

The bellboy smirked. Henry followed him to his room.

HENRY lay in the sun for two weeks and grew younger day by day. His skin tanned, his muscles became hard with the exertion of lengthy swims, the creases in his face smoothed out. Still he felt vaguely dissatisfied, empty. He lay on the beach, gazing into the ocean, and knew that something was missing.

The woman he had seen that first night crossed between him and the ocean and continued down the beach. Henry watched her out of sight.

"That woman is beautiful," he thought.

Sex, he thought. I wonder if that's what's missing. There was another aspect to be considered, of course. Two hundred and forty-five. And then a blonde young lady in a bikini wavered by him and he knew in that moment that he could.

He stood up and walked after her.

"I wonder if I might walk a bit with you," he said.

She looked him over carefully and then shrugged her shoulder, not quite dislodging the upper portion of her suit. "Suitcha self."

After a while she asked, "What business ya in?"

"I'm sort of retired," he explained, finding her very charming and refreshing to talk to. "I had a

modest income a while ago. I invested wisely, or prudently at least, and the interest has built up into quite a fortune by now."

"Really," she said.

They walked down the beach, hand in hand.

FIVE nights later he got out of bed when she fell asleep. He dressed and walked despondently down to the lobby. This was not it, not it at all. God, but her conversation was absolutely impossible. He couldn't stay with her another minute.

His problem was still unsolved. He wanted to get back to work, he wanted company, he wanted *life* again. As he came into the lobby, the woman of the first night passed by him again. She looked at him as she came, and smiled as she passed.

That, he thought, is a lovely woman. He stared at her back. How old would you say she is? Late twenties, not a day over thirty. Yet with a serenity in the eyes, in the smile somehow, that gives the impression of lifetimes of living. Yet not a day over thirty, surely no older than that.

That, he thought, is what I need. A woman like that to sleep with and, yes, to be with, even to talk with. She would not be like the one upstairs. But, he thought, one does not buy a woman like that. One marries her. Somehow, without knowing, he knew that.

GALAXY

And why not?
Why not, indeed?

He returned to his own room, stripped and consulted the mirror. Dye his hair, that was really all he needed. He smiled into the mirror. Forty, he thought, even thirty-five. Certainly, with this tan and slim body and his hair dyed, thirty-five at the most.

He went to bed, happily making plans. A new life opened up for him.

He would take a new name; he would live again. There was nothing to stop him.

That night, in the Sea Lion Hotel in Miami Beach, Henry Talbot died.

TWO months later Arnold Bottal, an experimental nuclear physicist of perhaps thirty-five, and his charming wife — with exquisite, nearly purple Eurasian eyes — joined the new country club in Lincoln Hills, New York, where Bottal had newly joined the Applied Physics Division of the Carbide Nuclear Company.

This Arnold Bottal was not a brilliant physicist, but he was certainly competent in his job. The company was satisfied with him. He and his wife bought a bubble home in the suburbs of Lincoln Hills and, together with their cat Bucephalus, lived happily ever after.

— DAVID E. FISHER

STATEMENT REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933, AND JULY 2, 1946 (Title 39, United States Code Section 233) SHOWING THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION OF

February, 1960.
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Sworn to and subscribed before me this 30th day of September, 1959.

Joan J. DeMario, Notary Public, State of New York, No. 24-5978800. Qualified in Kings County.

JOAN J. DeMARIO
(My commission expires March 30, 1960)



GALAXY'S 5 Star Shelf

OSSIAN'S RIDE by Fred Hoyle.
Harper & Bros., N.Y., \$3.00

IN ACCOLADING last year's *The Black Cloud* by the famous cosmologist, I hoped that he would occasionally go on forsaking his telescope for the typewriter. He did. And his new book is an even happier event in some ways than its startling predecessor. Hoyle's story writing skill, technique and dialogue have improved tremendously since his first effort, which was notable mainly for its humor and rich imagination.

Here he has turned out a sci-

ence-mystery-spy story that has no apparent forebear in the SF repertory. In fact, John Buchan and E. P. Oppenheim are the spiritual godfathers of this action-crammed thriller.

The basic idea is novel—a brand-new industrial complex, only ten years old, secreted in a remote and intensely guarded corner of Ireland, already overshadowing the giant industrial nations and dedicated to maintaining its mystery. The secret is finally uncovered by a resourceful young Cambridge student, one of the most unorthodox spies in SF history, after some

chase scenes worthy of *The Thirty-nine Steps*.

Rating: ★★★★★

THE WORLD THAT COULDN'T BE & EIGHT OTHER NOVELETS FROM GALAXY, THE FOURTH GALAXY READER, edited by H. L. Gold. *Doubleday & Co., Inc., N.Y., \$3.95*

TWO ANTHOLOGIES of stories that first appeared in this magazine, and that therefore are not for us to remark on.

ENCOUNTER by J. Hunter Holly. *Avalon Books, N.Y., \$2.75*

HOLLY, the newest addition to the Avalon stable of rapid-reading, action-packed authors, is even rapider and more fully packed than the average. His yarn of an alien castaway marooned on Earth is spattered with the blood of some twenty murders.

Appears as if the alien has power to absorb knowledge directly from other brains, but only at the cost of gruesomely exploded craniums. He can sense emotion, although not a true telepath, and can control all animal life except felines. A being like that could rule the world if he wants to and he wants to.

However, we're a pretty tough species when our and our cats' backs

★★★★★ SHELF

are up, as our alien learns.

Rating: ★★★½

PURPLE PIRATE by Talbot Mundy. *Gnome Press, Hicksville, N.Y., \$4.50*

SINCE SEQUELS almost invariably are diminished returns, and with *Tros of Samothrace* the predecessor, any successor would seem foredoomed to mediocrity. However, *Purple Pirate*, rescued by Gnome from a quarter-century of oblivion, is fully its equal in plot audacity, skill of execution and characterization.

Tros's story reopens in Egypt shortly after the death of his erstwhile bitter enemy, Caesar. He is kept busy rescuing Cleopatra's chestnuts while she maliciously holds his Norse crew hostage, forestalling his dream of circumnavigating the globe.

Tros has all of Conan's attributes plus one: though a superman, he is only human. Conan never has inner thoughts or fears; Tros is plagued by them. Additionally, each chapter head holds pearls of wisdom from his introspection, as did the former book, that constitute a culture's code of ethics in themselves.

Rating: ★★★★★

GIANTS FROM ETERNITY by Manly Wade Wellman. *Avalon Books, N.Y., \$2.75*

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QUAINTNESS IS the keynote of this yarn, brought back from the dust of decades, like its titled Giants.

Earth is threatened by the unleashed growth of an alien life-form that absorbs and transmutes all substances into its own matter type. However, a gaseous essence of the substance has the power to revivify the dead. To solve the problem of man's survival, Oliver Norfleet recalls Tom Edison, Lou Pasteur, Charlie Darwin, Ike Newton and Cutie Curie.

The naiveté of the fairytale plot is refreshing, if viewed as a device for getting five delightful oldtimers back into circulation — and if fairytale logic and dismissal of inconvenient facts don't irritate you.

Rating: ★★★

LORD OF THE FLIES by Wm. Golding. Capricorn Books, N.Y., \$1.25

ONE OF civilization-harassed mankind's oldest dreams is the tropic isle, plentifully stocked with accessible goodies and free from human and animal predators. Golding unloads his band of sub-teeners on such an island paradise, victims of an unnamed and undescribed war.

For the first time free of adult supervision, the instinct of the British youngsters is to revel. However, for rescue, a signal fire must be

tended, argues twelve-year-old Ralph who gets elected leader of a democracy. From that point on, Golding paints a truly terrifying picture of the decay of a miniscule society.

Well on its way to becoming a modern classic, this '55 hard-cover is welcome in its Putnam-Capricorn reissue.

Rating: ★★★★★

THE STARS ARE TOO HIGH by Agnew H. Bahnson, Jr. Random House, Inc., N.Y., \$3.95

THE REVERSE of Divide and Conquer must be Frighten and Unite. History holds many examples and SF several notable ones, most of them meant to avert global war with phony extraterrestrial threat.

Bahnson's UFO does nearly every maneuver accredited to bona fide saucers, only it was secretly built in Nevada by private citizens. In early SF, this was standard, but half a thought will show what a tiger's tail such a situation is.

To solve their dilemma, the three builders enlist the aid of the scientific adviser to the Air Force Chief of Staff, to help determine disposal of the super-machine to the best interests of all humanity. Enter idealism: all humanity will be united by means of impressive displays of power over Moscow and Washington by supposed ETs.

GALAXY

Bahnson, though, hews close to reality and some best-laid plans go mighty a-gley. He proposes a solution that unfortunately relies on the foresight, a sadly lacking ingredient, of present world leaders.

Rating: ★★★

THE INVOLUNTARY IMMORTALS by Rog Phillips. Avalon Books, N.Y., \$2.75

DESPITE PHILLIPS'S story, immortality isn't dead yet, not when tackled by craftsmen like Heinlein or Simak.

Phillips picks up his protagonists a few years hence, in the second century of their existence. A shared but unknown experience back in 1848 produced several hundred immortals. They have since scouted for stragglers and experimented for the source of their longevity.

Unlike the aforementioned masters, Phillips doesn't permit his people the wisdom of their years. They act as well as look like perennial teenagers.

Rating: ★★

SF: '59, edited by Judith Merril. Gnome Press, Hicksville, N.Y., \$3.50

MISS MERRIL'S present anthology, for the first time in this series, is more an anthology than the *Ladies Home Journal of SF*. Most of the stories are good; several, in-

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ SHELF

cluding "Triggerman" by J. F. Bone, "Prize of Peril" by Sheckley, and "Or All the Seas with Oysters" by Davidson, are excellent.

The Science Fact section is back, however, despite Miss Merril's admission that virtually every type of publication is giving enormously serious coverage to even the most outlandish scientific investigations.

Rating: ★★★★★ (stories only)

THE SCIENCE FICTION NOVEL. Advent: Publishers, P.O. Box 9228 Chicago 90, Ill., \$3.50

ROBERT A. HEINLEIN, C. M. Kornbluth, Robert Bloch and Alfred Bester each delivered a lecture on the worth of science fiction early in 1957 at the U. of Chicago. Basil Davenport has added a genuinely catalytic introduction to these, so that the contradictories and mutual exclusions combine in a way that the authors never meant them to, for each, of course, has his own set of ingredients, his own measures, his own way of mixing. Davenport likes them all, and so do we.

THINGS THAT GO BUMP IN THE NIGHT by Louis C. Jones. Hill & Wang, N.Y., \$3.75

DURING A six-year period at the N.Y. State College for Teachers, Dr. Jones collected a huge quantity of lore, legend and phenomena.

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Though documented, his book is pegged for entertainment value; Dr. Jones admits to blending stories for enhancement.

His haunts range from early colonial to post-WW II, from screamers to bumpers, from do-gooders to no-goodniks.

THE ATOM AND THE ENERGY REVOLUTION by Norman Lansdell. *Philosophical Library, N.Y.*, \$6.00

IN OUR civilization, individuals consume more power than entire townships did not too many years ago. Demands upon our power resources are therefore prodigious — and extrapolation indicates an utterly fantastic increase in the close future. Moreover, fossil fuels, aside from increasing scarcity, must be reserved for chemical use. Other energy sources must be found.

Lansdell's study, though primarily concerned with nuclear energy, includes the latest actual and conjectural data on many other sources.

PAPERBACK NEWS

SIGNET BOOKS: *The Door into Summer*, Robert A. Heinlein, 35¢. Heinlein's superlative time travel yarn of revenge and paradox . . . *The Black Cloud*, Fred Hoyle, 35¢. Astronomer Hoyle's novella-like entry into the SF firmament . . .

The Man Who Sold the Moon, Robert A. Heinlein, 35¢. Four of the six stories in the original collection; "Blowups Happen" and "Lifeline" are omitted.

ACE BOOKS: *The Macabre Reader*, edited by Donald A. Wollheim, 35¢. Several grisly masterpieces as well as some ghosts of real stories . . . *Plague Ship and Voodoo Planet*, Andrew North, 35¢. "Ship" is Andrew North-Andre Norton's '56 Gnome juvenile. "Planet" is a new novelet . . . *Red Alert*, Peter Bryant, 35¢. That one man can kill the world with a button is the story skeleton of a well-muscled yarn. . . . *The Invaders Are Coming*, Alan E. Nourse and J. A. Meyer, 35¢. Bureaucratic America is a setup for a Batista-type strong man with a program . . . *The Hidden Planet*, edited by D. A. Wollheim, 35¢. Stanley Weinbaum's "The Lotus Eaters" gleams like new despite a quarter-century . . . *Recruit for Andromeda*, Milton Lesser; *The Plot Against Earth*, Calvin M. Knox; Ace Double, 35¢. Lesser's yarn hurtles to a pratfall. Knox's less pretentious effort holds surprises.

BALLANTINE BOOKS: *The Midwich Cuckoos*, John Wyndham, 35¢. An expert chiller about a pregnant situation — invasion by insemination . . . *Star Science Fiction 5*, edited by Frederik Pohl, 35¢. A good collection of new stories.

—FLOYD C. GALE

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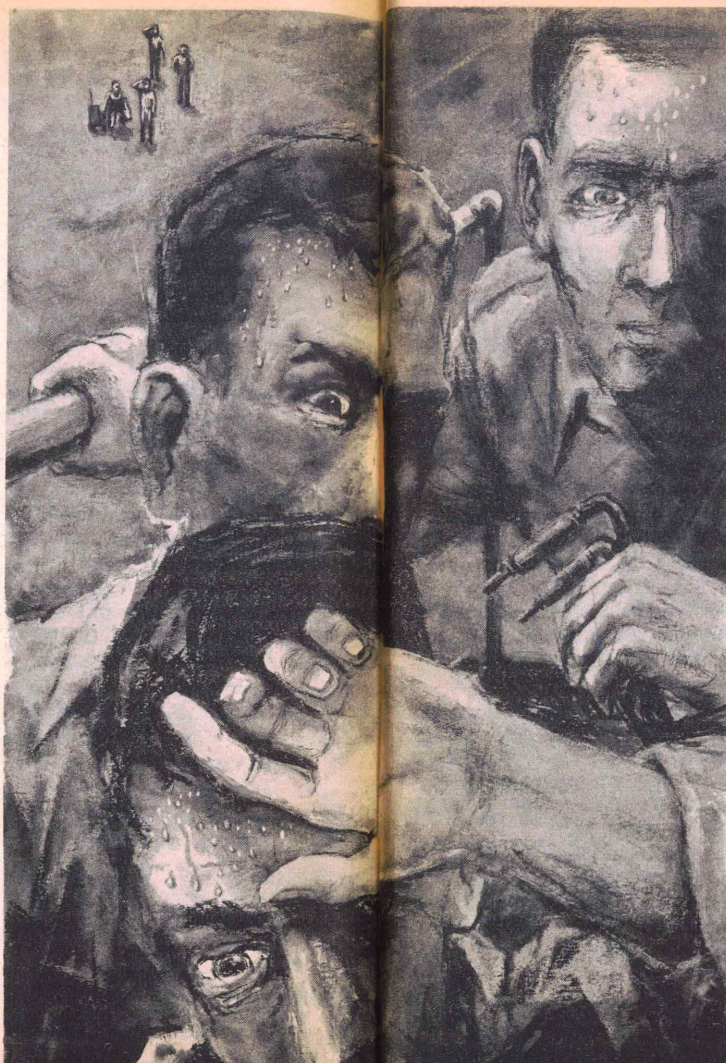
BY JIM WANNAMAKER

Illustrated by DICK FRANCIS

FLINN took the seat that Wilmer indicated, dropped his overnight bag beside it, and tried to relax. He'd had five hours of inactivity on the plane, but the peremptory manner with which he had been routed out of his California apartment and conveyed to Washington, D. C., had so filled his mind with unanswered questions that he still found rest to be impossible. He had been told simply that the government needed him; and when federal wheels started turning, there wasn't much a private citizen could do to stop them.

He watched the tall, lean, dark-haired man, who had been introduced as Dr. Jackson Wilmer, nuclear physicist, disappear through a door.

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There's just one way

to disarm a bomb — be at least

a step ahead of it —

but what if it's always

at least a step

ahead of you?

Flinn looked around.

The room in which he sat — comparatively small, one of hundreds in the vastness of the Pentagon—seemed to be a sort of minor office. At least there were several desks and filing cabinets. Besides himself, there were now only two other men in the room.

One, a complete stranger, sat at a desk across the room with his back turned toward Flinn.

The other leaned against the wall near the door. All Flinn knew about him, despite the fact that they had been as close as boy and dog for the past seven hours, was that his name was Hayes and that he was a special agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. There was a muscular hardness about this young man that be-

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trayed an athletic background. He was about thirty, had a craggy face beneath short brown hair, hard gray eyes, and his nose had been broken at least once. There was a light trace of beard beginning to show on the agent's face, but his brown summer suit still looked neat, and the man himself seemed something less than tried.

Looking at him, Flinn felt a sense of his own shabbiness. He needed a shave as badly as his slacks and sports jacket needed pressing.

At forty-two, Flinn was somewhat taller than average and slightly underweight from overwork and the irregularities of a bachelor existence. His black hair, beginning to recede a little, was peppered with silver, and his normally relaxed face was now tight, and the whites of his hazel eyes were bloodshot.

THE door beside Hayes opened and Wilmer entered, carrying a brown folder. He was in his shirtsleeves, his necktie pulled down and his collar open, and, as he approached, Flinn noted that the deeply tanned face of the physicist was as stubbled and tired-looking as his own felt. He was about the same age as Flinn.

Wilmer tossed the folder on the desk in front of Flinn and then perched on one corner of the desk. He gazed at the parapsy-

chologist for a long few seconds, his eyes startlingly ice-blue in his dark face.

"Well," he said presently, "I guess you're wondering what this is all about."

"Yes, I guess I am," Flinn said wryly. "This bird dog—" he indicated Hayes with a nod of his head, and the agent retaliated with a flash of teeth—"hauls me away from an important experiment, loads me on an Air Force jet, and, after a high-altitude flight at God only knows what kind of fantastic speeds, I find myself in the holiest of holies, surrounded by MPs and — yes, you might say I'm wondering what this is all about."

Wilmer nodded patiently and rubbed one hand across his eyes.

"When you find out, you'll understand the reason for the secrecy." He faced Hayes. "How long have we been on this thing now, Fred? It seems like weeks."

"Ten days," the FBI man answered.

Wilmer shook his head slowly, then reached for the folder, opened it, and took out several scientific journals that Flinn recognized instantly. The physicist opened one of them.

"Advanced Experiments in TP, by Patrick Flinn," he read. He laid the publication aside and picked up another. "A Monograph on the Probabilities of TH," same author."

He quoted at random from the introductory page: "It is therefore my belief, based upon recent preliminary experimentation, that not only can one mind be used to scan the thoughts of another, but that ideas and suggestions may be implanted upon another's mind without the knowledge of the receptor. This is not to be confused with simple telepathic 'sending,' where the receptor is completely aware of the other's transmission. This to which I refer may, at least in one phase, be described as hypnotic in effect. The possibilities of such influence over the mind-matter of another are more than somewhat considerable..."

He paused, lowered the journal and gazed speculatively at Patrick Flinn. "Telepathy, telehypnosis," he said, rolling out the words as if they left a strange taste in his mouth. "Very interesting. Just how much truth is there in all this stuff? I mean, how far along are you, really?"

FLINN considered the question for a few seconds. It was one he had heard often, especially from his colleagues at the small California college where he held an assistantship in psychology. But after twenty years of skepticism—he had first discovered his rudimentary telepathic abilities just after graduating from college, and had been experimenting and ad-

vancing ever since — he had become immune to criticism.

"Very few people bother to read my articles," Flinn said evenly, "and still fewer understand them, and the fewest believe. But I can tell you I'm far enough along in my research to know that the human mind has latent powers that are, to quote my article, more than somewhat considerable."

Wilmer and Hayes exchanged glances.

"That's fine," Wilmer said, "but abstruse, wouldn't you say? What I'm getting at is, I want to see a practical demonstration."

"Put up or shut up, eh?" Flinn said.

"I'd rather call it an examining of credentials," the physicist countered.

"All right. I don't see any connection between my work and nuclear physics, but what do you want me to do? First, though, I'd better explain that I might fail. I'm really just on the threshold."

"Granted. So I'll make it easy. Suppose—" He looked over his shoulder, faced Flinn again, and continued in a low voice: "Suppose you tell me what the man at the far desk is thinking."

Flinn glanced past the physicist at the stranger across the room. The man seemed completely unaware of the others. He was poring over some papers that were spread out upon the desk.

Flinn focused his eyes upon the man's head. His mind was really too steeped in fatigue for this sort of thing, but it was a chance not to be missed, a chance to demonstrate his talents in the presence of a responsible scientist, so he willed himself into a gradually deepening concentration. His eyes seemed to go myopic, out of focus. A gray, ethereal haze came into his consciousness, like swirling smoke. Easy? But presently a picture began to form, blurred at first, then fragmentary, then coming into identifiable clarity.

Flinn held it for a moment, before snapping back into objective consciousness. He was grinning slightly as his eyes refocused and came to rest on Wilmer.

"Well?" the physicist asked.

"What's his name?" Flinn said.

"Barnes. Robert Barnes."

"Say, Bob!" Flinn called out. The smallish, partially bald man at the far desk looked up and swiveled around to face him. "Tell me something, Bob," Flinn went on. "Do you act that way with all women, or just blondes?"

Barnes' placid face suddenly underwent a marvelous transformation. First he blushed furiously. Then his jaw dropped open and the high color began to drain away. He stared across the room, his face pallid.

"My God!" he managed to blurt in a stricken voice.

THERE was dead silence in the room as Wilmer and Hayes looked from Barnes' shocked face to Flinn's smiling one.

"I think it's obvious—" Hayes started to say.

"Me, too," Wilmer agreed. He looked sharply at Flinn. "Can you tell what I'm thinking at this moment?"

Flinn shrugged. "Not without a special effort, and I'm not going to make that effort unless I have to."

The physicist sighed and his tanned face relaxed a little. He looked at Flinn with a new respect. "I guess I'd better put you in the picture." He reopened the folder and extracted several newspaper clippings. "What I'm about to divulge is so unbelievable that—well, I'd best break it to you gradually. You know my job. That fact and this tan—" he pointed to his face — "should give you an inkling of what I've been up to the last few weeks."

Flinn thought, and nodded. "I'm to assume that you've been out in the Pacific, is that right?"

"Yes," Wilmer said. "Eniwetok. Have you been following our progress in the papers?"

"Not really. I've been a little too busy, I'm afraid."

"No matter." The physicist handed the clippings to Flinn. "Read these."

Flinn scanned the first clipping. It bore a recent date.

"... Reliable sources," he read aloud, "report that a civilian, believed to be a scientist, is being held incommunicado in the Pentagon. All efforts on the part of newsmen to gain additional information have been met with polite but firm rebuffs. Spokesmen from the AEC have refused to confirm or deny theories that the man's detention is in some way connected with the recent fiasco at Eniwetok Atoll . . ."

He read the second. It was dated Honolulu, a week before the other.

"Beyond the terse comment that there were 'no casualties,' all official sources are silent today concerning the news leak of the failure of a nuclear device in our Pacific Test Area. It has been understood that this device, the third in a series of thermonuclear test shots, failed to detonate. Since this test was scheduled to have been a 'tower shot,' under rigid instrumental control, much speculation has arisen . . ."

Flinn looked up hopelessly. "I don't understand. Does this concern you? I mean—"

"It concerns *all* of us," Wilmer said grimly. "But I know what you're getting at. No, I'm not the man they mention. I was in charge of that particular test."

Hayes cleared his throat abruptly and Wilmer nodded.

"I want you to understand, Mr.

Flinn, before we go any further, that everything you hear and see, and have heard and seen from the time Fred first contacted you, is to be held in the strictest confidence. Is that clear?"

"Yes."

"All right. How much do you know about atomic physics?"

FLINN spread his hands. "I'm somewhat past the Democritus stage, but I don't claim to be an expert."

"Well, basically, in a thermonuclear explosive device, hydrogen is transformed into helium," said Hayes. "In the process there is a loss of mass. This loss results in a tremendous and sudden release of energy. Are you familiar with the energy-mass relationship, $E = MC^2$?"

Flinn nodded.

"Okay. In other words, the nuclei of hydrogen atoms are fused under the influence of great heat, resulting in a different element, less mass, a release of energy, and an explosion."

"I'm with you so far," Flinn said.

"Then you realize that once this fusion process commences, nothing in God's great universe can stop it?"

"Yes."

"And that after certain things are done, fusion *must* result?"

"Surely."

"Well, so all of us believed, too."

But we were wrong about it."

"I don't understand. You just said—"

"So I said. But let me try to describe to you the situation as it happened." He paused, not for dramatic effect, but to take a moment to force himself to recall what Flinn could see must have been a very painful experience.

"We are on the command ship," Wilmer continued, "at a safe distance from the atoll. Everything is in readiness, checked and double-checked by me, personally. The automatic firing process is in progress. The last countdown has commenced. Five, four, three, two, one, zero. *Nothing happens.*

"I'll simplify the subsequent chain of events. After a reasonable interval, a volunteer pilot and myself and one other man fly by helicopter to the atoll. We climb the tower. I'm sweating and so are the others. We're standing beside a *live hydrogen bomb*. I disconnect the power sources and do various things to render the device safe. Then we check. Everything — *everything*—is in working order. There is absolutely no reason why the thing failed to detonate. Yet it did fail.

"We fly back to the command ship. We hold an emergency conference. We're sitting there staring at each other. Then this — this man, Dobbs, starts to laugh. We think it is hysterics, due to the tre-

mendous strain that everyone has been under. But apparently it isn't. He laughs and laughs and laughs. Finally he manages to say: 'You can't figure it out, can you? Well, I know. Old Dobbsie knows. *It didn't explode because I willed it not to!*'"

Flinn's mind was almost too tired to accept what he had heard. "Are you trying to tell me—"

"Figure it out for yourself," Wilmer said flatly. "It's your field. Telepathy, telehypnosis, and what's left?"

"Psychokinesis," Flinn said in a stifled voice.

"Right. Psychokinesis. Mind over matter."

ORDINARILY, Patrick Flinn would have used the morning ride over Washington's broad avenues to good advantage — this was his first visit to the nation's capital — but his mind was too filled with the preceding day's revelations to permit anything save minimal sightseeing.

"I hate to keep repeating myself," Wilmer was saying, "but I must be certain you understand what's at stake here."

"I know," Flinn answered with some impatience. "I'm not to reveal, under any circumstances, the fact that I have telepathic powers."

"Correct." The physicist sat in the seat beside Flinn, and Hayes was in front beside the driver.

"Your job is to find out just how much this man *can* do. We'd like to know the way he does it, too, but that's secondary."

"It strikes me," Flinn mused, "that anyone who can influence a fusion bomb can do anything."

"That's what we're afraid of."

Wilmer looked soberly at the parapsychologist. "I think I can understand what's going on in your mind. This is your special love and you're finding it difficult to divorce yourself from pure clinical investigation. You want, really, to talk to Dobbs as one scientist to another. But I must warn you that this is impossible. If he gets the least inkling that you're a special mind, something disastrous may result. As long as he gets what he wants, fine, but rub him the wrong way and—"

"And yet you have him a virtual prisoner and he doesn't object?"

"Well, at least not strenuously," Wilmer said. "I don't profess to understand a warped mind, but apparently Dobbs realizes that his confinement is mostly protective custody. It's to his own advantage. After all, he doesn't have to stand up at a public forum and shout threats. All he has to do is contact the few to reach the many. And if he has the powers he says he has, full use of them would result in his own destruction. And he doesn't want that. He's too inter-

ested, right now, in satisfying his own animal appetites. But faced with losing everything—"

"Our biggest immediate worry," Hayes said from the front seat, "is keeping all this from the public. That's why we put Dobbs out of sight in a hurry. There have been some leaks already, but so far most people consider the papers' theories as just so much wild speculation. And thank God for that. You can understand why all recognizable public figures are keeping as far away from Dobbs as possible."

FLINN nodded; it was self-evident. There were other phases of the problem that bothered him more. He was still vaguely and, as it seemed, illogically worried about the several questions he had raised the day before.

The fact that Dobbs might have read his articles and hence might put two and two together, despite a cover identity, was the least of them. Flinn had never lectured in public, his efforts had received no publicity except in specialized psychological circles, and his latest monograph on TH had been published when Dobbs was working at the atoll.

Wilmer, Hayes, and others had managed to assuage reasonable fears on the other point. Flinn had always assumed that psychokinesis would be the logical result of advanced telepathy, that they were

links in the same chain. Now it seemed that a person could be one without the other. Either you possessed a latent ability to scan mind-matter, or an affinity for material substance, but not necessarily both.

Earlier, Wilmer and Hayes had devised a test to check the possibility that Dobbs was an advanced telepath. They had mentally vilified him beyond the ability of even an accomplished actor to resist, over prolonged periods of time, and yet Dobbs had shown not the least indication that he had intercepted their thoughts. But there was one additional point.

"You used the expression 'warped mind' in describing Dobbs," Flinn said to Wilmer. "Is it your opinion then that he is definitely psychopathic? The reason I ask is that scanning a confused mind may prove to be more than I can handle."

"I used that expression for want of a better," Wilmer answered cautiously. "Put it this way — suppose you suddenly found you were able to control, even in a minor way, the stuff of the universe; would you use those powers for the benefit of mankind, or would you leap over the traces and reach for all the things that had been denied you over the years for moral, or legal, or whatever reasons?"

"You paint a lurid picture," Flinn said.

They turned down a side street in a residential district and drew up in front of what appeared to be a large two-story private home.

Flinn took a deep breath. He was rested now, but still uncertain whether he was up to what lay ahead.

After the preliminary discussion with Wilmer, Hayes, and Barnes—the latter had proved to be a military intelligence man — the previous afternoon, Flinn had been closeted immediately with a number of generals, admirals, and high-ranking civilians from both houses of Congress, the Defense Department, the Department of State, and various security agencies.

There had been the usual skepticism until he had performed some simple but histrionic "mind-reading" feats, and then there had been much talk about the responsibilities that had now become incumbent upon him and how perhaps even the fate of the nation was in his hands. It had left him wandering in a jungle of doubts and fears. Yet he had managed to sleep.

"The wonderful ability of the human mind to reject unpleasantness," he had told himself.

As a matter of fact, he had fallen into deep, untroubled unconsciousness within an hour of the time his head had first touched the pillow in the comfortable hotel room the government had provided. Hayes

had been with him. "Security," Hayes had said.

And now, clean-shaven, his clothes neatly pressed, the substantial breakfast still warm in his stomach, and fatigue no longer in his muscles and nerves, Flinn told himself that he was as ready as he would ever be.

THEY got out of the conservative, unmarked sedan and approached the house. There was a man mowing the lawn, another clipping hedges, and still another polishing a car that was parked in the driveway just outside the spacious garage.

"How's it going?" Hayes said to the hedge trimmer.

"All quiet," the man answered without looking up.

They went around the house and entered unchallenged through a side door. It was all very casual, yet Flinn did not have to be told that they were under constant scrutiny.

The room in which he found himself was just off the kitchen. Three men in working clothes sat around a table, drinking coffee. They looked up and nodded. They seemed to be cut from much the same cloth as Fred Hayes, even to the expression.

"Well, well," one of them said, "the brain trust." He surveyed Flinn with frank interest, then faced Hayes. "Say, buddy, how

does a man get a transfer out of this outfit?"

Hayes grinned his wolfish grin. "All in good time, partner." He pointed with his chin upstairs and raised his eyebrows.

The man who had spoken, a large, broad-shouldered youngster with an affably homely face, got up, stepped back from the table, and went into a vaudevillian travesty of a bow. "The great man has been prepared and awaits your presence." Then his expression changed. "What a party! I never saw so much liquor in my life! It's a lucky thing the rumpus room is soundproof."

"And girls!" one of the seated men said. "Man, oh, man!"

Flinn looked at Wilmer, and Wilmer shrugged as if to say, "That's the way it is."

"Just don't forget what you're here for," Hayes said harshly.

"Don't fret," the big man said. "None of us touched a drop."

"Neither did Dobbs," one of the seated men interjected. "I guess that's the only reason he's alive today." He guffawed loudly and suggestively.

Hayes leading, they entered a hallway and turned toward a flight of stairs.

"Your boys seemed very off-hand about all this," Flinn said to the government agent.

"Don't kid yourself," Hayes replied. "They're as nervous as cats."