

apt to forget, or to dismiss the medication or the therapy as too much trouble. The overactive type is more likely to be water skiing on Lake Superior than sitting and listening to the tranquilizing strains of prescribed music, and the medication dumped down the drain instead of taken."

"You *do* have your problems, don't you?" said Mrs. Hanford sympathetically.

"Ah, yes. But our greatest problem is the overactive young female. Young males can be siphoned off in one way or another — work to be done that, unfortunately, females, can't also do." Scholar Ross smiled at Mr. and Mrs. Harrison. "So we actually are grateful for the lethargic types. They provide us with a fine sobering influence upon the —"

The scholar was interrupted by a wordless cry from beyond the French windows.

THE Harrisons, the Hanfords, and Scholar Ross leaped to their feet and started for the terrace. They did not get all the way to the French doors, for Gloria Hanford came stamping in. Her eyes were bright, and she was dusting one palm with the other.

"What —?"

Gloria snapped, "Someone been feeding that oaf red meat?"

"But what *happened*?" asked Mr. Harrison.

"Oh, I could stand the big

dummy acting as if he'd never been alone with a girl before in all his life. But to *ask* me for a kiss!"

"Is that what caused the eruption?" said Scholar Ross.

"When he *asked* me for a kiss, I told him that I was saving my kisses for a *man*!"

"And then?"

"Then he decided that I meant a man big enough to wrestle." Gloria laughed and then looked thoughtful.

"What's so funny — and not so funny now?"

"I just realized that *I like men*!"

"But Bertram?"

"Darned if it isn't the first time I've ever resented being pawed," said Gloria in a matter-of-fact tone, as if it were her hair-do rather than her virtue that was the subject of discussion. "So I grabbed a hand, hung the arm over my shoulder with the inside upward, and hip-tossed the big oaf over the railing into that silly little fish pond."

"Gloria!" exploded her mother.

"Poor Bertram!" exclaimed his mother.

Scholar Ross sighed. "These things often go awry at first. Bertram shouldn't have taken a double dose of his medication. And I'd guess that Gloria hasn't been meticulous about hers, either. Now —"

He was interrupted by the arrival of Bertram Harrison, who looked as if he'd just waded home across a mud flat at low tide. He

stepped toward Gloria purposefully; the girl crouched in a judo position and said, "Want some more? Come and get it!"

"Now wait a moment," said Scholar Ross. "Gloria, where did you ever learn such brutal, belligerent tactics?"

GLORIA faced him, but kept one eye on Bertram. "Out of a book — where else in this calm old world?"

The scholar said, "You see, Miss Hanford, the results of your outrageous behavior? You've committed an act of physical violence. You've —"

The girl gave one sharp bark of laughter. "Who started it with whose caveman technique?"

"I think," said Scholar Ross to the four parents, "that this meeting should be resumed at a later date. Bertram must *not* overdose himself in a misguided effort to make up for omitted medication. Gloria must *not* avoid hers — and, Mrs. Hanford, you'll not only have to watch closely to see that she does take her pills; you'll also have to make sure that Gloria doesn't counteract them by surreptitiously acquiring some agitators to neutralize the tranquilizers."

"And suppose I call the whole thing off?" demanded Gloria. "Suppose I don't agree to share bed and board with this souped-up sardine?"

The room grew quieter until the

background sounds were gone and from the patio came the faint, sweet strains of romantic music: Program R-147.

Finally Scholar Ross said, "Miss Hanford, we cannot force you to do anything, but we can make your life extremely uncomfortable if you do not comply with what we believe to be best for society. You will find — if you care to look it up — that there is a drastic shortage of eligible young women on the planet Eden, Tau Ceti."

"You mean — migrate — to the colony?"

"I mean just that."

Gloria Hanford's face went white. She understood that if Scholar Ross decreed Eden, Tau Ceti, for her, then she would end up on Eden, Tau Ceti, and it made no difference whether by force, coercion, or gentle persuasion.

Mrs. Hanford took a step forward and opened her mouth to speak. But before she could protest, her husband put out a hand and stopped her. His act was an admission that not money, position, nor logic would overrule such a decision.

"Eden, Tau Ceti," breathed Gloria. She turned and faced Bertram Harrison. "Junior," she said in a dry, strained voice, "if you'll wear mittens and handcuffs, let's go back in the garden and get acquainted."

Her father exhaled a full breath.

Mr. Harrison tapped him on the

shoulder. "How about a sample of that bottle of natural bourbon?" he suggested.

"Not," Mrs. Hanford said shakily, "without me!"

IV

MAN'S first sally across the gulf of interstellar space had been more fruitful than his first fumbling exploration of the Solar System by a score of one to nothing. Of all the celestial real estate that orbits around old Sol, only the Earth will support life — at least as we know it. Survival elsewhere depends upon taking enough of Earth environment along to last of the trip. From the scientific standpoint, the first exploration of space was a brilliant operation, but before finding a place to accept the teeming millions of Earth's exploding population, the patient nearly died. For it was a quarter of a century until Murray, Langdon, and Hanover cracked the Einstein barrier.

By careful design, and then by counting the last gram and striking a mathematically adjusted balance between power bank and crew space, the range of a spacecraft was found to be slightly more than seventeen light-years to the point of no return.

Within seventeen light-years of Sol, there are forty-one other stars.

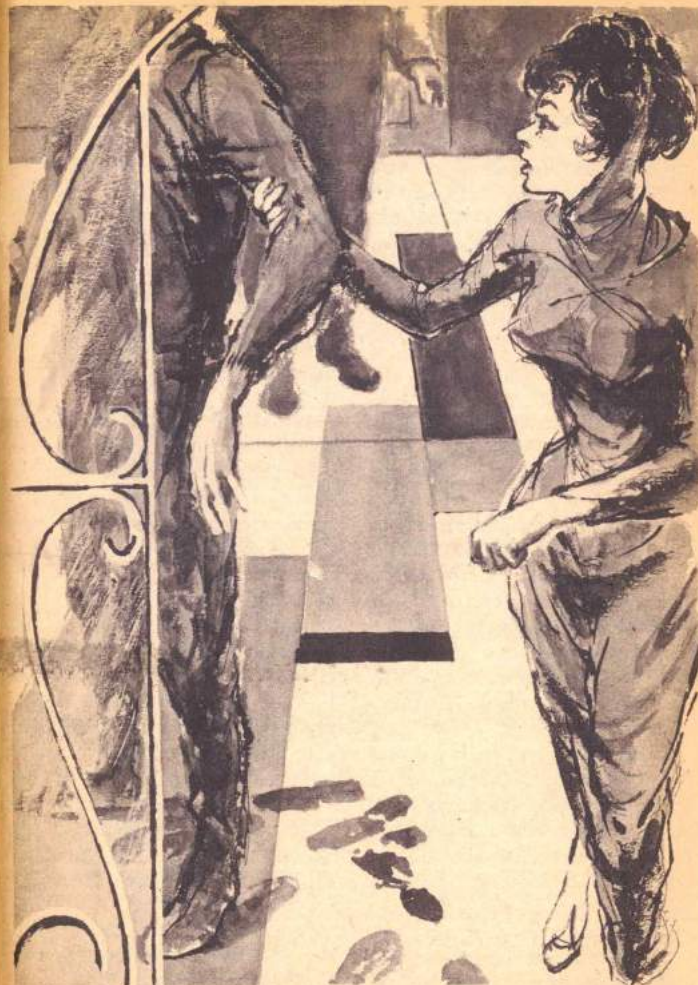
Of these forty-one stars, three are triple-sun systems, and twelve are doubles, which eliminates fifteen of them. Of the remaining twenty-six single stars, one is the blinding-blue giant Altair, two are white dwarf stars, and nineteen of them are the faint red dwarf stars of Spectral Class M, and that eliminates all but four of the original forty-one. Of this remaining four, Epsilon Eridani, Epsilon Indi, and Groombridge 1618 fall into the orange Spectral Class K, which is not too far away from Sol's Spectral Class G. But K is only close; it is no bull's eye when the combination of all the factors must add up to produce a planetary environment that will support human life.

And so, having eliminated forty out of the forty-one stars in Sol's neighborhood, only Tau Ceti remains. Tau Ceti is also a Spectral Class G star and therefore Tau Ceti was voted the star most likely to succeed, long before Man had the foggiest notion of how to cross the light-years, long before instruments sensitive enough to ascertain that Tau Ceti possessed a planetary system were developed.

Tau Ceti's planetary system can be used as an example of the brilliance of logic and reasoning. The second planet in the family of Tau Ceti is the planet Eden.

Eden supports life.

Or perhaps it is more proper to



say that Eden's environment permits life to support itself. Voltaire, through the mouths of his characters Candide and Pangloss, had a lot to say about Earth being the best of all possible worlds, both pro and con. He had never been to Eden. Eden was christened by the rules of real estate that dictate that a housing development situated on a tree-bald plain in central Kansas shall be called "Sylvan Heights."

V

JUNIOR Spaceman Howard Reed went through a brief period of excitement and then settled down to boredom. The excitement came from his first experience in space travel, and the thrill of standing on soil almost twelve light-years from home base. This thrill faded as soon as he discovered that the people on Eden, Tau Ceti, were far too busy to be bothered with the reactions of a junior spaceman.

If his duties had been demanding, Reed might have gone on for some time without becoming bored. But as a junior officer in the Space Service, Reed had no roots, no property, no basic interests on Eden.

The Space Service had been born out of interservice rivalry during a tense period of international competition. There had been a

strong upsurge during the early years of the initial interstellar exploration. The leaders of the Space Service were quite willing to feathered themselves into permanent positions of high authority. They discovered the best method lay in exploiting every method of scaring the public with the bogey of meeting some warlike culture "Out There." Then the years passed with neither sight nor evidence of any other form of life but Man and the creatures he carried with him. The Space Service found itself with little to do.

It did not stop the clamor for money, men and materiel. But the job of the Space Service was not hunting space pirates. The only place where the power banks of a spacecraft could be restored was in the hands of the Space Service itself, and it was an installation vast enough to tax the wealth and ingenuity of a whole continent to create. The job was not fighting interstellar wars with fierce, super-intelligent interstellar aliens with a taste for human flesh — not, at least, until human and alien met.

So, in a desultory manner, the Space Service maintained a perimeter of lookout and detection stations that could have been completely automated . . . if it hadn't been that there were more Space Service Personnel than the Service could find work for.

The whole situation gave Junior

GALAXY

Spaceman Howard Reed a lot of time to think.

The culture of Eden, Tau Ceti, completed the process.

Eden used old-fashioned telephones because its people were too widespread across the face of the planet to make the use of the vidphone practical. Radio broadcasting was maintained by the government as a public service information agency. It had to be. There were not commercial enterprises enough to support radio broadcasting on a profit-making basis. For there simply were not enough people. And if simple radio broadcasting could not be supported, there was not yet room for even the old flat-faced television, much less trivideo.

Theirs was a culture in a mixed state. They had the know-how for a highly technical, closely-integrated urban civilization, but lacked the hardware necessary to construct it. They were an aircar people, but they used horses. Horses can be raised. Aircars have to be fabricated. It would not have been prohibitive to trans-ship the basic tools and dies for aircar assembly from Earth, Sol, to Eden, Tau Ceti. But it would have been economic suicide to attempt to keep the voracious maw of an automated assembly plant satiated with raw material shipped from home base. And then, one week's run would have saturated the Tau

THE TROUBLEMAKERS

Ceti market. They were a people who played their own musical instruments because they were faced with the very odd economic fact that the first phonograph record from the die costs five thousand dollars. Nobody makes a dime until fifty thousand of its brothers are sold. The population to buy fifty thousand did not exist.

In simple fact, Eden, Tau Ceti, was far from a flourishing colony. It was a classic example of the simple economic truth that a fully integrated mechanistic society can not be supported by a sparsely populated region.

AMBITION has many origins. The urge to return home became a drive. The result was Junior Spaceman Howard Reed's complete preoccupation with the mathematics known as Hansen's Folly.

As the months went by he exhausted his original knowledge. He took to the library, to the local schools, and to self-study to improve his grasp. He approached the basic mathematics of the space drive from several different angles, even going back to the old original Einstein Equations and learning their fault in the hope that this study might point the way.

Then, as the months began to grow into the close of his first year, Reed took advantage of the casually informal operation at the Space Service Base. He began to experi-

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ment with hardware on the theory that he would have a better grasp of the problem if he tried some empirical work as well as the academic approach.

Junior Spaceman Howard Reed had been on Eden, Tau Ceti, for eighteen terrestrial months before his superior officer, making a tour of inspection, opened the office reserved for him at the Administration Building. On the eighth day of his visit, Commander Breckenridge summoned the junior spaceman to his office. He asked, "Mr. Reed, have you been successful in solving the flaw in Hansen's Folly?"

"Well, sir, not exactly."

"Have you improved your grasp of the facts of life?"

"Sir? I don't quite understand."

"You don't? Well, perhaps you need some help. For instance, Mr. Reed, can you give me an estimate of the useful land area of Eden, Tau Ceti?"

"Sir, the total land area is about fifty million square miles. Perhaps about half of that is useful, or could be."

"Ah. You said 'could be'. Why, Mr. Reed?"

"Let's put it this way, sir. Whether a given acreage is useful often depends upon how badly it is needed. For instance, a plot of wooded land might well be ignored for centuries by a sparsely populated agrarian culture who had a lot of open plain to cultivate. At a

later date, an increasing pressure of population might make it expedient and sensible to clear vast areas of tree stumps, boulders and all sorts of hazards."

"And here on Eden?"

"Well, sir, at the present time the population of Eden is about a hundred thousand. Fertile plains are growing wild with weeds because the land isn't needed yet. That is — er —"

"That is what?"

"Maybe I shouldn't have said 'wild with weeds' sir. After all, they have been encouraged. I'm told that the atmosphere smelled a lot stronger when Man first arrived."

THE commander sniffed and said, "It's pretty strong right now."

"You don't notice it after a couple of months," said Reed.

"I don't propose to be here that long," said the commander curtly. "Let's get back to your grasp of the overall picture." Commander Breckenridge leaned back in his chair and said, "No doubt you were exposed to Early North American History. You will recall that there was a strong pioneering drive in the human race that went on almost from the date of the discovery of North America until the opening phases of the so-called 'Industrial Revolution' — that is, beginning of the electro-mechanical era. Am I not correct?"

"Yes, sir."

"Now, young man, what has become of this strong pioneering drive? How did it ooze out of the human race? Where did it go, and why? Why are six billion people living in crowded conditions on Earth, while here upon Eden, Tau Ceti, a mere hundred thousand people occupy — by your estimate — some twenty million square miles? Why haven't the crowded millions of Earth clamored for all this extra space?"

"Perhaps because space travel is so expensive."

"Only in terms of cash. To be sure, it might take practically everything that a man has to buy passage. I now ask you to estimate how many men and their families sacrificed everything they had, packed a few treasured possessions into a Conestoga wagon and headed for the West."

"I have no way of knowing, sir."

"No, of course not. Let me tell you what happened. In that glorious phase of Early North America, men, women, and even their children toiled from sunrise to sunset to scratch out their living. From the dawn of history, luxury and leisure belonged to the landed baron. Since wealth went with acreage, any man who could stake out a claim to acreage could also claim wealth. It was a matter of finding the unclaimed acreage first."

THE commander leaned forward to press his point. "Then came the industrial revolution and the age of automation. Industrial slavery ended in a clank of gears. Your little man no longer starved to death nor toiled twelve hours a day. The finest automobile that the wealthy man could buy was only three or four times as expensive as the car driven by the average workman. Therefore the idea of staking out arable land as a means to wealth became less and less desirable. Automation hit the farm. The landed baron changed into the elected presiding officer over a stock-secured corporation.

"Today," said the commander, "the man who leaves his home to migrate is not abandoning squalor and sorrow in the hope of finding something better. He's leaving luxury, culture, and leisure. For what? For the privilege of scrabbling for a bare existence. Now, Mr. Reed, are you beginning to understand?"

"I think so, sir."

"Good. Then you'll begin to revise your opinion as to the importance of extending the cruising range of our spacecraft."

Reed blinked, "Sir?"

"Be sensible, young man. A colony is a waste of effort unless it becomes more than self-sufficient. Until Eden, Tau Ceti, has become populated to the point where Eden can support her own highly technical culture, it is an economically

unsound proposition." The commander glared at the young spaceman. "Must I be blunt? Every effort must be spent in raising the culture-level of Eden, Tau Ceti. That means increasing the population, Mr. Reed, until the numbers are high enough to pay for industrialization. Once the cities of Eden, Tau Ceti, offer the culture opportunity of the cities of Earth, then we'll have migration on a social level instead of the malcontents, rugged individualists, and petty lawbreakers who've been given the alternative of migration instead of incarceration.

"Now, Mr. Reed, do you see what I'm driving at? It would be far wiser of you to spend your time enhancing the aspect of Eden, Tau Ceti, than trying to figure out ways and means of getting to more distant stars and locating other distant planets — to which the human race wouldn't migrate."

"But sir—"

"Mr. Reed, I recognize in you the admirable spirit of adventure. But we must remember that this same spirit that once drove men to land on Earth's moon in a multi-stage chemical rocket was not enough to establish a tax-paying colony there. Now, about this project of yours. You say that you have not yet located the flaw in Hansen's Folly?"

"No, sir, but—"

"Mr. Reed, you realize that you'll

stay here on Eden until you do?"

"Yes, sir, but—"

"And the longer it takes you, the more ridicule will be directed at you, at me, and the Bureau of Operations?"

"But, sir—"

"Mr. Reed, I'll also point out that there will be no promotion until your assignment is complete."

"I'm aware of that sir, but—"

"But what, Mr. Reed?"

REED said, "Sir, may I speak without annoying you?"

"If you've something to say, go ahead. I can hardly promise not to be annoyed before I hear what the subject is."

"Thank you, sir. In trying to solve Hansen's Folly I engaged in some physical experiment and measurement because I couldn't find any flaw in the mathematical argument on the abstract scale. As you know, sir, one of the ways to find out why something won't work is to try it. It isn't often the easiest or the simplest, but it is often the only way."

"So go on. What happened?"

"Sir, my hardware works. So far as I can see, sir, there is no flaw! I was right!"

"Commander Briggs of Research —"

"Sir, there must be some mistake."

"Silence! I'm not through! Commander Briggs seems to know

more about my personnel than I do."

"Sir?"

"First, he offered to bet me a dinner at the Officer's Club that you wouldn't locate the flaw in Hansen's Folly by the time I made this tour of inspection. Knowing that you'd probably have no other ambition than to leave Eden, Tau Ceti, I snapped at this wager like a starving dog latching onto a piece of steak. I have lost, it would appear, which is only one dinner. But, Mr. Reed, when I accepted this wager, Commander Briggs compounded it by offering to bet me a dinner for the whole Bureau of Research that after not finding the flaw by means of the academic analysis, you'd resort to experiment in hardware. Knowing full well that you'd not have the temerity to divert Service Materiel for your own tinkering, I accepted that wager also. Then to top it off, Briggs added a bet of champagne and corsages for the officers' wives that you'd complete your hardware and still not locate the flaw, and that when I arrived you'd be firmly convinced that you'd proved your point in theory and practice and that therefore you were right and the rest of the known universe was wrong."

THE commander took a deep breath under which he swore gently but feelingly. Then he went on: "And so, Mr. Reed, I am going

to be 'Guest of Dishonor' at the Officers' Club. I will, according to custom, be served the plate of baked synthetic beans whilst my contemporary officers and their wives partake of a gourmet's banquet of natural foods."

"Sir, I'm sorry."

"Being sorry is hardly enough!" The commander pawed through his attache case until he came to a file-folder which he looked through meticulously for several minutes as if justifying a carefully considered opinion. Finally he made a lightly pencilled note on the margin or one page and said, "Lalande 25372!"

Junior Spaceman Howard Reed gasped and blurted, "Flatbush, sir?"

Commander Breckenridge nodded curtly. "You will man the perimeter alien-spacecraft detection station and the astrogation beacon distance and direction equipment located on Flatbush, Lalande 25372. And you will stay there until you have Hansen's Folly completely solved. Do you understand?"

Junior Spaceman Howard Reed nodded unhappily.

Lalande 25372 was close to the maximum range, the seventeen-light-year point of no return. Any enjoyment in knowing that he would have to be commissioned one of the finer, more efficient little spacecraft in order to get there in

the first place was completely wiped out in the knowledge that once there, it would have to stand inert awaiting his return, because there would be no power to spare on side trips. One did not, with subatomic power, carry a spare can of fuel for emergency.

VI

MRS. Hanford opened the door and saw Scholar Ross. She smiled uncertainly at him as she invited him in. In the Hanford living room, in the presence of Mr. Hanford, the scholar of genetics looked around cautiously and questioningly. Hanford said, "Gloria is not here. She's out."

"Then I may speak openly."

"Of course. Is there some trouble — again?"

"Frankly, I'm not certain," said the scholar of genetics slowly. "I'd like more information if you'd be so good as to help."

"Of course we'll help!" exclaimed Mrs. Hanford. "What's bothering you?"

"How is your daughter getting on with Bertram Harrison?"

"Why, I'd guess they're getting along about as well as any other young pre-marriage couple. That's what the engagement period is for, isn't it? I mean, it's been that way historically."

"Yes, you're right," nodded Scholar Ross. "Did they rent the

usual pre-marriage apartment?"

"Oh yes. They were quite the conventional young lovers, Scholar Ross."

The man from the Department of Domestic Tranquility smiled. "And you, of course, were the conventional parents of the affianced bride?"

"Of course. We were so pleased that we could hardly wait for Twelfth Night."

"And during that visit, were the appointments of the apartment proper?"

"Why, Scholar Ross!"

"No, no, Mrs. Hanford, you misunderstand. I implied no moral question. I really meant to ask if you knew whether Gloria and Bertram each and separately were properly continuing their therapy."

Mr. Hanford grunted. "As parents of the affianced bride," he said, "we're paying for it!"

Mrs. Hanford blushed. "I — er — snooped," she said.

Scholar Ross looked at Mrs. Hanford with an expression that indicated that snooping was an entirely acceptable form of social behavior. "And what did you find?"

"Everything entirely right." Then she looked doubtful and bit her lower lip. "Scholar Ross, I'm no authority in these matters. In Gloria's bathroom were the same-looking kind of bottles and pills that we got when you prescribed, and when

I turned on the speaker in her bedroom it sounded like the same kind of music as I'd heard in her bedroom when she was living at home. It — frankly — depressed me."

"And Bertram's?"

"I know less of his medication. But I did listen to his music outlet. It removed the feeling of depression I'd gotten from Gloria's program material."

"That's quite right. It sounds reasonable."

SHE blushed again and looked at her husband. "Only one thing," she said very slowly.

"What's that?"

"I — er, hardly know how to put it. You see, when Gerald and I were affianced, neither one of us were undergoing any kind of corrective therapy and so I don't know how these things work out."

"What are you driving at?"

"Why, Scholar Ross, with neither of us undergoing corrective therapy, it didn't matter which one of the bedrooms we used."

Scholar Ross considered for a moment and then nodded. "Of course," he said with an air of complete finality. "That's it!"

"What's it?" asked Mr. Hanford.

"The situation becomes a simple matter of reduction to the law of most-active reaction. Look," he said, "we have one personality that requires an environment of stimulation to bring him up to normal,

and another personality that requires a tranquil atmosphere to normal. Place them both in the tranquilizing environment and he is driven deeper into his lethargy, probably to the point of complete physical and intellectual torpor. Place them both in the stimulating atmosphere and he becomes normal while she goes into transports of sensuous excitement. This explains it!"

"Explains what?" demanded Mr. Hanford.

"Her recent behavior. Or rather escapade."

None of them heard the gentle snick of the lock in the front door.

"Escapade?" exclaimed Mrs. Hanford.

"We didn't know that she was in any trouble," said Mr. Hanford.

"That's just the point," said Scholar Ross. "Your daughter has the infuriating habit of indulging in outrageous behavior under the name of brilliant intellectual accomplishment."

Gloria Hanford said, "Why, thank you, sir!"

She dropped the scholar a deep curtsy, displaying several inches of slender ankle.

"Gloria!" demanded her mother. "What have you been up to?"

Gloria Hanford smiled at her mother in an elfin, yet superior manner. "I am the affianced bride of Bertram Harrison," she said softly. "Therefore my behavior,

whether good, bad, or indifferent, is no longer the problem of my parents."

Her father said, "Gloria, I happen to be big enough in both the physical and intellectual departments to overrule both you and your husband-to-be. So you'll answer your mother."

"Why," said Gloria quietly, "I've done nothing wrong."

Mr. Hanford said to Scholar Ross: "What's your side of this?"

Scholar Ross said, "Last week the Westchester Young People's Club gave a costume ball. The young ladies were to attend this affair adorned in the authentic fashion of some period in the past, and a prize was to be awarded to the most novel, yet completely authentic costume."

"And," said Gloria with a smile, "I won!"

"Your daughter won because she has a talent for performing the most shocking deeds under a cloak of intellectual achievement."

"Do go on, Scholar Ross. What did Gloria do?"

THE scholar smiled wryly. "Style and fashion ceased to be logical when clothing was designed for sly provocation rather than as a protection against a harsh environment," he said. "We live in a mixed-up social world. We encourage communal swimming and sun bathing in the nude — and yet after

five o'clock it is considered shocking to display more than the bare face and hands.

"So in order to combine the maximum shock-effect with the cloak of utter authenticity, Miss Hanford researched the styles and fashions until she located a brief period of a few scant months late in the Twentieth Century. Her costume consisted of a many-fold voluminous skirt of semi-transparent material that draped in graceful folds from waist to mid-calf. She was completely nude above the waist! To prove her point, she offered fashion stereotypes of the period from style magazines."

Gloria chuckled. "I might have researched back to the Old Testament," she said.

Scholar Ross shook his head. "As I say, her shocking behavior could not be criticized. She could justify it according to the rules."

Mr. Hanford shook his head and asked, "Gloria, what did Bertram think of all this?"

"Bertram carried the style stereotypes," said Gloria. "There wasn't any pocket in my costume."

Abruptly, Scholar Ross said, "Miss Hanford, how are you and Bertram getting along?"

"As well as could be expected."

"Meaning what?"

"Meaning that each of us lives our own life. Bertie likes his sedentary, torpid existence. In fact, he'd like to be more of a vegetable than

he is. It started with his taking my pills and that was all right, I guess. But when he started sleeping in my bedroom so that he could estimate under the tranquilizing music program you prescribed for me, that was too much!"

Scholar Ross looked unprecedently astonished. "So?" he demanded.

"What do you mean 'so?' What would any red blooded woman do? I moved out and into his bedroom, naturally."

"And then started taking his medication?" asked Scholar Ross curtly.

"Natch!"

"Oh, my God!" exploded Scholar Ross. He eyed Gloria intently. "How do you manage to get Bertram awake far enough to attend things like your costume ball?" he asked.

"Well," she said with a smile, "I am really strong enough to sling a hundred and eighty-five pounds of loosely-stuffed sausage over my shoulder in a fireman's carry and tote the inert mass back to its own bedroom so that its own music will rouse it enough to reach for its bedside bottles of medication. Nature then takes its course until the awakening. Then he goes along with my desires—because he knows that if he doesn't, I won't let him dive back into his complete inertia. It's very simple. Of course, it isn't much fun."

SCHOLAR Ross said, "Gloria, do you intend to continue this sort of self-centered, artificial life after you and Bertram are married?"

"I've given the future very little thought."

"You always have," said Scholar Ross unhappily. "That's been a lot of your trouble."

"So what am I supposed to do? Do you really expect me to marry that vegetable? I've got a life to lead too, you know. It may suit your overall program of genetics to breed a batch of normal children, but the same Book of Laws grants me the right to seek my own level of happiness."

"Granted—"

"Well, scholar, I can tell you that my idea of happiness is not a husband who comes into my bedroom walking like a somnambulist just barely able to cross the room before collapsing like a loosely-packed sandbag."

"What you need," said Scholar Ross firmly, "is a man who is strong enough to tell you what you're going to do."

"And where are you going to find one?"

Scholar Ross turned from Gloria to her parents. "Obviously," he said regretfully, "this proposed marriage between your daughter and Bertram Harrison is not going to culminate in a happy union."

"Did you expect it to?" asked Gloria.

"I had hopes. I can only propose a course of action. Were you willing to embark upon your prescribed program of corrective therapy, and so become a normally active and emotionally stable woman, then the marriage might work out very well indeed."

"It's all my fault, of course?"

"Yes. Of course. The decision was yours to make."

"And how about that lump of lard you've foisted off on me?"

"Bertram Harrison's willing retreat into total lethargy is, of course, his own decision. But it, too, is only another aspect of the usual case. The strong-willed personality makes its own way. The weak one follows."

"I see," sneered Gloria. "It's all my fault!"

"Of course it is," snapped Scholar Ross. "Were you willing to correct yourself, you'd also have been willing to correct Bertram since yours is the stronger personality."

"So what's the next move? Do I get to try another dolt?"

"Hardly. You'd do the same with any of them."

"So what is it? Am I going to be exported to Eden, Tau Ceti as an incorrigible?"

Scholar Ross was silent.

MR. Hanford said, "Certainly there must be another way?"

Mrs. Hanford said, "Must I lose my daughter?"

Scholar Ross said regretfully, "There is another way, of course, but either way is essentially a loss of your daughter, Mrs. Hanford."

Mr. Hanford said, "And what is this other course, Scholar Ross?"

"It's called re-orientation."

"Brain-washing!" exclaimed Gloria.

"That's a harsh, colloquial term."

Mrs. Hanford said, "How does this re-orientation work?"

Coldly, as if he were discussing the repair of some inanimate engine, Scholar Ross said, "It starts with corrective surgery on the pituitary and thyroid glands. Next comes some very complicated neuro-cerebral surgery, somewhat resembling the crude, primitive process once called 'Prefrontal Lobotomy'. Nowadays it produces the desired effect without all of the deleterious side-effects. Then, once the patient is completely disoriented, the process of re-education takes place. The patient is extremely docile and highly impressionable. All decisions carry the same weight —"

"How do you mean that?" asked Mr. Hanford.

"Why, the decision to use blue or black ink in your fountain pen becomes as important as the decision of whether to cling or jump from a damaged aircar."

"Oh. And then?"

"Why, since the patient is docile and impressionable, we can mold

the patient's appreciation of people, places, and events into conformity. Events of the former life are not erased, but they are viewed as if the patient had seen a trivideo drama instead of having been that person. The entire list of friends and acquaintances is changed because the patient's personality is so different that the former friends no longer have anything in common with the patient. It will be," said Scholar Ross, "exactly as if your daughter left you, never to return, and then next year you are introduced to a strange woman who bears a complete resemblance to your daughter. To whom," he added, "you eventually become emotionally attached because of your daughter's memory."

"It sounds pretty drastic."

"I shall not fool you. It is drastic, indeed."

"I don't like it," Gloria snapped.

"Yes," pleaded Mrs. Hanford.

"What is the alternative?"

"Eden, Tau Ceti. I'll arrange transportation under the migration act, and she'll be permitted two hundred pounds of gross." Scholar Ross smiled thinly. "You can diet a few pounds off and thus increase the net weight of your allowable possessions," he said. "But, on the other hand, if you diet down to rail-skinny no one will take a chance on you."

Gloria demanded belligerently, "What am I, a raffle prize?"

"Why, that's no better than white slavery!" cried her mother.

"Oh, come now!" said Scholar Ross. "Miss Hanford will receive a home and a hard-working husband on a fine new world with unlimited opportunities."

Gloria Hanford snorted. "The term, 'unlimited opportunity' is just the optimist's way of describing a situation that the pessimist would call, 'lack of modern conveniences.'"

"Well, Miss Hanford, you have your choice. One of three. Corrective therapy and marriage with Bertram Harrison; total re-orientation; or migration to Eden, Tau Ceti. I'll not ask for your decision now. Give me your answer within thirty days."

"You can't force me!"

"No. I can't. All I can do is to point out your three avenues of future travel — and then point out that I do have the means of making your life so very inconvenient that you'll have no recourse but to make your choice from among the three desirable possibilities. Desirable, I must admit, means that which is most favorable to the furtherance of domestic tranquility!"

VII

LALANDE 25372 is a Spectral Class M star, a faint red dwarf not visible to the naked eye from Earth. Sol. Lalande 25372 lies fif-

teen point nine light years from Sol, about fifteen degrees north of the celestial equator and not quite opposite the vernal equinox. It has planets, but this does not make Lalande 25372 unique. Like most of the planets found in space, neither mad dogs nor Englishmen would have anything to do with them — willingly. They are suitable only for the hapless wight whose erring foot has unhappily landed on the tender official toe.

The planet Flatbush, Lalande 25372, received its name from an obscure medieval reference to a form of punishment known as "Walking a beat in Flatbush," if we are to believe MacClelland's authoritative volume *The Origin of Place Names*.

Observed through the multipane window of the Station, Flatbush, Lalande 25372, was a pleasant enough planet, provided one could ignore the fact that there was not a sign nor trace of vegetation from the Installation Building to the horizon. A couple of hundred yards from the building there was a pleasant looking lake. The lake was indeed water, but it contained dissolved substances that would have poisoned a boojum snark. The warm wind of Flatbush rippled the surface of the lake, but no square yard of sail would be hoisted until someone first built a gas mask that would filter out the colorless gases that turned silver

black. Fluffy clouds floated across the sky, but they rained down a mess that etched stainless steel.

Out There, near the perimeter of Man's five-parsec range of operations, subelectromagnetic detector beams scoured the sky. Taking the most pessimistic standpoint — the least possible combinations of Nature's infinite variety of environment — Nature's own profligacy with life-forms still demanded that somewhere, Out There, another race was plying the spaceways.

Someday this hypothetical race was certain to touch wings with mankind.

When that took place it was the duty of the Bureau of Operations to detect them, to intercept them, and to warn the men of Earth, Sol, that Mankind was no longer alone. The fact that the subelectromagnetic detecting beams had been sweeping space for a couple of hundred years without detecting anything had no bearing on the future. The beams must be maintained so long as a human man remained alive in space.

In addition to the detector beams, the outlying planets carried astrogation beacons. They were subelectromagnetic lighthouses, so to speak, that rang across space with known direction and ranging telemetered signals. Someday, Man hoped to fill the space lanes with spacecraft and the planets with interstellar commerce.

Someday there might be another *Marie Celeste* plying its course with its crew inexplicably missing. But if this ever happened, it was not going to happen without the Space Service knowing precisely how many and which spacecraft were operating through that volume of space before, during, and after D-for-Disaster Day and M-for-Mysterious Minute.

The equipment, of course, was automated to modern perfection, with multi-lateral channels that would take over in case of component failure. Its factor of reliability was well above six or seven nines of perfection. But to admit that this perfection was adequate would have deprived the Space Service of a convenient minor penal detail to take care of brash junior officers. Manning such a station provided the junior officer with a wealth of time to contemplate his sins, and to mend his evil ways.

In the case of Junior Spaceman Howard Reed, this process consisted of locating the flaw that prevented Hansen's Folly from being Hansen's Analysis.

NOW, from the time of Alexander Selkirk, romantic history has been dotted with accounts of men who have been cast away with nothing more than their hands and their brains. And with these, they have succeeded in raising their caveman environment up to the

level of modern technical conveniences.

Like them — having been unable to locate the flaw in Hansen's Folly by the theoretical approach during his tour of duty on Earth, Sol, and having similarly failed to locate the error in experimental hardware during his tour of duty on Eden, Tau Ceti — Junior Spaceman Howard Reed began to experiment on the spacecraft that stood parked on its launching pad two hundred feet from the Installation. There was plenty of equipment to work with. The Space Service did not stock its perimeter stations in a slipshod manner.

Furthermore, Junior Spaceman Howard Reed had plenty of time.

The account of his life and adventures is hardly worth telling. He had no distractions. He worked. The months passed one after the other.

Flatbush, Lalande 25372 was so far out that there was no provision made for a regular tour of inspection. Nobody bothered to drop in on Junior Spaceman Howard Reed. Gabbling on the official communication channels was strictly forbidden, so the young junior officer was denied even contact by voice. No one had come up with an economically sound means of producing entertainment programs from Earth, Sol, on the subelectromagnetic beams and so he — like his fellows in the other perimeter

stations — received neither news nor music from home.

He could terminate this tour of duty only by solving the riddle of Hansen's Folly, and then notifying his superiors on the official communications channels — or by tucking a note in the once-each-year supply drone that came laden with enough of Earth's environment to keep the young expatriate alive for another year.

The set-up was wholly conducive to work. There was time and there was equipment; his orders were to remain there until he had studied his way through the problem.

With nothing else to do, Junior Spaceman Howard Reed was deep in his investigation . . . when the drone spacecraft came down along the subelectromagnetic beacon and made its landing a dozen yards away.

The drone was standard spacecraft size, an unmanned hull laden with the necessities of life that would support him for a year.

It was the first one that he had ever seen. This was the first time that Junior Spaceman Howard Reed had had to face the problem of Supply. Packed in that dronship was enough earth environment to last a man a year. The perishables and expendables, as well as replacement for the lost fractions of the recyclables, were all there. They were dehydrated

and deep frozen after all waste had been removed, then compressed into cubes of identical size for the most favorable packing fraction. Even so, it was a prodigious amount of stuff. Supply would have been impossible on a once-per-year basis, if the foul water of Flatbush, Lalande 25372, hadn't been distillable with ease.

THE junior spaceman eyed the dronship with a sudden burst of pride in his fellow man's accomplishment. Given a pre-programmed flight along telemetered beacons originating at either terminus, the running equipment within the drone would bulk much less than the same mass and size as a human and his needs. Until flight-decisions were necessary, the hardware pilot was as good as the human pilot — and far less subject to headache, tantrum, disappointment at not getting the Saturday night pass and resentment over being passed by at promotion time.

Then his pride gave way to sudden, prolonged thought.

The range of a spacecraft is computed from point of takeoff to point of no return. There was no way of restoring the powerbanks of a spacecraft except on Earth, Sol.

Now, of course, it is entirely possible to take off and just keep going until the powerbanks are depleted.

That will cover twice the stated range to the point of no return.

Ships have gone out and off and away and have never been heard of again. It is possible that one or more of these have succeeded in locating an Earth-like planet beyond the point of no return, but the Earthmen at home will never know about it until the range is extended. The possibility of such a planet favoring human life and ultimately harboring a culture of technical competence enough to create and maintain the power restoring equipment is extremely remote.

For spacecraft that carry women are few and far between.

And it takes more than one man's lifetime to make use of the knowhow.

Junior Spaceman Howard Reed knew that away back in the Twentieth Century, the average engineer could make a guess, count on his fingers, and come up with a pretty shrewd estimate of the horsepower per cubic inch that could be stored by the various ways and means available to the age.

Removing the human pilot and his needs did give the dronship quite a bit more space for cargo and power. But, as he looked at the dronship standing there, it became plain to Junior Spaceman Howard Reed that there was not room in that size of hull for both the necessary powerbanks and the full year's store of supplies for one man.

Whereupon Junior Spaceman Howard Reed dropped his tools. He donned his space suit and crossed the intervening space to the dronship.

He began to examine the ship's running gear with a critical and suspicious eye.

He was examining hardware that was familiar to him. It took him no more than two hours to determine beyond a shadow of a doubt that the dronship's drive was built along the theories and mathematical analysis that he had been told simply did not work!

Someone had reduced Hansen's Folly to practice!

HE paused again. Hansen's Folly had been called a failure about two hundred years ago, but what did that really mean? He considered his history.

In 1724, Stephen Gray and Granville Wheeler made the proud announcement that they had succeeded in transmitting an electrical phenomenon along a wire for a distance of 682 feet. Two hundred years later the entire Earth was girdled with telegraph, telephone and cable wires and linked with the invisible bonds of radio waves.

In about 1904 the Wright Brothers made their first powered airplane flight. Forty years later men were flying in airplanes that carried a wingspread greater than the