the same time as James Coburn and Johnny Saxon."

At the time, Lee was at MGM shooting *Marlowe*, written by Silliphant, who mentored his film career. Ellison was working on the lot at the same time and watched dailies with *Marlowe*'s producer, Sidney Beckerman. Beckerman was convinced that the cameraman had speeded up Lee's scenes because Lee's

1 Erik Nelson interviews.

moves were so fast that they didn't register on film. The producer paid an angry visit to the set.

"The set had crates everywhere," Ellison says. "Sid Beckerman was over six feet. Bruce Lee was my height, five foot five, five foot six. They talked for a little while. Sid says, 'Show me.' Bruce agreed but warned, 'Mr. Beckerman I ask only one thing. Please do not move. Let me repeat that.'

"Sid: 'Yeah yeah.'

"'No. *Please do not move.*'

"Bruce went back to the other end, all the way to the wall of that soundstage, which had to be sixty feet away, maybe more. Sid Beckerman is standing. Bruce started running at him. He ran full tilt. He ran straight up, stopped in front of him, went straight into the air, and straight down behind him. Beckerman passed out and collapsed on the floor."

The Bruce Lee experience did Ellison little good when he and Robert Crais—the young prodigy he had befriended at the 1975 Clarion Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers Workshop—got into a scuffle with five muggers outside of Eddie Dipente's dojo near LA's Crenshaw district. Crais (author of the Elvis Cole novels) was set upon by the thugs and called for Ellison to fetch Eddie. Instead, Ellison jumped in himself, and both men got the shit beat out of them. "You shoulda went screaming to Eddie," Crais said. "You shouldn'ta come and tried to help." Ellison, according to Crais, "cocked his head and gave me a genuine, honest-to-god confused, 'What else could I do?'"¹

Writer Jon Winokur, who writes the *Curmudgeon* books (*The Portable Curmudgeon*, *The Curmudgeon in Love*, etc.) interviewed Ellison in late 1988 for *The Portable Curmudgeon*, and the two have been friends since, on the theory that it takes one to know one. A friend's wife gave him the idea to start a Curmudgeon Club. "I said, 'That's a contradiction in terms.' But I thought about it and felt it might not be a bad idea. We wanted to have a meeting, and Harlan said, 'I'll be there. When do you want to do it?' Sure enough, he came to this curmudgeon club meeting, and we immediately elected him the sergeant-at-arms. We had one meeting. It was great; he regaled everybody."

Actor Edward Asner, also known as a curmudgeon, defers to Ellison: "He does it better than I do it. He's a much better grinch than I am." The two men met after Ellison wrote several columns in the *L. A. Weekly* chastising CBS for appeasing conservatives by canceling Asner's *Lou Grant* TV series. "He wrote

1 Robert Crais, "The Cricket Beneath the Hammer," by Robert Crais, foreword to *The Harlan Ellison Hornbook*, New York: Penzler Books, 1990, and also conversation with the Author.

it up as David versus Goliath,” says Asner, who won an Emmy for the title role. “When I read those articles, I tried to step forward. We both played it macho. I’m sure he growled and shrugged it off and all that, but I expressed my gratitude and have been his idolater since then.”

In addition to Emmy-winning actors and fellow progressives (Asner is both), Ellison’s address book is a personal A-List of the great and the near great, some of whom, to his embarrassment, he didn’t know were great at the time he met them. “They introduced me to Richard Feynman when I was lecturing at Cal Tech, and I was such a moron I didn’t realize how famous Richard Feynman was. I knew his name, and it was not until afterward when Feynman was sitting in the front row roaring with laughter that I thought, ‘Oh my god, I’ve met one of the great minds of our time and didn’t know it.’ I would’ve loved to have become good friends with Feynman as I did with Carl Sagan.” Regarding Sagan, in 2013 Ellison also published a slim illustrated pamphlet titled “Li’l Harlan and His Sidekick Carl the Comet in Danger Land” about the pair’s encounter with hoods in Philadelphia in the early 1980s. It is illustrated by no less than Gahan Wilson, who is, of course, also a friend.

In May 1981, Sagan and Ellison along with naturalist Arnold Newman and actor Leonard Nimoy led a community effort to halt the commercial development of a huge parcel of land in Sherman Oaks, the last untouched land in the area.¹ It also happened to be the view out Ellison’s office window. A bill to create a Conservancy was pending in Sacramento, and Nimoy and Ellison joined other volunteers to lobby on its behalf. “We were on our way on a flight to Sacramento,” Nimoy says, “and discovered that Jerry Brown, who was then governor, was on the plane. He was up at the bulkhead and had an empty seat beside him. I had met him a couple of times; I was active in California politics. So I took it upon myself to walk up and sit down beside him. I said, ‘Hi governor, Leonard Nimoy.’ ‘Oh yeah, hello, how are you?’ I said, ‘We’re on our way to Sacramento to talk about this bill.’ Very briefly, I gave him a twenty second story about what we were trying to do in Sacramento. And, sure enough, the whole thing worked. Everybody gave me glowing reviews for interceding with the governor, and maybe it did help—I honestly don’t know—but I do remember sitting with the governor and pitching him, and then I left him alone; I didn’t want to feel I’d overstayed my welcome. My memory is that it worked. The bill was passed to protect that territory.”

1 *Future Life* magazine #29, September 1981.

In more recent times, Ellison is a huge fan of comedian Lewis Black, who he says credits *The Glass Teat* with inspiring much of his material about the hypocrisy of the media. When the men finally met backstage after one of Black's shows, Ellison said, "Lewis, this is an historic meeting. This is like Richard Nixon in the kitchen in Russia, and people will say what did you say to each other? I want to be sure that we say something of importance, so I say to you, 'Lewis Black, what a piece of work is man.' He looked at me and roared with laughter, clapped me on the shoulder, and gave me a kiss on the cheek."

Patton Oswalt is another young admirer. They met in the late 1990s in a manner that neither could imagine would lead to the close friendship that it has become. "I was in Golden Apple (a high-end comic book store in Los Angeles), and he was in the back. I didn't know he was there, and someone whispered, 'That's Harlan Ellison.'" Oswalt had been performing stand-up comedy and gingerly approached Ellison who, he knew, could be irascible. Ellison had seen his work, "And he said I was amazing. So I said, 'You mean *fucking* amazing.' And he said, 'You need to lose weight.' We became friends years later when I got famous enough that he wanted to talk to me."

Just as Ellison can be effusive with his likes, he doesn't hold back on his dislikes. He harbors particular antipathy for Forest J Ackerman, the avuncular (and now deceased) editor of *Famous Monsters of Filmland*, the magazine that raised two generations of monster movie fans, but who also had less agreeable dealings with writers whose work he published and simultaneously represented. Discussing him, Ellison fulminates. "He was at core a man who was so absorbed with himself that he played the sweet and kindly gentleman, and people who grew up on *Famous Monsters of Filmland* think, 'Oh Uncle Forry, oh Uncle Forry.' Well, Uncle Forry was a piece of shit."

Then there's the major science fiction writer who cadged a meal from his local Chinese restaurant. "He goes to pick up a huge order one night of the dinner. The little Chinese man, nice little man, brings three huge bags—you know how much Chinese food you can get in three big bags—and he puts them down on the wooden counter and is writing the check when they both notice movement out of the corner of their eyes. They both spot a rat running across the floor of this little mom and pop place. Now they turn to face each other again, having seen the rat. My friend reaches around the three bags, holds them to his chest, turns and walks out of the restaurant without paying." Ellison stews not for himself but for the restaurant owner. "I have

just told you everything you will ever need to know about this charming, famous, award-winning author. That's who he really is." (Ellison declines to name him.)

"It's like brushing up against a bag of razor blades," says Mary Reinholz, who has remained a friend. "He can be very cutting. I think he's under a lot of pressure, but it's his own pressure. Something drives him forward. What is he trying to prove? Does he want to be immortal?"

"He hasn't been that way with me," says Stu Levin, his Cleveland Playhouse cohort. "I have seen the defense mechanism, I have seen the bragadocio, I have seen the colossal ego. But I have also seen the sweet side of him, and that is how he is with my wife and me. I genuinely care about him, and he genuinely cares about me. How he is with the rest of the world, that's their problem." Ellison and Levin had been out of touch for nearly two decades when they ran into each other at Hollywood's Rain Check Room in the mid-1960s. "I walked in there one night and saw Harlan," Levin says, "I wasn't sure it was him, so I walked by him and, as I walked by, I said, 'Harlan?' and kept walking. And Harlan said, 'Who the fuck was that?' That's how we reconnected."

"He showed up at the DC Comics office one day to punch me in the nose," says Len Wein, the creator of Swamp Thing and Wolverine. This was in the 1970s. "That's Harlan. He said I had stolen one of his stories. When I pointed out to him the reality of the situation, he went, 'Oh, oh, got it, of course,' and apologized, and we became best friends. It was a story based on the obvious twist on a classic story. We had done the same twist, but the other side of it. He said, 'No one else would think of it.' I said, 'Come on, if you're gonna do what I just did, what would *you* do?' 'What you did.' 'See?'"

The relationship Ellison has with Robert Silverberg is far more complex. The two men started as fans and then became colleagues, but there is an additional dynamic, some of which is hinted at in Ellison's 1962 story, "All the Lies That Are My Life." The dynamic is competition.

"We are each other's yardstick, in a way," Robert Silverberg wrote in his July 1977 appreciation, and the friendly rivalry has not abated. "[W]e have had one another to watch, to study, to wonder at, since late boyhood and having shared our fantasies of what we wanted our adult lives to be, we know exactly where we have achieved what we dreamed of achieving, and where we have gone beyond what we dared to dream, and where we have fallen short."¹

1 Silverberg, "Harlan."

The Ellison-Silverberg competition has continued since Silverberg noted it in 1977, and is perhaps best symbolized by each man's receiving the Damon Knight Memorial Grand Master Award from the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America. Silverberg got his first, and when he was announced to receive it in 2004, Ellison cleared his calendar to be at the ceremony and salute his old friend. When it came time for Ellison to receive the award in 2006, however, Silverberg did not attend. His absence still rankles. "When he got the Grand Master award, he made sure that I didn't get it before him," Ellison says. "He got it first. I went all the way up to Seattle to present it to him and hired a quartet of girls in boots. They sang 'Mr. Wonderful' to him as he got it. When I got it, he couldn't even rearrange his schedule to be in Arizona where I got it. Wasn't even there. Didn't even show up."

"I wasn't there when he got his award," Silverberg confirms. "I did call him to congratulate him. As for the 'pageant' he staged for me, I was, as I said, disappointed. I was hoping for a warm speech of reminiscences about our intertwined lives. Instead, he found some group of female singers who happened to be in town and had them sing a Nat King Cole song to me from the stage. Since I know almost nothing about popular music, I was probably the only one in the room who had no idea what the song was, and I just sat there patiently waiting for it to end. He didn't actually speak at the ceremony himself."¹

Silverberg offers a postscript: "This comes from a well-known writer who is a friend both of Harlan and of me. (No, I will not name him.) You might bear it in mind when you compare Harlan's version of events with the things I tell you":

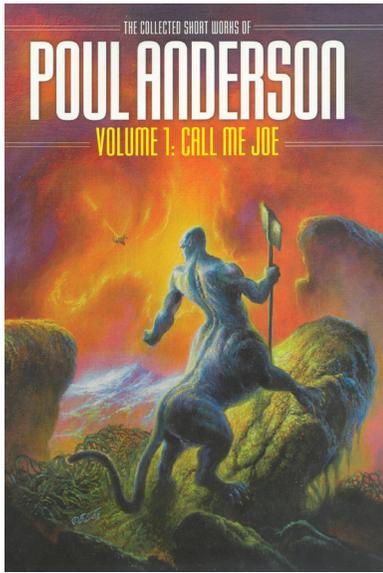
It became clear to me a while back that Harlan's putative memory is completely unreliable. In a phone conversation a couple of years ago he recalled with great bonhomie how he and I used to travel the country together, hopping freight trains and riding the rails. Now I never did this, with him or with anyone else, or even on my lonesome. And I never met Harlan until sometime in the late '60s or early '70s—although God knows by then I'd heard enough HE anecdotes to hold an audience spellbound. And it was just the two

1 Not that there is necessarily a connection, but it was announced in *Rabbit Hole* #45 that "Robert Silverberg will not be writing the foreword to the PS Publishing Edition of Classic *Ellison Wonderland*" and "Harlan will not be writing the introduction to Robert Silverberg's *Nightwings* by IDW Publishing."

of us on the phone, so he wasn't trying to get over, or to impress anybody, as the only person hearing him tell the story was the person who knew it had never happened. This and a variety of other bits of evidence have convinced me that the man has total recall, but not necessarily of events that ever actually occurred.

Christopher Priest is similarly skeptical of Ellison's veracity. Although he declined to be interviewed for this book, he has been resolute in holding that everything Ellison says should be challenged. A contributor to Ellison's long-anticipated anthology *The Last Dangerous Visions*, Priest's essay on its non-appearance, *The Last Deadloss Visions*, will be addressed in a later chapter.

Adds Silverberg in a phrase as dry as a deposition, "You have picked a difficult subject for a biography."



Call Me Joe

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CALL ME JOE

The wind came whooping out of eastern darkness, driving a lash of ammonia dust before it. In minutes, Edward Anglesey was blinded.

He clawed all four feet into the broken shards which were soil, hunched down and groped for his little smelter. The wind was an idiot bassoon in his skull. Something whipped across his back, drawing blood, a tree yanked up by the roots and spat a hundred miles. Lightning cracked, immensely far overhead where clouds boiled with night.

As if to reply, thunder toned in the ice mountains and a red gout of flame jumped and a hillside came booming down, spilling itself across the valley. The earth shivered.

Sodium explosion, thought Anglesey in the drumbeat noise. The fire and the lightning gave him enough illumination to find his apparatus. He picked up tools in muscular hands, his tail gripped the trough, and he battered his way to the tunnel and thus to his dugout.

It had walls and roof of water, frozen by sun-remoteness and compressed by tons of atmosphere jammed onto every square inch. Ventilated by a tiny smoke hole, a lamp of tree oil burning in hydrogen made a dull light for the single room.

Anglesey sprawled his slate-blue form on the floor, panting. It was no use to swear at the storm. These ammonia gales often came at sunset, and there was nothing to do but wait them out. He was tired, anyway.

It would be morning in five hours or so. He had hoped to cast an axhead, his first, this evening, but maybe it was better to do the job by daylight.

He pulled a dekapod body off a shelf and ate the meat raw, pausing for long gulps of liquid methane from a jug. Things would improve once he had proper tools; so far, everything had been painfully grubbed and hacked to shape with teeth, claws, chance icicles, and what detestably weak and crumbling fragments remained of the spaceship. Give him a few years and he'd be living as a man should.

He sighed, stretched, and lay down to sleep.

Somewhat more than one hundred and twelve thousand miles away, Edward Anglesey took off his helmet.

He looked around, blinking. After the Jovian surface, it was always a little unreal to find himself here again, in the clean, quiet orderliness of the control room.

His muscles ached. They shouldn't. He had not really been fighting a gale of several hundred miles an hour, under three gravities and a temperature of 140 absolute. He had been here, in the almost nonexistent pull of Jupiter V, breathing oxynitrogen. It was Joe who lived down there and filled his lungs with hydrogen and helium at a pressure which could still only be estimated, because it broke aneroids and deranged piezoelectrics.

Nevertheless, his body felt worn and beaten. Tension, no doubt—psychosomatics. After all, for a good many hours now he had, in a sense, been Joe, and Joe had been working hard.

With the helmet off, Anglesey held only a thread of identification. The esprojector was still tuned to Joe's brain but no longer focused on his own. Somewhere in the back of his mind, he knew an indescribable feeling of sleep. Now and then, vague forms or colors drifted in the soft black—dreams? Not impossible that Joe's brain should dream a little when Anglesey's mind wasn't using it.

A light flickered red on the esprojector panel, and a bell whined electronic fear. Anglesey cursed. Thin fingers danced over the controls of his chair, he slewed around and shot across to the bank of dials. Yes, there—K tube oscillating again! The circuit blew out. He wrenched the face plate off with one hand and fumbled in a drawer with the other.

Inside his mind, he could feel the contact with Joe fading. If he once lost it entirely, he wasn't sure he could regain it. And Joe was an investment of several million dollars and quite a few highly skilled man-years.

Anglesey pulled the offending K tube from its socket and threw it on the floor. Glass exploded. It eased his temper a bit, just enough so he could find a replacement, plug it in, switch on the current again. As the machine warmed up, once again amplifying, the Joeness in the back alleys of his brain strengthened.

Slowly, then, the man in the electric wheel chair rolled out of the room, into the hall. Let somebody else sweep up the broken tube. To hell with it. To hell with everybody.

Jan Cornelius had never been farther from Earth than some comfortable Lunar resort. He felt much put upon that the Psionics Corporation should tap him for a thirteen-month exile. The fact that he knew as much about esprojectors and their cranky innards as any other man alive was no excuse. Why send anyone at all? Who cared?

Obviously the Federation Science Authority did. It had seemingly given those bearded hermits a blank check on the taxpayer's account.

Thus did Cornelius grumble to himself, all the long hyperbolic path to Jupiter. Then the shifting accelerations of approach to its tiny inner satellite left him too wretched for further complaint. And when he finally, just prior to disembarkation, went up to the greenhouse for a look at Jupiter, he said not a word. Nobody does, the first time.

Arne Viken waited patiently while Cornelius stared. *It still gets me too*, he remembered. *By the throat. Sometimes I'm afraid to look.*

At length Cornelius turned around. He had a faintly Jovian appearance himself, being a large man with an imposing girth. "I had no idea," he whispered. "I never thought...I had seen pictures, but..."

Viken nodded. "Sure, Dr. Cornelius. Pictures don't convey it."

Where they stood, they could see the dark broken rock of the satellite, jumbled for a short way beyond the landing slip and then chopped off sheer. This moon was scarcely even a platform, it seemed, and cold constellations went streaming past it, around it. Jupiter lay across a fifth of that sky, softly ambrous, banded with colors, spotted with the shadows of planet-sized moons and with whirlwinds as broad as Earth. If there had been any gravity to speak of, Cornelius would have thought, instinctively, that the great planet was falling on him. As it was, he felt as if sucked upward, his hands were still sore where he had grabbed a rail to hold on.

"You live here...all alone...with this?" He spoke feebly.

"Oh, well, there are some fifty of us all told, pretty congenial," said Viken. "It's not so bad. You sign up for four-cycle hitches—four ship arrivals—and believe it or not, Dr. Cornelius, this is my third enlistment."

The newcomer forbore to inquire more deeply. There was something not quite understandable about the men on Jupiter V. They were mostly bearded, though otherwise careful to remain neat; their low-gravity movements were somehow dreamlike to watch; they hoarded their conversation, as if to stretch it through the year and a month between ships. Their monkish existence had changed them—or did they take what amounted to vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience because they had never felt quite at home on green Earth?

Thirteen months! Cornelius shuddered. It was going to be a long, cold wait, and the pay and bonuses accumulating for him were scant comfort now, four hundred and eighty million miles from the sun.

"Wonderful place to do research," continued Viken. "All the facilities, hand-picked colleagues, no distractions—and, of course..." He jerked his thumb at the planet and turned to leave.

Cornelius followed, wallowing awkwardly. "It is very interesting, no doubt," he puffed. "Fascinating. But really, Dr. Viken, to drag me way out here and make me spend a year-plus waiting for the next ship—to do a job which may take me a few weeks..."

"Are you sure it's that simple?" asked Viken gently. His face swiveled around, and there was something in his eyes that silenced Cornelius. "After all my time here, I've yet to see any problem, however complicated, which when you looked at it the right way didn't become still more complicated."

They went through the ship's air lock and the tube joining it to the station entrance. Nearly everything was underground. Rooms, laboratories, even halls, had a degree of luxuriousness—why, there was a fireplace with a real fire in the common room! God alone knew what *that* cost! Thinking of the huge chill emptiness where the king planet laired, and of his own year's sentence, Cornelius decided that such luxuries were, in truth, biological necessities.

Viken showed him to a pleasantly furnished chamber which would be his own. "We'll fetch your luggage soon, and unload your psionic stuff. Right now, everybody's either talking to the ship's crew or reading his mail."

Cornelius nodded absently and sat down. The chair, like all low-gee furniture, was a mere spidery skeleton, but it held his bulk comfortably enough. He felt in his tunic, hoping to bribe the other man into keeping him company for a while. "Cigar? I brought some from Amsterdam."

"Thanks." Viken accepted with disappointing casualness, crossed long, thin legs and blew grayish clouds.

"Ah...are you in charge here?"

"Not exactly. No one is. We do have one administrator, the cook, to handle that little work of that type may come up. Don't forget, this is a research station, first, last, and always."

"What is your field, then?"

Viken frowned. "Don't question anyone else so bluntly, Dr. Cornelius," he warned. "They'd rather spin the gossip out as long as possible with each newcomer. It's a rare treat to have someone whose every last conceivable reaction hasn't been—no, no apologies to me. 'S all right. I'm a physicist, specializing in the solid state at ultra-high pressures." He nodded at the wall. "Plenty of it to be observed—there!"

"I see." Cornelius smoked quietly for a while. Then: "I'm supposed to be the psionics expert, but, frankly, at present I've no idea why your machine should misbehave as reported."

"You mean those, uh, K tubes have a stable output on Earth?"

"And on Luna, Mars, Venus—everywhere, apparently, but here." Cornelius shrugged. "Of course, psibeams are always persnickety, and sometimes you get an unwanted feedback when—no. I'll get the facts before I theorize. Who are your psimen?"

"Just Anglesey, who's not a formally trained esman at all. But he took it up after he was crippled, and showed such a natural aptitude that he was shipped out here when he volunteered. It's so hard to get anyone for Jupiter V that we aren't fussy about degrees. At that, Ed seems to be operating Joe as well as a Ps.D. could."

"Ah, yes. Your pseudojovian. I'll have to examine that angle pretty carefully, too," said Cornelius. In spite of himself, he was getting interested. "Maybe the trouble comes from something in Joe's biochemistry. Who knows? I'll let you into a carefully guarded little secret, Dr. Viken: psionics is not an exact science."

"Neither is physics," grinned the other man. After a moment, he added more soberly: "Not my brand of physics, anyway. I hope to make it exact. That's why I'm here, you know. It's the reason we're all here."

Edward Anglesey was a bit of a shock the first time. He was a head, a pair of arms, and a disconcertingly intense blue stare. The rest of him was mere detail, enclosed in a wheeled machine.

"Biophysicist originally," Viken had told Cornelius. "Studying atmospheric spores at Earth Station when he was still a young man—accident, crushed him

up, nothing below his chest will ever work again. Snappish type, you have to go slow with him.”

Seated on a wisp of stool in the esprojector control room, Cornelius realized that Viken had been soft-pedaling the truth.

Anglesey ate as he talked, gracelessly, letting the chair’s tentacles wipe up after him. “Got to,” he explained. “This stupid place is officially on Earth time, GMT. Jupiter isn’t. I’ve got to be here whenever Joe wakes, ready to take him over.”

“Couldn’t you have someone spell you?” asked Cornelius.

“Bah!” Anglesey stabbed a piece of prot and waggled it at the other man. Since it was native to him, he could spit out English, the common language of the station, with unmeasured ferocity. “Look here. You ever done therapeutic esping? Not just listening in, or even communication, but actual pedagogic control?”

“No, not I. It requires a certain natural talent, like yours.” Cornelius smiled. His ingratiating little phrase was swallowed without being noticed by the scored face opposite him. “I take it you mean cases like, oh, re-educating the nervous system of a palsied child?”

“Yes, yes. Good enough example. Has anyone ever tried to suppress the child’s personality, take him over in the most literal sense?”

“Good God, no!”

“Even as a scientific experiment?” Anglesey grinned. “Has any esprojector operative ever poured on the juice and swamped the child’s brain with his own thoughts? Come on, Cornelius, I won’t snitch on you.”

“Well...it’s out of my line, you understand.” The psionist looked carefully away, found a bland meter face and screwed his eyes to that. “I have, uh, heard something about...Well, yes, there were attempts made in some pathological cases to, uh, bull through...break down the patient’s delusions by sheer force—”

“And it didn’t work,” said Anglesey. He laughed. “It *can’t* work, not even on a child, let alone an adult with a fully developed personality. Why, it took a decade of refinement, didn’t it, before the machine was debugged to the point where a psychiatrist could even ‘listen in’ without the normal variation between his pattern of thought and the patient’s—without that variation setting up an interference scrambling the very thing he wanted to study. The machine has to make automatic compensations for the differences between individuals. We still can’t bridge the differences between species.

“If someone else is willing to cooperate, you can very gently guide his thinking. And that’s all. If you try to seize control of another brain, a brain with its own background of experience, its own ego, you risk your very sanity. The other brain will fight back instinctively. A fully developed, matured, hardened human personality is just too complex for outside control. It has too many resources, too much hell the subconscious can call to its defense if its integrity is threatened. Blazes, man, we can’t even master our own minds, let alone anyone else’s!”

Anglesey’s cracked-voice tirade broke off. He sat brooding at the instrument panel, tapping the console of his mechanical mother.

“Well?” said Cornelius after a while.

He should not, perhaps, have spoken. But he found it hard to remain mute. There was too much silence—half a billion miles of it, from here to the sun. If

you closed your mouth five minutes at a time, the silence began creeping in like fog.

“Well,” gibed Anglesey. “So our pseudojovian, Joe, has a physically adult brain. The only reason I can control him is that his brain has never been given a chance to develop its own ego. I *am* Joe. From the moment he was ‘born’ into consciousness, I have been there. The psibeam sends me all his sense data and sends him back my motor-nerve impulses. Nevertheless, he has that excellent brain, and its cells are recording every trace of experience, even as yours and mine; his synapses have assumed the topography which is my ‘personality pattern.’

“Anyone else, taking him over from me, would find it was like an attempt to oust me myself from my own brain. It couldn’t be done. To be sure, he doubtless has only a rudimentary set of Anglesey-memories—I do not, for instance, repeat trigonometric theorems while controlling him—but he has enough to be, potentially, a distinct personality.

“As a matter of fact, whenever he wakes up from sleep—there’s usually a lag of a few minutes, while I sense the change through my normal psi faculties and get the amplifying helmet adjusted—I have a bit of a struggle. I feel almost a...a resistance until I’ve brought his mental currents completely into phase with mine. Merely dreaming has been enough of a different experience to...” Anglesey didn’t bother to finish the sentence.

“I see,” murmured Cornelius. “Yes, it’s clear enough. In fact, it’s astonishing that you can have such total contact with a being of such alien metabolism.”

“I won’t for much longer,” said the esman sarcastically, “unless you can correct whatever is burning out those K tubes. I don’t have an unlimited supply of spares.”

“I have some working hypotheses,” said Cornelius, “but there’s so little known about psibeam transmission—is the velocity infinite or merely very great, is the beam strength actually independent of distance? How about the possible effects of transmission—oh, through the degenerate matter in the Jovian core? Good Lord, a planet where water is a heavy mineral and hydrogen is a metal! What do we know?”

“We’re supposed to find out,” snapped Anglesey. “That’s what this whole project is for. Knowledge. Bull!” Almost, he spat on the floor. “Apparently what little we have learned doesn’t even get through to people. Hydrogen is still a gas where Joe lives. He’d have to dig down a few miles to reach the solid phase. And I’m expected to make a scientific analysis of Jovian conditions!”

Cornelius waited it out, letting Anglesey storm on while he himself turned over the problem of K-tube oscillation.

“They don’t understand back on Earth. Even here they don’t. Sometimes I think they refuse to understand. Joe’s down there without much more than his bare hands. He, I, we started with no more knowledge than that he could probably eat the local life. He has to spend nearly all his time hunting for food. It’s a miracle he’s come as far as he has in these few weeks—made a shelter, grown familiar with the immediate region, begun on metallurgy, hydrurgy, whatever you want to call it. What more do they want me to do, for crying in the beer?”

“Yes, yes,” mumbled Cornelius. “Yes, I...”

Anglesey raised his white bony face. Something filmed over in his eyes.

“What—” began Cornelius.

“Shut up!” Anglesey whipped the chair around, groped for the helmet, slapped it down over his skull. “Joe’s waking. Get out of here.”

“But if you’ll let me work only while he sleeps, how can I—”

Anglesey snarled and threw a wrench at him. It was a feeble toss, even in low gee. Cornelius backed toward the door. Anglesey was tuning in the esprojector. Suddenly he jerked.

“*Cornelius!*”

“Whatisit?” The psionist tried to run back, overdid it, and skidded in a heap to end up against the panel.

“K tube again.” Anglesey yanked off the helmet. It must have hurt like blazes, having a mental squeal build up uncontrolled and amplified in your own brain, but he said merely: “Change it for me. Fast. And then get out and leave me alone. Joe didn’t wake up of himself. Something crawled into the dugout with me—I’m in trouble down there!”

It had been a hard day’s work, and Joe slept heavily. He did not wake until the hands closed on his throat.

For a moment then he knew only a crazy smothering wave of panic. He thought he was back on Earth Station, floating in null gee at the end of a cable while a thousand frosty stars haloed the planet before him. He thought the great I-beam had broken from its moorings and started toward him, slowly, but with all the inertia of its cold tons, spinning and shimmering in the Earthlight, and the only sound himself screaming and screaming in his helmet, trying to break from the cable, the beam nudged him ever so gently but it kept on moving. He moved with it; he was crushed against the station wall; nuzzled into it, his mangled suit frothed as it tried to seal its wounded self. There was blood mingled with the foam—his blood. *Joe roared.*

His convulsive reaction tore the hands off his neck and sent a black shape spinning across the dugout. It struck the wall, thunderously, and the lamp fell to the floor and went out.

Joe stood in darkness, breathing hard, aware in a vague fashion that the wind had died from a shriek to a low snarling while he slept.

The thing he had tossed away mumbled in pain and crawled along the wall. Joe felt through lightlessness after his club.

Something else scabbled. The tunnel! They were coming through the tunnel! Joe groped blind to meet them. His heart drummed thickly and his nose drank an alien stench.

The thing that emerged, as Joe’s hands closed on it, was only about half his size, but it had six monstrously taloned feet and a pair of three-fingered hands that reached after his eyes. Joe cursed, lifted it while it writhed, and dashed it to the floor. It screamed, and he heard bones splinter.

“Come on, then!” Joe arched his back and spat at them, like a tiger menaced by giant caterpillars.

They flowed through his tunnel and into the room, a dozen of them entered while he wrestled one that had curled itself around his shoulders and anchored its

sinuous body with claws. They pulled at his legs, trying to crawl up on his back. He struck out with claws of his own, with his tail, rolled over and went down beneath a heap of them and stood up with the heap still clinging to him.

They swayed in darkness. The legged seething of them struck the dugout wall. It shivered, a rafter cracked, the roof came down. Anglesey stood in a pit, among broken ice plates, under the wan light of a sinking Ganymede.

He could see now that the monsters were black in color and that they had heads big enough to accommodate some brain, less than human but probably more than apes. There were a score of them or so, they struggled from beneath the wreckage and flowed at him with the same shrieking malice.

Why?

Baboon reaction, thought Anglesey somewhere in the back of himself. See the stranger, fear the stranger, hate the stranger, kill the stranger. His chest heaved, pumping air through a raw throat. He yanked a whole rafter to him, snapped it in half, and twirled the iron-hard wood.

The nearest creature got its head bashed in. The next had its back broken. The third was hurled with shattered ribs into a fourth, they went down together. Joe began to laugh. It was getting to be fun.

“Yee-ow! Ti-i-i-iger!” He ran across the icy ground, toward the pack. They scattered, howling. He hunted them until the last one had vanished into the forest.

Panting, Joe looked at the dead. He himself was bleeding, he ached, he was cold and hungry and his shelter had been wrecked—but he’d whipped them! He had a sudden impulse to beat his chest and howl. For a moment he hesitated. Why not? Anglesey threw back his head and bayed victory at the dim shield of Ganymede.

Thereafter he went to work. First build a fire, in the lee of the spaceship—which was little more by now than a hill of corrosion. The monster pack cried in darkness and the broken ground, they had not given up on him, they would return.

He tore a haunch off one of the slain and took a bite. Pretty good. Better yet if properly cooked. Heh! They’d made a big mistake in calling his attention to their existence! He finished breakfast while Ganymede slipped under the western ice mountains. It would be morning soon. The air was almost still, and a flock of pancake-shaped sky-skimmers, as Anglesey called them, went overhead, burnished copper color in the first pale dawn streaks.

Joe rummaged in the ruins of his hut until he had recovered the water-smelting equipment. It wasn’t harmed. That was the first order of business, melt some ice and cast it in the molds of ax, knife, saw, hammer he had painfully prepared. Under Jovian conditions, methane was a liquid that you drank and water was a dense hard mineral. It would make good tools. Later on he would try alloying it with other materials.

Next—yes. To hell with the dugout, he could sleep in the open again for a while. Make a bow, set traps, be ready to massacre the black caterpillars when they attacked him again. There was a chasm not far from here, going down a

long way toward the bitter cold of the metallic-hydrogen strata: a natural icebox, a place to store the several weeks' worth of meat his enemies would supply. This would give him leisure to—Oh, a hell of a lot!

Joe laughed exultantly and lay down to watch the sunrise.

It struck him afresh how lovely a place this was. See how the small brilliant spark of the sun swam up out of eastern fog banks colored dusky purple and veined with rose and gold; see how the light strengthened until the great hollow arch of the sky became one shout of radiance; see how the light spilled warm and living over a broad fair land, the million square miles of rustling low forests and wave-blinking lakes and feather-plumed hydrogen geysers; and see, see, see how the ice mountains of the west flashed like blued steel!

Anglesey drew the wild morning wind deep into his lungs and shouted with a boy's joy.

"I'm not a biologist myself," said Viken carefully. "But maybe for that reason I can better give you the general picture. Then Lopez or Matsumoto can answer any questions of detail."

"Excellent." Cornelius nodded. "Why don't you assume I am totally ignorant of this project? I very nearly am, you know."

"If you wish," laughed Viken.

They stood in an outer office of the xenobiology section. No one else was around, for the station's clocks said 1730 GMT and there was only one shift. No point in having more, until Anglesey's half of the enterprise had actually begun gathering quantitative data.

The physicist bent over and took a paperweight off a desk. "One of the boys made this for fun," he said, "but it's a pretty good model of Joe. He stands about five feet tall at the head."

Cornelius turned the plastic image over in his hands. If you could imagine such a thing as a feline centaur with a thick prehensile tail... The torso was squat, long-armed, immensely muscular; the hairless head was round, wide-nosed, with big deep-set eyes and heavy jaws, but it was really quite a human face. The overall color was bluish gray.

"Male, I see," he remarked.

"Of course. Perhaps you don't understand. Joe is the complete pseudojovian—as far as we can tell, the final model, with all the bugs worked out. He's the answer to a research question that took fifty years to ask." Viken looked sidewise at Cornelius. "So you realize the importance of your job, don't you?"

"I'll do my best," said the psionicist. "But if...well, let's say that tube failure or something causes you to lose Joe before I've solved the oscillation problem. You do have other pseudos in reserve, don't you?"

"Oh, yes," said Viken moodily. "But the cost...We're not on an unlimited budget. We do go through a lot of money, because it's expensive to stand up and sneeze this far from Earth. But for that same reason our margin is slim."

He jammed hands in pockets and slouched toward the inner door, the laboratories, head down and talking in a low, hurried voice. "Perhaps you don't realize

what a nightmare planet Jupiter is. Not just the surface gravity—a shade under three gees, what's that?—but the gravitational potential, ten times Earth's. The temperature. The pressure. Above all, the atmosphere, and the storms, and the darkness!

“When a spaceship goes down to the Jovian surface, it's a radio-controlled job; it leaks like a sieve, to equalize pressure, but otherwise it's the sturdiest, most utterly powerful model ever designed; it's loaded with every instrument, every servomechanism, every safety device the human mind has yet thought up to protect a million-dollar hunk of precision equipment.

“And what happens? Half the ships never reach the surface at all. A storm snatches them and throws them away, or they collide with a floating chunk of Ice Seven—small version of the Red Spot—or, so help me, what passes for a flock of *birds* rams one and stoves it in!

“As for the fifty per cent which do land, it's a one-way trip. We don't even try to bring them back. If the stresses coming down haven't sprung something, the corrosion has doomed them anyway. Hydrogen at Jovian pressure does funny things to metals.

“It cost a total of about five million dollars to set Joe, one pseudo, down there. Each pseudo to follow will cost, if we're lucky, a couple of million more.”

Viken kicked open the door and led the way through. Beyond was a big room, low-ceilinged, coldly lit and murmurous with ventilators. It reminded Cornelius of a nucleonics lab; for a moment he wasn't sure why, then he recognized the intricacies of remote control, remote observation, walls enclosing forces which could destroy the entire moon.

“These are required by the pressure, of course,” said Viken, pointing to a row of shields. “And the cold. And the hydrogen itself, as a minor hazard. We have units here duplicating conditions in the Jovian, uh, stratosphere. This is where the whole project really began.”

“I've heard something about that. Didn't you scoop up airborne spores?”

“Not I.” Viken chuckled. “Totti's crew did, about fifty years ago. Proved there was life on Jupiter. A life using liquid methane as its basic solvent, solid ammonia as a starting point for nitrate synthesis: the plants use solar energy to build unsaturated carbon compounds, releasing hydrogen; the animals eat the plants and reduce those compounds again to the saturated form. There is even an equivalent of combustion. The reactions involve complex enzymes and—well, it's out of my line.”

“Jovian biochemistry is pretty well understood, then.”

“Oh, yes. Even in Totti's day they had a highly developed biotic technology: Earth bacteria had already been synthesized and most gene structures pretty well mapped. The only reason it took so long to diagram Jovian life processes was the technical difficulty, high pressure and so on.”

“When did you actually get a look at Jupiter's surface?”

“Gray managed that, about thirty years ago. Set a televisor ship down, a ship that lasted long enough to flash him quite a series of pictures. Since then, the

technique has improved. We know that Jupiter is crawling with its own weird kind of life, probably more fertile than Earth. Extrapolating from the airborne micro-organisms, our team made trial syntheses of metazoans and—”

Viken sighed. “Damn it, if only there were intelligent native life! Think what they could tell us, Cornelius, the data, the—just think back how far we’ve gone since Lavoisier, with the low-pressure chemistry of Earth. Here’s a chance to learn a high-pressure chemistry and physics at least as rich with possibilities!”

After a moment, Cornelius murmured slyly, “Are you certain there *aren’t* any Jovians?”

“Oh, sure, there could be several billion of them.” Viken shrugged. Cities, empires, anything you like. Jupiter has the surface area of a hundred Earths, and we’ve only seen maybe a dozen small regions. But we do know there aren’t any Jovians using radio. Considering their atmosphere, it’s unlikely they ever would invent it for themselves—imagine how thick a vacuum tube has to be, how strong a pump you need! So it was finally decided we’d better make our own Jovians.”

Cornelius followed him through the lab into another room. This was less cluttered, it had a more finished appearance; the experimenter’s haywire rig had yielded to the assured precision of an engineer.

Viken went over to one of the panels which lined the walls and looked at its gauges. “Beyond this lies another pseudo,” he said. “Female, in this instance. She’s at a pressure of two hundred atmospheres and a temperature of 194 absolute. There’s a...an umbilical arrangement, I guess you’d call it, to keep her alive. She was grown to adulthood in this, uh, fetal stage—we patterned our Jovians after the terrestrial mammal. She’s never been conscious, she won’t ever be till she’s ‘born.’ We have a total of twenty males and sixty females waiting here. We can count on about half reaching the surface. More can be created as required. It isn’t the pseudos that are so expensive, it’s their transportation. So Joe is down there alone till we’re sure that his kind *can* survive.”

“I take it you experimented with lower forms first,” said Cornelius.

“Of course. It took twenty years, even with forced-catalysis techniques, to work from an artificial airborne spore to Joe. We’ve used the psibeam to control everything from pseudo insects on up. Interspecies control is possible, you know, if your puppet’s nervous system is deliberately designed for it and isn’t given a chance to grow into a pattern different from the esman’s.”

“And Joe is the first specimen who’s given trouble?”

“Yes.”

“Scratch one hypothesis.” Cornelius sat down on a workbench, dangling thick legs and running a hand through thin sandy hair. “I thought maybe some physical effect of Jupiter was responsible. Now it looks as if the difficulty is with Joe himself.”

“We’ve all suspected that much,” said Viken. He struck a cigarette and sucked in his cheeks around the smoke. His eyes were gloomy. “Hard to see how. The biotics engineers tell me *Pseudocentaurus sapiens* has been more carefully designed than any product of natural evolution.”

“Even the brain?”

“Yes. It’s patterned directly on the human, to make psibeam control possible, but there are improvements—greater stability.”

“There are still the psychological aspects, though,” said Cornelius. “In spite of all our amplifiers and other fancy gadgets, psi is essentially a branch of psychology, even today—or maybe it’s the other way around. Let’s consider traumatic experiences. I take it the...the adult Jovian fetus has a rough trip going down?”

“The ship does,” said Viken. “Not the pseudo itself, which is wrapped up in fluid just like you were before birth.”

“Nevertheless,” said Cornelius, “the two-hundred-atmospheres pressure here is not the same as whatever unthinkable pressure exists down on Jupiter. Could the change be injurious?”

Viken gave him a look of respect. “Not likely,” he answered. “I told you the J ships are designed leaky. External pressure is transmitted to the uh, uterine mechanism through a series of diaphragms, in a gradual fashion. It takes hours to make the descent, you realize.”

“Well, what happens next?” went on Cornelius. “The ship lands, the uterine mechanism opens, the umbilical connection disengages, and Joe is, shall we say, born. But he has an adult brain. He is not protected by the only half-developed infant brain from the shock of sudden awareness.”

“We thought of that,” said Viken. “Anglesey was on the psibeam, in phase with Joe, when the ship left this moon. So it wasn’t really Joe who emerged, who perceived. Joe has never been much more than a biological waldo. He can only suffer mental shock to the extent that Ed does, because it *is* Ed down there!”

“As you will,” said Cornelius. “Still, you didn’t plan for a race of puppets, did you?”

“Oh, heavens, no,” said Viken. “Out of the question. Once we know Joe is well established, we’ll import a few more esmen and get him some assistance in the form of other pseudos. Eventually females will be sent down, and uncontrolled males, to be educated by the puppets. A new generation will be born normally—well, anyhow, the ultimate aim is a small civilization of Jovians. There will be hunters, miners, artisans, farmers, housewives, the works. They will support a few key members, a kind of priesthood. And that priesthood will be esp-controlled, as Joe is. It will exist solely to make instruments, take readings, perform experiments, and tell us what we want to know!”

Cornelius nodded. In a general way, this was the Jovian project as he had understood it. He could appreciate the importance of his own assignment.

Only, he still had no clue to the cause of that positive feedback in the K tubes. And what could he do about it?

His hands were still bruised. *Oh God*, he thought with a groan, for the hundredth time, *does it affect me that much? While Joe was fighting down there, did I really hammer my fists on metal up here?*

His eyes smoldered across the room, to the bench where Cornelius worked. He didn’t like Cornelius, fat cigar-sucking slob, interminably talking and talking. He had about given up trying to be civil to the Earthworm.

The psionicist laid down a screwdriver and flexed cramped fingers. “*Whuff!*” He smiled. “I’m going to take a break.”

The half-assembled esprojector made a gaunt backdrop for his wide soft body, where it squatted toad fashion on the bench. Anglesey detested the whole idea of anyone sharing this room, even for a few hours a day. Of late he had been demanding his meals brought here, left outside the door of his adjoining bedroom-bath. He had not gone beyond for quite some time now.

And why should I?

“Couldn’t you hurry it up a little?” snapped Anglesey.

Cornelius flushed. “If you’d had an assembled spare machine, instead of loose parts—” he began. Shrugging, he took out a cigar stub and relit it carefully; his supply had to last a long time. Anglesey wondered if those stinking clouds were blown from his mouth of malicious purpose. *I don’t like you, Mr. Earthman Cornelius, and it is doubtless quite mutual.*

“There was no obvious need for one, until the other esmen arrive,” said Anglesey in a sullen voice. “And the testing instruments report this one in perfectly good order.”

“Nevertheless,” said Cornelius, “at irregular intervals it goes into wild oscillations which burn out the K tube. The problem is why. I’ll have you try out this new machine as soon as it is ready, but, frankly, I don’t believe the trouble lies in electronic failure at all—or even in unsuspected physical effects.”

“Where, then?” Anglesey felt more at ease as the discussion grew purely technical.

“Well, look. What exactly is the K tube? It’s the heart of the esprojector. It amplifies your natural psionic pulses, uses them to modulate the carrier wave, and shoots the whole beam down at Joe. It also picks up Joe’s resonating impulses and amplifies them for your benefit. Everything else is auxiliary to the K tube.”

“Spare me the lecture,” snarled Anglesey.

“I was only rehearsing the obvious,” said Cornelius, “because every now and then it is the obvious answer which is hardest to see. Maybe it isn’t the K tube which is misbehaving. Maybe it is you.”

“What?” The white face gaped at him. A dawning rage crept across its thin bones.

“Nothing personal intended,” said Cornelius hastily. “But you know what a tricky beast the subconscious is. Suppose, just as a working hypothesis, that way down underneath, you don’t *want* to be on Jupiter. I imagine it is a rather terrifying environment. Or there may be some obscure Freudian element involved. Or, quite simply and naturally, your subconscious may fail to understand that Joe’s death does not entail your own.”

“Um-m-m.” *Mirabile dictu*, Anglesey remained calm. He rubbed his chin with one skeletal hand. “Can you be more explicit?”

“Only in a rough way,” replied Cornelius. “Your conscious mind sends a motor impulse along the psibeam to Joe. Simultaneously, your subconscious mind, being scared of the whole business, emits the glandular-vascular-cardiac-visceral impulses associated with fear. These react on Joe, whose tension is transmitted back along the beam. Feeling Joe’s somatic fear symptoms, your subconscious gets

still more worried, thereby increasing the symptoms. Get it? It's exactly similar to ordinary neurasthenia, with this exception, that since there is a powerful amplifier, the K tube, involved, the oscillations can build up uncontrollably within a second or two. You should be thankful the tube does burn out—otherwise your brain might do so!"

For a moment Anglesey was quiet. Then he laughed. It was a hard, barbaric laughter. Cornelius started as it struck his eardrums.

"Nice idea," said the esman. "But I'm afraid it won't fit all the data. You see, I like it down there. I like being Joe."

He paused for a while, then continued in a dry impersonal tone; "Don't judge the environment from my notes. They're just idiotic things like estimates of wind velocity, temperature variations, mineral properties—insignificant. What I can't put in is how Jupiter looks through a Jovian's infrared-seeing eyes."

"Different, I should think," ventured Cornelius after a minute's clumsy silence.

"Yes and no. It's hard to put into language. Some of it I can't, because man hasn't got the concepts. But...oh, I can't describe it. Shakespeare himself couldn't. Just remember that everything about Jupiter which is cold and poisonous and gloomy to us is *right* for Joe."

Anglesey's tone grew remote, as if he spoke to himself. "Imagine walking under a glowing violet sky, where great flashing clouds sweep the earth with shadow and rain strides beneath them. Imagine walking on the slopes of a mountain like polished metal, with a clean red flame exploding above you and thunder laughing in the ground. Imagine a cool wild stream, and low trees with dark coppery flowers, and a waterfall—methanefall, whatever you like—leaping off a cliff, and the strong live wind shakes its mane full of rainbows! Imagine a whole forest, dark and breathing, and here and there you glimpse a pale-red wavering will-o'-the-wisp, which is the life radiation of some fleet, shy animal, and...and..."

Anglesey croaked into silence. He stared down at his clenched fists then he closed his eyes tight and tears ran out between the lids, "Imagine being *strong!*"

Suddenly he snatched up the helmet, crammed it on his head and twirled the control knobs. Joe had been sleeping, down in the night, but Joe was about to wake up and—roar under the four great moons till all the forest feared him?

Cornelius slipped quietly out of the room.

In the long brazen sunset light, beneath dusky cloud banks brooding storm, he strode up the hill slope with a sense of day's work done. Across his back, two woven baskets balanced each other, one laden with the pungent black fruit of the thorn tree and one with cable-thick creepers to be used as rope. The ax on his shoulder caught the waning sunlight and tossed it blindingly back.

It had not been hard labor, but weariness dragged at his mind and he did not relish the household chores yet to be performed, cooking and cleaning and all the rest. Why couldn't they hurry up and get him some helpers?

His eyes sought the sky resentfully. Moon Five was hidden; down here, at the bottom of the air ocean, you saw nothing but the sun and the four Galilean satellites. He wasn't even sure where Five was just now, in relation to himself. *Wait a*

minute, it's sunset here, but if I went out to the viewdome I'd see Jupiter in the last quarter, or would I, oh, hell, it only takes us half an Earth day to swing around the planet anyhow—

Joe shook his head. After all this time, it was still damnably hard, now and then, to keep his thoughts straight. *I, the essential I, am up in heaven, riding Jupiter Five between cold stars. Remember that. Open your eyes, if you will, and see the dead control room superimposed on a living hillside.*

He didn't, though. Instead, he regarded the boulders strewn windblasted gray over the tough mossy vegetation of the slope. They were not much like Earth rocks, nor was the soil beneath his feet like terrestrial humus.

For a moment Anglesey speculated on the origin of the silicates, aluminates, and other stony compounds. Theoretically, all such materials should be inaccessiblely locked in the Jovian core, down where the pressure got vast enough for atoms to buckle and collapse. Above the core should lie thousands of miles of allotropic ice, and then the metallic-hydrogen layer. There should not be complex minerals this far up, but there were.

Well, possibly Jupiter had formed according to theory, but had thereafter sucked enough cosmic dust, meteors, gases and vapors down its great throat of gravitation to form a crust several miles thick. Or more likely the theory was altogether wrong. What did they know, what *could* they know, the soft pale worms of Earth?

Anglesey stuck his—Joe's—fingers in his mouth and whistled. A baying sounded in the brush, and two midnight forms leaped toward him. He grinned and stroked their heads; training was progressing faster than he'd hoped, with these pups of the black caterpillar beasts he had taken. They would make guardians for him, herders, servants.

On the crest of the hill, Joe was building himself a home. He had logged off an acre of ground and erected a stockade. Within the grounds there now stood a lean-to for himself and his stores, a methane well, and the beginnings of a large, comfortable cabin.

But there was too much work for one being. Even with the half-intelligent caterpillars to help, and with cold storage for meat, most of his time would still go to hunting. The game wouldn't last forever either; he had to start agriculture within the next year or so—Jupiter year, twelve Earth years, thought Anglesey. There was the cabin to finish and furnish; he wanted to put a waterwheel, no, methanewheel, in the river to turn any of a dozen machines he had in mind, he wanted to experiment with alloyed ice and—

And, quite apart from his need of help, why should he remain alone, the single thinking creature on an entire planet? He was a male in this body, with male instincts—in the long run, his health was bound to suffer if he remained a hermit, and right now the whole project depended on Joe's health.

It wasn't right!

But I am not alone. There are fifty men on the satellite with me. I can talk to any of them, anytime I wish. It's only that I seldom wish it, these days. I would rather be Joe.

Nevertheless...I, the cripple, feel all the tiredness, anger, hurt, frustration, of that wonderful biological machine called Joe. The others don't understand. When the ammonia gale flays open his skin. It is I who bleed.

Joe lay down on the ground, sighing. Fangs flashed in the mouth of the black beast which humped over to lick his face. His belly growled with hunger, but he was too tired to fix a meal. Once he had the dogs trained...

Another pseudo would be so much more rewarding to educate.

He could almost see it, in the weary darkening of his brain. Down there, in the valley below the hill, fire and thunder as the ship came to rest. And the steel egg would crack open, the steel arms—already crumbling, puny work of worms!—lift out the shape within and lay it on the earth.

She would stir, shrieking in her first lungful of air looking about with blank mindless eyes. And Joe would come and carry her home. And he would feed her, care for her, show her how to walk—it wouldn't take long, an adult body would learn those things very fast. In a few weeks she would even be talking, be an individual, a soul.

Did you ever think, Edward Anglesey, in the days when you also walked, that your wife would be a gray four-legged monster?

Never mind that. The important thing was to get others of his kind down here female *and* male. The station's niggling little plan would have him wait two more Earth years, and then send him only another dummy like himself, a contemptible human mind looking through eyes which belonged rightfully to a Jovian. It was not to be tolerated.

If he weren't so tired...

Joe sat up. Sleep drained from him as the realization entered. *He* wasn't tired, not to speak of. Anglesey was. Anglesey, the human side of him, who for months had slept only in cat naps, whose rest had lately been interrupted by Cornelius—it was the human body which drooped, gave up, and sent wave after soft wave of sleep down the psibeam to Joe.

Somatic tension traveled skyward; Anglesey jerked awake.

He swore. As he sat there beneath the helmet, the vividness of Jupiter faded with his scattering concentration, as if it grew transparent; the steel prison which was his laboratory strengthened behind it. He was losing contact. Rapidly, with the skill of experience, he brought himself back into phase with the neural currents of the other brain. He willed sleepiness on Joe, exactly as a man wills it on himself.

And, like any other insomniac, he failed. The Joe body was too hungry. It got up and walked across the compound toward its shack.

The K tube went wild and blew itself out.

The night before the ships left, Viken and Cornelius sat up late. It was not truly a night, of course. In twelve hours the tiny moon was hurled clear around Jupiter, from darkness back to darkness, and there might well be a pallid little sun over its crags when the clocks said witches were abroad in Greenwich. But most of the personnel were asleep at this hour.

Viken scowled. "I don't like it," he said. "Too sudden a change of plans. Too big a gamble."

"You are only risking—how many?—three male and a dozen female pseudos," Cornelius replied.

"And fifteen J ships. All we have. If Anglesey's notion doesn't work, it will be months, a year or more, till we can have others built and resume aerial survey."

"But if it does work," said Cornelius, "you won't need any J ships, except to carry down more pseudos. You will be too busy evaluating data from the surface to piddle around in the upper atmosphere."

"Of course. But we never expected it so soon. We were going to bring more esmen out here, to operate some more pseudos—"

"But they aren't *needed*," said Cornelius. He struck a cigar to life and took a long pull on it, while his mind sought carefully for words. "Not for a while, anyhow. Joe has reached a point where, given help, he can leap several thousand years of history—he may even have a radio of sorts operating in the fairly near future, which would eliminate the necessity of much of your esping. But without help, he'll just have to mark time. And it's stupid to make a highly trained human esman perform manual labor, which is all that the other pseudos are needed for at this moment. Once the Jovian settlement is well established, certainly, then you can send down more puppets."

"The question is, though," persisted Viken, "can Anglesey himself educate all those pseudos at once? They'll be helpless as infants for days. It will be weeks before they really start thinking and acting for themselves. Can Joe take care of them meanwhile?"

"He has food and fuel stored for months ahead," said Cornelius. "As for what Joe's capabilities are—well, hm-m-m, we just have to take Anglesey's judgment. He has the only inside information."

"And once those Jovians do become personalities," worried Viken, "are they necessarily going to string along with Joe? Don't forget, the pseudos are not carbon copies of each other. The uncertainty principle assures each one a unique set of genes. If there is only one human mind on Jupiter, among all those aliens—"

"One *human* mind?" It was barely audible. Viken opened his mouth inquiringly. The other man hurried on.

"Oh, I'm sure Anglesey can continue to dominate them," said Cornelius. "His own personality is rather—tremendous."

Viken looked startled. "You really think so?"

The psionicist nodded. "Yes. I've seen more of him in the past weeks than anyone else. And my profession naturally orients me more toward a man's psychology than his body or his habits. You see a waspish cripple. I see a mind which has reacted to its physical handicaps by developing such a hellish energy, such an inhuman power of concentration, that it almost frightens me. Give that mind a sound body for its use and nothing is impossible to it."

"You may be right, at that," murmured Viken after a pause. "Not that it matters. The decision is taken, the rockets go down tomorrow. I hope it all works out."

He waited for another while. The whirring of ventilators in his little room seemed unnaturally loud, the colors of a girlie picture on the wall shockingly garish. Then he said slowly, "You've been rather close-mouthed yourself, Jan. When do you expect to finish your own esprojector and start making the tests?"

Cornelius looked around. The door stood open to an empty hallway, but he reached out and closed it before he answered with a slight grin, "It's been ready for the past few days. But don't tell anyone."

"How's that?" Viken started. The movement, in low gee, took him out of his chair and halfway across the table between the men. He shoved himself back and waited.

"I have been making meaningless, tinkering motions," said Cornelius, "but what I waited for was a highly emotional moment, a time when I can be sure Anglesey's entire attention will be focused on Joe. This business tomorrow is exactly what I need."

"*Why?*"

"You see, I have pretty well convinced myself that the trouble in the machine is psychological, not physical. I think that for some reason, buried in his subconscious, Anglesey doesn't want to experience Jupiter. A conflict of that type might well set a psionic-amplifier circuit oscillating."

"Hm-m-m." Viken rubbed his chin. "Could be. Lately Ed has been changing more and more. When he first came here, he was peppery enough, and he would at least play an occasional game of poker. Now he's pulled so far into his shell you can't even see him. I never thought of it before, but...yes, by God, Jupiter must be having some effect on him."

"Hm-m-m." Cornelius nodded. He did not elaborate—did not, for instance, mention that one altogether uncharacteristic episode when Anglesey had tried to describe what it was like to be a Jovian.

"Of course," said Viken thoughtfully, "the previous men were not affected especially. Nor was Ed at first, while he was still controlling lower-type pseudos. It's only since Joe went down to the surface that he's become so different."

"Yes, yes," said Cornelius hastily. "I've learned that much. But enough shop talk—"

"No. Wait a minute." Viken spoke in a low, hurried tone, looking past him. "For the first time, I'm starting to think clearly about this. Never really stopped to analyze it before, just accepted a bad situation. There *is* something peculiar about Joe. It can't very well involve his physical structure, or the environment, because lower forms didn't give this trouble. Could it be the fact that Joe is the first puppet in all history with a potentially human intelligence?"

We speculate in a vacuum," said Cornelius. "Tomorrow, maybe I can tell you. Now I know nothing."

Viken sat up straight. His pale eyes focused on the other man and stayed there, unblinking. "One minute," he said.

"Yes?" Cornelius shifted, half rising. "Quickly, please. It is past my bedtime."

"You know a good deal more than you've admitted," said Viken. "Don't you?"

"What makes you think that?"

"You aren't the most gifted liar in the universe. And then, you argued very strongly for Anglesey's scheme, this sending down the other pseudos. More strongly than a newcomer should."

"I told you, I want his attention focused elsewhere when—"

"Do you want it that badly?" snapped Viken.

Cornelius was still for a minute. Then he sighed and leaned back.

"All right," he said. "I shall have to trust your discretion. I wasn't sure, you see, how any of you old-time station personnel would react. So I didn't want to blabber out my speculations, which may be wrong. The confirmed facts, yes, I will tell them; but I don't wish to attack a man's religion with a mere theory."

Viken scowled. "What the devil do you mean?"

Cornelius puffed hard on his cigar; its tip waxed and waned like a miniature red demon star. "This Jupiter Five is more than a research station," he said gently. "It is a way of life, is it not? No one would come here for even one hitch unless the work was important to him. Those who re-enlist, they must find something in the work, something which Earth with all her riches cannot offer them. No?"

"Yes," answered Viken. It was almost a whisper. "I didn't think you would understand so well. But what of it?"

"Well, I don't want to tell you, unless I can prove it, that maybe this has all gone for nothing. Maybe you have wasted your lives and a lot of money, and will have to pack up and go home."

Viken's long face did not flicker a muscle. It seemed to have congealed. But he said calmly enough, "Why?"

"Consider Joe," said Cornelius. "His brain has as much capacity as any adult human's. It has been recording every sense datum that came to it, from the moment of 'birth'—making a record in itself, in its own cells, not merely in Anglesey's physical memory bank up here. Also, you know, a thought is a sense datum, too. And thoughts are not separated into neat little railway tracks; they form a continuous field. Every time Anglesey is in rapport with Joe, and thinks, the thought goes through Joe's synapses as well as his own—and every thought carries its own associations, and every associated memory is recorded. Like if Joe is building a hut, the shape of the logs might remind Anglesey of some geometric figure, which in turn would remind him of the Pythagorean theorem—"

"I get the idea," said Viken in a cautious way. "Given time, Joe's brain will have stored everything that ever was in Ed's."

"Correct. Now, a functioning nervous system with an engrammatic pattern of experience, in this case a *nonhuman* nervous system—isn't that a pretty good definition of a personality?"

"I suppose so, Good Lord!" Viken jumped. "You mean Joe is—taking over?"

"In a way. A subtle, automatic, unconscious way." Cornelius drew a deep breath and plunged into it. "The pseudojovian is so nearly perfect a life-form: your biologists engineered into it all the experience gained from nature's mistakes in designing *us*. At first, Joe was only a remote-controlled biological machine. Then Anglesey and Joe became two facets of a single personality. Then, oh, very slowly, the stronger, healthier body...more amplitude to its thoughts...do you

see? Joe is becoming the dominant side. Like this business of sending down the other pseudos—Anglesey only thinks he has logical reasons for wanting it done. Actually, his 'reasons' are mere rationalizations for the instinctive desires of the Joe facet.

"Anglesey's subconscious must comprehend the situation, in a dim reactive way; it must feel his human ego gradually being submerged by the steamroller force of *Joe's* instincts and *Joe's* wishes. It tries to defend its own identity, and is swatted down by the superior force of Joe's own nascent subconscious.

"I put it crudely," he finished in an apologetic tone, "but it will account for that oscillation in the K tubes."

Viken nodded, slowly, like an old man. "Yes, I see it," he answered. "The alien environment down there...the different brain structure...Good God! Ed's being swallowed up in Joe! The puppet master is becoming the puppet!" He looked ill.

"Only speculation on my part," said Cornelius. All at once, he felt very tired. It was not pleasant to do this to Viken, whom he liked. "But you see the dilemma, no? If I am right, then any esman will gradually become a Jovian—a monster with two bodies, of which the human body is the unimportant auxiliary one. This means no esman will ever agree to control a pseudo—therefore, the end of your project."

He stood up. "I'm sorry, Arne. You made me tell you what I think, and now you will lie awake worrying, and I am maybe quite wrong and you worry for nothing."

"It's all right," mumbled Viken. "Maybe you're not wrong."

"I don't know." Cornelius drifted toward the door. "I am going to try to find some answers tomorrow. Good night."

The moon-shaking thunder of the rockets, crash, crash, crash, leaping from their cradles, was long past. Now the fleet glided on metal wings, with straining secondary ram-jets, through the rage of the Jovian sky.

As Cornelius opened the control-room door, he looked at his telltale board. Elsewhere a voice tolled the word to all the stations, *One ship wrecked, two ships wrecked*, but Anglesey would let no sound enter his presence when he wore the helmet. An obliging technician had haywired a panel of fifteen red and fifteen blue lights above Cornelius' esprojector, to keep him informed, too. Ostensibly, of course, they were only there for Anglesey's benefit, though the esman had insisted he wouldn't be looking at them.

Four of the red bulbs were dark and thus four blue ones would not shine for a safe landing. A whirlwind, a thunderbolt, a floating ice meteor, a flock of mantalike birds with flesh as dense and hard as iron—there could be a hundred things which had crumpled four ships and tossed them tattered across the poison forests.

Four ships, hell! Think of four living creatures, with an excellence of brain to rival your own, damned first to years in unconscious night and then, never awakening save for one uncomprehending instant, dashed in bloody splinters against an ice mountain. The wasteful callousness of it was a cold knot in Cornelius'

belly. It had to be done, no doubt, if there was to be any thinking life on Jupiter at all; but then let it be done quickly and minimally, he thought, so that the next generation could be begotten by love and not by machines!

He closed the door behind him and waited for a breathless moment. Anglesey was a wheel chair and a coppery curve of helmet, facing the opposite wall. No movement, no awareness whatsoever. Good! It would be awkward, perhaps ruinous, if Anglesey learned of this most intimate peering. But he needn't, ever. He was blindfolded and ear-plugged by his own concentration.

Nevertheless, the psionist moved his bulky form with care, across the room to the new esprojector. He did not much like his snooper's role, he would not have assumed it at all if he had seen any other hope. But neither did it make him feel especially guilty. If what he suspected was true, then Anglesey was all unawares being twisted into something not human; to spy on him might be to save him.

Gently, Cornelius activated the meters and started his tubes warming up. The oscilloscope built into Anglesey's machine gave him the other man's exact alpha rhythm; his basic biological clock. First you adjusted to that, then you discovered the subtler elements by feel, and when your set was fully in phase you could probe undetected and—

Find out what was wrong. Read Anglesey's tortured subconscious and see what there was on Jupiter that both drew and terrified him.

Five ships wrecked.

But it must be very nearly time for them to land. Maybe only five would be lost in all. Maybe ten would get through. Ten comrades for—Joe?

Cornelius sighed. He looked at the cripple, seated blind and deaf to the human world which had crippled him, and felt a pity and an anger. It wasn't fair, none of it was.

Not even to Joe. Joe wasn't any kind of soul-eating devil. He did not even realize, as yet, that he *was* Joe, that Anglesey was becoming a mere appendage. He hadn't asked to be created, and to withdraw his human counterpart from him would very likely be to destroy him.

Somehow, there were always penalties for everybody when men exceeded the decent limits.

Cornelius swore at himself, voicelessly. Work to do. He sat down and fitted the helmet on his own head. The carrier wave made a faint pulse, inaudible, the trembling of neurons low in his awareness. You couldn't describe it.

Reaching up, he turned to Anglesey's alpha. His own had a somewhat lower frequency, it was necessary to carry the signals through a heterodyning process. Still no reception. Well, of course he had to find the exact wave form, timbre was as basic to thought as to music. He adjusted the dials slowly, with enormous care.

Something flashed through his consciousness, a vision of clouds roiled in a violet-red sky, a wind that galloped across horizonless immensity—he lost it. His fingers shook as he turned back.

The psibeam between Joe and Anglesey broadened. It took Cornelius into the circuit. He looked through Joe's eyes, he stood on a hill and stared into the sky

above the ice mountains, straining for sign of the first rocket; and simultaneously he was still Jan Cornelius, blurrily seeing the meters, probing about for emotions, symbols, any key to the locked terror in Anglesey's soul.

The terror rose up and struck him in the face.

Psionic detection is not a matter of passive listening in. Much as a radio receiver is necessarily also a weak transmitter, the nervous system in resonance with a source of psionic-spectrum energy is itself emitting. Normally, of course, this effect is unimportant; but when you pass the impulses, either way, through a set of heterodyning and amplifying units, with a high negative feedback...

In the early days, psionic psychotherapy vitiated itself because the amplified thoughts of one man, entering the brain of another, would combine with the latter's own neural cycles according to the ordinary vector laws. The result was that both men felt the new beat frequencies as a nightmarish fluttering of their very thoughts. An analyst, trained into self-control, could ignore it; his patient could not, and reacted violently.

But eventually the basic human wave timbres were measured, and psionic therapy resumed. The modern esprojector analyzed an incoming signal and shifted its characteristics over to the "listener's" pattern. The *really* different pulses of the transmitting brain, those which could not possibly be mapped onto the pattern of the receiving neurones—as an exponential signal cannot very practically be mapped onto a sinusoid—those were filtered out.

Thus compensated, the other thought could be apprehended as comfortably as one's own. If the patient were on a psibeam circuit, a skilled operator could tune in without the patient being necessarily aware of it. The operator could either probe the other man's thoughts or implant thoughts of his own.

Cornelius' plan, an obvious one to any psionist, had depended on this. He would receive from an unwitting Anglesey-Joe. If his theory was right and the esman's personality was being distorted into that of a monster, his thinking would be too alien to come through the filters. Cornelius would receive spottily or not at all. If his theory was wrong, and Anglesey was still Anglesey, he would receive only a normal human stream of consciousness and could probe for other troublemaking factors.

His brain roared!

What's happening to me?

For a moment, the interference which turned his thoughts to saw-toothed gibberish struck him down with panic. He gulped for breath, there in the Jovian wind, and his dreadful dogs sensed the alienness in him and whined.

Then, recognition, remembrance, and a blaze of anger so great that it left no room for fear. Joe filled his lungs and shouted it aloud, the hillside boomed with echoes:

"Get out of my mind!"

He felt Cornelius spiral down toward unconsciousness. The overwhelming force of his own mental blow had been too much. He laughed, it was more like a snarl, and eased the pressure.

Above him, between thunderous clouds, winked the first thin descending rocket flare.

Cornelius' mind groped back toward the light. It broke a watery surface, the man's mouth snapped after air and his hands reached for the dials, to turn his machine off and escape.

"Not so fast, you." Grimly, Joe drove home a command that locked Cornelius' muscles rigid. "I want to know the meaning of this. Hold still and let me look!" He smashed home an impulse which could be rendered, perhaps, as an incandescent question mark. Remembrance exploded in shards through the psionist's forebrain.

"So. That's all there is? You thought I was afraid to come down here and be Joe, and wanted to know why? But I *told* you I wasn't!"

I should have believed, whispered Cornelius.

"Well, get out of the circuit, then." Joe continued growling it vocally. "And don't ever come back in the control room, understand? K tubes or no, I don't want to see you again. And I may be a cripple, but I can still take you apart cell by cell. Now sign off—leave me alone. The first ship will be landing in minutes."

You a cripple—you, Joe Anglesey?

"What?" The great gray being on the hill lifted his barbaric head as if to sudden trumpets. "What do you mean?"

Don't you understand? said the weak, dragging thought. *You know how the esprojector works. You know I could have probed Anglesey's mind in Anglesey's brain without making enough interference to be noticed. And I could not have probed a wholly nonhuman mind at all, nor could it have been aware of me. The filters would not have passed such a signal. Yet you felt me in the first fractional second. It can only mean a human mind in a nonhuman brain.*

You are not the half-corpse on Jupiter Five any longer. You're Joe—Joe Anglesey.

"Well, I'll be damned," said Joe. "You're right."

He turned Anglesey off, kicked Cornelius out of his mind with a single brutal impulse, and ran down the hill to meet the spaceship.

Cornelius woke up minutes afterward. His skull felt ready to split apart. He groped for the main switch before him, clashed it down, ripped the helmet off his head and threw it clanging on the floor. But it took a little while to gather the strength to do the same for Anglesey. The other man was not able to do anything for himself.

They sat outside sick bay and waited. It was a harshly lit barrenness of metal and plastic, smelling of antiseptics—down near the heart of the satellite, with miles of rock to hide the terrible face of Jupiter.

Only Viken and Cornelius were in that cramped little room. The rest of the station went about its business mechanically, filling in the time till it could learn what had happened. Beyond the door, three biotechnicians, who were also the station's medical staff, fought with death's angel for the thing which had been Edward Anglesey.

"Nine ships got down," said Viken dully. "Two males, seven females. It's enough to start a colony."

"It would be genetically desirable to have more," pointed out Cornelius. He kept his own voice low, in spite of its underlying cheerfulness. There was a certain awesome quality to all this.

"I still don't understand," said Viken.

"Oh, it's clear enough—now. I should have guessed it before, maybe. We had all the facts, it was only that we couldn't make the simple, obvious interpretation of them. No, we had to conjure up Frankenstein's monster."

"Well," Viken's words grated, "we have played Frankenstein, haven't we? Ed is dying in there."

"It depends on how you define death." Cornelius drew hard on his cigar, needing anything that might steady him. His tone grew purposely dry of emotion.

"Look here. Consider the data. Joe, now: a creature with a brain of human capacity, but without a mind—a perfect Lockean *tabula rasa* for Anglesey's psi-beam to write on. We deduced, correctly enough—if very belatedly—that when enough had been written, there would be a personality. But the question was, whose? Because, I suppose, of normal human fear of the unknown, we assumed that any personality in so alien a body had to be monstrous. Therefore it must be hostile to Anglesey, must be swamping him—"

The door opened. Both men jerked to their feet.

The chief surgeon shook his head. "No use. Typical deep-shock traumata, close to terminus now. If we had better facilities, maybe..."

"No," said Cornelius. "You cannot save a man who has decided not to live any more."

"I know." The doctor removed his mask. "I need a cigarette. Who's got one?" His hands shook a little as he accepted it from Viken.

"But how could he—decide—anything?" choked the physicist. "He's been unconscious ever since Jan pulled him away from that...that thing."

"It was decided before then," said Cornelius. "As a matter of fact that hulk in there on the operating table no longer has a mind. I know. I was there." He shuddered a little. A stiff shot of tranquilizer was all that held nightmare away from him. Later he would have to have that memory exorcised.

The doctor took a long drag of smoke, held it in his lungs a moment, and exhaled gustily. "I guess this winds up the project," he said. "We'll never get another esman."

"I'll say we won't." Viken's tone sounded rusty. "I'm going to smash that devil's engine myself."

"Hold on a minute!" exclaimed Cornelius. "Don't you understand? This isn't the end. It's the beginning!"

"I'd better get back," said the doctor. He stubbed out his cigarette and went through the door. It closed behind him with a deathlike quietness.

"What do you mean?" Viken said it as if erecting a barrier.

"*Won't* you understand?" roared Cornelius. "Joe has all Anglesey's habits, thoughts, memories, prejudices, interests. Oh, yes, the different body and the

different environment—they do cause some changes, but no more than any man might undergo on Earth. If you were suddenly cured of a wasting disease, wouldn't you maybe get a little boisterous and rough? There is nothing abnormal in it. Nor is it abnormal to want to stay healthy—no? Do you see?"

Viken sat down. He spent a while without speaking.

Then, enormously slow and careful: "Do you mean Joe is Ed?"

"Or Ed is Joe. Whatever you like. He calls himself Joe now I think—as a symbol of freedom—but he is still himself. What *is* the ego but continuity of existence?"

"He himself did not fully understand this. He only knew—he told me, and I should have believed him—that on Jupiter he was strong and happy. Why did the K tube oscillate? A hysterical symptom! Anglesey's subconscious was not afraid to stay on Jupiter—it was afraid to come back!"

"And then, today, I listened in. By now, his whole self was focused on Joe. That is, the primary source of libido was Joe's virile body not Anglesey's sick one. This meant a different pattern of impulses—not too alien to pass the filters, but alien enough to set up interference. So he felt my presence. And he saw the truth just as I did.

"Do you know the last emotion I felt as Joe threw me out of his mind? Not anger any more. He plays rough, him, but all he had room to feel was joy.

"I *knew* how strong a personality Anglesey has! Whatever made me think an overgrown child brain like Joe's could override it? In there, the doctors—bah! They're trying to salvage a hulk which has been shed because it is useless!"

Cornelius stopped. His throat was quite raw from talking. He paced the floor, rolled cigar smoke around his mouth but did not draw it any farther in.

When a few minutes had passed, Viken said cautiously, "All right. You should know—as you said, you were there. But what do we do now?" How do we get in touch with Ed? Will he even be interested in contacting us?"

"Oh, yes, of course," said Cornelius. "He is still himself, remember. Now that he has none of the cripple's frustrations, he should be more amiable. When the novelty of his new friends wears off, he will want someone who can talk to him as an equal."

"And precisely who will operate another pseudo?" asked Viken sarcastically. "I'm quite happy with this skinny frame of mine, thank you!"

"Was Anglesey the only hopeless cripple on Earth?" asked Cornelius quietly.

Viken gaped at him.

"And there are aging men, too," went on the psionicist, half to himself. "Some-day, my friend, when you and I feel the years close in, and so much we would like to learn—maybe we too would enjoy an extra lifetime in a Jovian body." He nodded at his cigar. "A hard, lusty, stormy kind of life, granted—dangerous, brawling, violent—but life as no human, perhaps, has lived it since the days of Elizabeth the First. Oh, yes, there will be small trouble finding Jovians."

He turned his head as the surgeon came out again.

“Well?” croaked Viken.

The doctor sat down. “It’s finished,” he said. They waited for a moment, awkwardly.

“Odd,” said the doctor. He groped after a cigarette he didn’t have. Silently, Viken offered him one. “Odd. I’ve seen these cases before. People who simply resign from life. This is the first one I ever saw that went out smiling—smiling all the time.”

Prayer in War

Lord beyond eternity,
Fountainhead of mystery,
Why have You now set us free?

You, Who unto death were given,
By Yourself, that we be shriven,
See, Your world will soon lie riven.

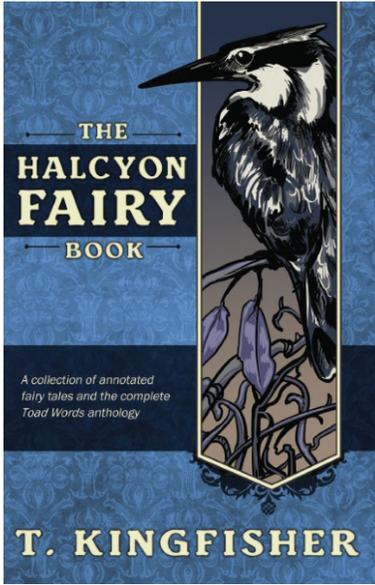
After Easter, need we dread
Fire and ice when we are dead?
Hell indwells in us instead.

From our hearts we raise a tower
Wherein sullen monsters glower.
Save us from our hard-won power!

You Who raged within the sun
When no life had yet begun,
Will You let it be undone?

We have wrought such ghastly wonders,
Lightning at our beck, and thunders—
Help, before this poor earth sunders.

Lord beyond eternity,
Fountainhead of mystery,
Why have You now set us free?



The Halcyon Fairy Book

by T. KINGFISHER

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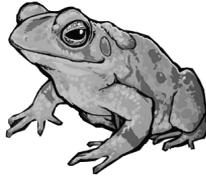
Bluebeard's Wife

The Halcyon Fairy Book is a delightful collection of wry and insightful comments on traditional fairy tales, originally presented in her blog, along with her first collection of fairy-tale inspired original work, “Toad Words”, previously only available as a self-published eBook.

T. Kingfisher

T. Kingfisher is the vaguely absurd pen-name of an author from North Carolina. In another life, as Ursula Vernon, she writes children's books and weird comics, and has won the Hugo, Sequoyah, Mythopoeic, Nebula and Ursa Major awards, as well as a half-dozen Junior Library Guild selections. This is the name she uses when writing things for grown-ups.

Edited and Designed by Sheila Perry



Bluebeard's Wife

She really hadn't known.

No one believed her, of course. The more sympathetic among her friends said "Oh, poor Althea, you must have been terrified, of course you couldn't tell anyone." Her detractors — her sisters foremost among them — all said "Of course she knew. She just didn't care. Those poor women."

No one had actually suggested that she might be involved in the murders, of course. Once the bodies had been identified, it was obvious that she had still been in the nursery for most of them. The youngest of the lot had been dead for several years before Lord Bluebeard moved into the neighborhood, so no one could imply that she was a murderess herself.

Still, she'd kept silent, went the whispers, and that made her an accomplice, didn't it?

She caught herself wishing that her husband were still alive, so that she could talk to him about it.

"And that is very nearly insane," Althea told the mirror in her bedroom, "since he was the one who killed all those poor women in the first place."

She still couldn't believe it. She knew that it was true, of course, she'd been the one to go into that awful charnel room in the first place.

Still.

Whatever his other faults — ha — he'd been easy to talk to. She had never exactly been in love with him, but they'd been good

friends. His offer of marriage had gotten her away from her house and the prying of her sisters.

She set the hairbrush down and went to the window. Trees looked back at her. She was living in the hunting lodge, now, many miles away from the accursed manor house.

She wanted to go home. Even knowing that awful room was there, even knowing what was in it. The manor had been her home for twenty-seven years. She was the mistress of it. She knew every inch of it, except for the room at the top of the tallest tower, and . . . well.

“Well,” she said aloud. “Well. Here we are.”

They asked the same question, all of them, friends and foes alike. “How could you not look? How could you live with that room there and never look into it?”

The answer was simple enough. She’d never looked because she had believed that she already knew what was inside.

Her father had a room that his daughters were not allowed to look into, and her sisters, prying and spying as they always did, had jimmied the lock one day and snuck in. Althea had peeped around the doorframe, half-curious, half-terrified.

It wasn’t much. A dusty room with big chairs leaking stuffing and taxidermy on the walls. Glassy-eyed deer stared down at her. There was a side table with some etchings of naked nymphs doing improbable things with goat-legged men. Her sisters thought this was hysterical. She just felt sick.

Her sisters had always been like that. She had never been allowed a diary, a corner of the room, even a single box that was not opened and pawed through. Her sisters wanted to make sure that she had no secrets, so she kept them all behind her eyes and committed nothing to paper.

When Bluebeard had brought her home from the honeymoon and handed her the great iron ring of keys, he had singled out the smallest one and said “This opens the door at the top of the tower. That is my room. Never, ever open it.”

Aha, she thought, another room of overstuffed furniture and pornographic etchings. Probably bad taxidermy as well. Well, everyone is allowed their privacy.

She pried the key off the ring and handed it back to him. "You should keep this, then."

He stared at her, his eyes absolutely blank. She did not know him well enough yet to read his moods, and so she laughed a little and said "My dear, don't you think I know how men are? Everyone needs a room to put their feet up. Take the key."

The key was very small in his large hand, and gleamed as golden as her wedding ring. "But—"

"Really, I can't think why I'd want the key," she said. "I'm not giving you the key to my diary. I hope that doesn't bother you."

"Ah—no, of course not—I—" He took a step back. "But—ah—if I should lose my key, I will want to know that there is another one—"

"Oh, well, quite sensible," she said. She plucked the key from his hands, looked around the room—they were in the library—and saw a bookend on a high shelf, in the shape of a woman holding an urn. "There, that will do." She pulled out a chair, climbed onto it—Bluebeard hurried to grab the chair back and steady her—and dropped the key into the urn. "There. If you lose yours, you know where it is now, and none of the maids will bother to dust it up there." She brushed her hands together.

"You are a marvel," said Bluebeard, lifting her down from the chair, and kissed her forehead.

He had not been a bad husband, truly he hadn't. He had even been concerned with her relationship with her sisters. When he left on travel, which he sometimes did, he always suggested that she invite her sisters to stay with her.

"Most certainly not," she said, sitting in the library again, in her favorite chair. Her husband grasped the back of the chair and looked down at her, and she tilted her head back to look up at him. She smiled upside down into his eyes. "My sisters are appalling people, and I have no desire to have them here, prying into everything and telling me how to do everything better and leaving me no scrap of home to call my own."

"Family is important," he said, looking down at her. He sounded sad, and she remembered that he had no family of his own.

“We’re each other’s family,” Althea said firmly, putting her hand over his on the back of the chair.

He turned his hand under hers and squeezed her fingers. “Still, your sisters — I hate to think of you isolated —”

She sighed. It was important to him, apparently, and she was determined to be a good wife, since it had already become obvious that there would be no children between them. “If you insist. But I will not have them here, you understand? I will go to the townhouse and receive them there.”

There had been an enormous party at the townhouse. In the middle of it, she had gone to her bedroom to change her shoes — the white ones had always pinched her feet, but they looked so elegant — and found her oldest sister rifling through her jewelry box and her middle sister going through the drawers of her vanity.

“Sister, dear,” said the oldest, leering, expecting her to ignore the intrusion, as she always had.

But she did not ignore it. She was no longer a little girl in a patched frock, but a married woman with a home and husband of her own. She bared her teeth and said “Get out. Go downstairs and leave gracefully, or I’ll have the footmen throw you out. You’re not welcome here any longer.”

“Althea, dear,” said her middle sister, trying to tuck her hand under Althea’s arm. “We’re your sisters. We just want to make sure you’re all right.”

“Then ask me,” she snapped. “You won’t find the answer at the bottom of the jewelry box. No, get out! I am sick to death of both of you.”

They left. Althea left the party in the hands of her aunt and went upstairs, pleading headache.

Thank god for Bluebeard. Otherwise she’d still be at home, dealing with those . . . those prying harpies. Not a shred of privacy to her name.

Her husband understood. When she said that she was sick of both of them, that they were appalling, that she would have nothing more to do with either of them, he did not argue. When she burst into furious tears at the end of it, he said “Oh, my dear —”

and opened his arms, and she cried into the blue curls of his beard until her nose was red and she looked a fright.

He had apparently been a very evil man, but not actually a bad one. Althea had spent the last few months trying to get her mind around how such a thing was possible.

At the end, he'd tried to spare her. She remembered that, when everyone turned on him, when they'd dug up the bones and thrown them into the river.

Years had passed. Any blue in his beard had long since been replaced by gray. He no longer travelled for business or rode to hounds. Althea herself moved more slowly, and felt the weather in her bones.

They had not shared a bed for many years, but they were friends. Probably there had been other women, but he was always discreet, and Althea never faulted him. There had certainly not been other women for a number of years, nor other men either.

They spent evenings in the library. She would read funny passages aloud to him and he would laugh. They played chess. He usually won, but he was a patient teacher and occasionally she surprised him.

On that last night, he moved restlessly away from the chessboard, rubbing his left arm and gazing out the window.

"What's wrong?" she asked.

He turned toward her and grasped her hands, his eyes fierce. "Althea — my love — promise me something."

"Anything," she said. She did not like the pallor of his face, or the way he kept rubbing his arm. "What can I do?"

"When I die — when I am dead —"

"Don't talk like that!"

"It will happen soon. I was already well-aged when we were wed. I have lasted much longer than I expected, probably because of you, my dear. But it will happen. I can hear Death tapping at the walls. I know him — very well. I owe him this."

Althea put a hand to her mouth.

"Promise me," he said, "that when I am dead, you will burn the house down."

"What?"

“The manor,” he said impatiently. He clasped his wrist to his chest, looking really angry, angrier than she had ever seen him look. “Take the furniture out if you must, take your clothes, whatever you want to keep—but burn it to the ground. Leave the doors opened. It must burn.”

“You’re mad,” she said unsteadily. “This is my home! I live here too! I can’t just—why?”

“I can’t tell you,” he said. He sank to his knees in front of her. “Please. If you have ever loved me—if we have been friends these last few years—”

“You aren’t well,” she said, standing up. “You’re delirious, that’s all. I’m going to send for the doctor. It will be all right, my love, it’s probably just a touch of the influenza—”

She put a hand on his forehead, and he groaned. He was ice cold, not hot.

“Please,” he said. He fell over on his side, curled in a ball, and she stood helplessly in front of him, not knowing what to do. “Please.”

When the servants found them the next morning, she was staring dry-eyed out the window, and Bluebeard’s body was already cold.

She wished now that she had listened to him.

If the house had been burned—oh, if only! Then she might be a respectable widow. They might whisper that she had gone mad, to burn such a marvelous house as a funeral pyre, but they would not stare at her with such mingled pity and disgust.

But she had not burned it. Instead she had been swept into the usual business of widowhood—papers to sort through and allotments to settle. He had left most of his affairs in good order, but there were a few things missing, and she had to turn the house over looking for them, while the lawyers tapped their feet and sent politely worded notes about how vital it all was that they receive this by such-and-such a time to avoid some unspecified unpleasantness.

At last, with one of the lawyers actually in the house, she had remembered the room at the top of the tower.

“There’s one other place I suppose it could be,” she said dubiously. “My husband’s study—I never went in there. But I suppose it’s possible.”

“Were there papers in there?” asked the lawyer.

“I haven’t the faintest idea,” said Althea. “I still haven’t gone in there. Let me find the key.”

She had to get a chair into the library, and then check three or four bookends—was it the elephant with the saddle, or the woman with the urn, or the dragon clutching the treasure chest?—until she found the key. There were cobwebs in the urn, but nothing more. The key was as brilliantly gold as it had been the day that Bluebeard had handed it to her.

They went up the stairs to the top of the tower—stupid having a tower in a manor house, but the previous earl had been fond of eccentric architecture—and Althea fitted the key to the door.

“The dust is probably appalling,” she said. “Nobody’s been in here in six months, and I doubt my husband kept it up very well. He was a dear thing, but not much of a housekeep—”

She pushed the door open, with the lawyer at her back.

No overstuffed chairs. No etchings. Bare floors, bare walls—and them. The previous wives of Bluebeard.

The irony was that there was bad taxidermy after all. He hadn’t been good at it. Those poor women. Bad enough that he had killed them at all, but their bodies were preserved so badly that they barely looked human. At first she had thought they were festival costumes with poorly-constructed masks, draped over dress-maker’s dummies. Something. Not people.

Cobwebs draped each of the figures. There were seven in all.

“What on earth ...” she said, peering more closely. “What are—oh god—”

When Althea realized what they were, she sat down in the middle of the floor and put her hands over her face. The lawyer caught her shoulder. “Miss—miss—” and then, bless him, he picked her up bodily and carried her out of that terrible room.

She didn’t go back. They had men out—constables and investigators and who knew what. They went into the room and took the pitiful contents out. Althea lay in bed for three days, her mind a great roaring silence, and then her sisters arrived and she rose off her bed long enough to throw them out again.

Once she was up, she figured that she might as well stay up. She packed the entire household up in a week, left most of the furniture to the lawyers to auction off, and went to the hunting lodge in the country. Before the horses were even unloaded, she went into every room, throwing the doors and windows open, letting light shine into every crack of the house.

There were no dead women there. She moved in at once.

It was not a bad place. It was rougher than the manor house, and the cook complained endlessly about the stove, but be damned if she was moving to the townhouse to be the butt of pity and accusation. She walked through the woods every day, wearing mourning black, not entirely sure who she was mourning for.

She still missed her husband sometimes. Every time it felt like a betrayal of those women — those other wives — and yet it was what she felt. Twenty-seven years of living with someone, sharing their bed and crying on their shoulder, were not so easily erased. There was a great deal of guilt and fury as well — enough to fill an ocean, enough to make her pound her fists on the walls and howl — but there was no one she could talk to. No one else had ever been in this situation. The one person she could always talk to, the one who would have listened, was dead. And a murderer. But mostly dead.

When the lawyers found her at last, and made their report, she learned that she had a great deal of money. A murderer's estate was automatically forfeit to the Crown, but apparently her husband had, in the last few months of his life, put everything into a trust in her name — except for the manor house.

Very well. Let it be someone else's problem now.

She also learned that around the neck of each of his dead wives had been a necklace, and on each necklace hung a brilliant golden key.

“How frustrating that must have been for him,” she said, and laughed a little to herself. Her laughter sounded rusty and disused, but it was a laugh all the same.

She really hadn't known.

She'd just thought that the world was a complicated place, and everyone in it deserved a little bit of privacy, and perhaps a room of one's own.

