



The Foreign Hand Tie
Garrett, Randall

Published: 1961

Type(s): Short Fiction, Science Fiction

Source: <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/30497>

About Garrett:

Randall Garrett (December 16, 1927 - December 31, 1987) was an American science fiction and fantasy author. He was a prolific contributor to *Astounding* and other science fiction magazines of the 1950s and 1960s. He instructed Robert Silverberg in the techniques of selling large quantities of action-adventure sf, and collaborated with him on two novels about Earth bringing civilization to an alien planet. Source: Wikipedia

Also available on Feedbooks for Garrett:

- *Pagan Passions* (1959)
- *Brain Twister* (1961)
- *...After a Few Words...* (1962)
- *Supermind* (1963)
- *A Spaceship Named McGuire* (1961)
- *Anything You Can Do ...* (1963)
- *...Or Your Money Back* (1951)
- *The Impossibles* (1963)
- *Unwise Child* (1962)
- *The Highest Treason* (1961)

Copyright: Please read the legal notice included in this e-book and/or check the copyright status in your country.

Note: This book is brought to you by Feedbooks.

<http://www.feedbooks.com>

Strictly for personal use, do not use this file for commercial purposes.

Transcriber's Note:

This etext was produced from Analog Science Fact & Fiction December 1961. Extensive research did not uncover any evidence that the U.S. copyright on this publication was renewed.

From Istanbul, in Turkish Thrace, to Moscow, U.S.S.R., is only a couple of hours outing for a round trip in a fast jet plane—a shade less than eleven hundred miles in a beeline.

Unfortunately, Mr. Raphael Poe had no way of chartering a bee.

The United States Navy cruiser *Woonsocket*, having made its placid way across the Mediterranean, up the Aegean Sea, and through the Dardanelles to the Bosphorous, stopped overnight at Istanbul and then turned around and went back. On the way in, it had stopped at Gibraltar, Barcelona, Marseilles, Genoa, Naples, and Athens—the main friendly ports on the northern side of the Mediterranean. On the way back, it performed the same ritual on the African side of the sea. Its most famous passengers were the American Secretary of State, two senators, and three representatives.

Its most important passenger was Mr. Raphael Poe.

During the voyage in, Mr. Raphael Poe remained locked in a state-room, all by himself, twiddling his thumbs restlessly and playing endless games of solitaire, making bets with himself on how long it would be before the ship hit the next big wave and wondering how long it would take a man to go nuts in isolation. On the voyage back, he was not aboard the *Woonsocket* at all, and no one missed him because only the captain and two other Navy men had known he was aboard, and they knew that he had been dropped overboard at Istanbul.

The sleek, tapered cylindroid might easily have been mistaken for a Naval torpedo, since it was roughly the same size and shape. Actually, it was a sort of hybrid, combining the torpedo and the two-man submarine that the Japanese had used in World War II, plus refinements contributed by such apparently diverse arts as skin-diving, cybernetics, and nucleonics.

Inside this one-man underwater vessel, Raphael Poe lay prone, guiding the little atomic-powered submarine across the Black Sea, past Odessa, and up the Dnieper. The first leg, the four hundred miles from the Bosphorous to the mouth of the river, was relatively easy. The two hundred and sixty miles from there to the Dnepropetrovsk was a little more difficult, but not terribly so. It became increasingly more difficult as the Dnieper narrowed and became more shallow.

On to Kiev. His course changed at Dnepropetrovsk, from northeast to northwest, for the next two hundred fifty miles. At Kiev, the river changed course again, heading north. Three hundred and fifty miles farther on, at Smolensk, he was heading almost due east.

It had not been an easy trip. At night, he had surfaced to get his bearings and to recharge the air tanks. Several times, he had had to take to the land, using the caterpillar treads on the little machine, because of obstacles in the river.

At the end of the ninth day, he was still one hundred eighty miles from Moscow, but, at that point, he got out of the submarine and prepared himself for the trip overland. When he was ready, he pressed a special button on the control panel of the expensive little craft. Immediately, the special robot brain took over. It had recorded the trip upstream; by applying that information in reverse—a "mirror image," so to speak—it began guiding itself back toward Istanbul, applying the necessary corrective factors that made the difference between an upstream and a downstream trip. If it had made a mistake or had been discovered, it would have blown itself to bits. As a tribute to modern robotics and ultra-microminiaturization, it is a fact that the little craft was picked up five days later a few miles from Istanbul by the U.S.S. *Paducah*.

By that time, a certain Vladimir Turenski, a shambling not-too-bright deaf mute, had made his fully documented appearance in Moscow.

Spies, like fairies and other such elusive sprites, traditionally come in rings. The reason for this circumstructural metaphor is obscure, but it remains a fact that a single spy, all by himself, is usually of very little use to anybody. Espionage, on any useful scale, requires organization.

There is, as there should be, a reason for this. The purpose of espionage is to gather information—preferably, *useful* information—against the wishes of, and in spite of the efforts of, a group—usually referred to as "the enemy"—which is endeavoring to prevent that information from getting into other hands than their own. Such activities obviously imply communication. An espionneur, working for Side A, who finds a bit of important information about Side B must obviously communicate that bit of information to Side A or it is of no use whatsoever.

All of these factors pose complex problems.

To begin with, the espionneur must get himself into a position in which he can get hold of the information he wants. Usually, that means that he must pass himself off as something he is not, a process which requires time. Then, when he gets the information he is after, he must get it to his employers quickly. Information, like fish, becomes useless after a certain amount of time, and, unlike fish, there is no known way of refrigerating it to retard spoilage.

It is difficult to transmit information these days. It is actually easier for the espionneur to transmit it than to get it, generally speaking, but it is difficult for him to do both jobs at once, so the spy ring's two major parts consist of the ones who get the information from the enemy and the ones who transmit it back to their employers.

Without magic, it is difficult for a single spy to be of any benefit. And "magic," in this case, can be defined as some method by which information can be either obtained or transmitted without fear of discovery by the enemy. During World War I, a competent spy equipped with a compact transistorized short-wave communications system could have had himself a ball. If the system had included a miniature full-color television camera, he could have gone hog wild. In those days, such equipment would have been magic.

All this is not *à propos* of nothing. Mr. Raphael Poe was, in his own way, a magician.

It is not to be supposed that the United States of America had no spy rings in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics at that time. There were plenty of them. Raphael Poe could have, if it were so ordained, availed himself of the services of any one or all of them. He did not do so for two reasons. In the first place, the more people who are in on a secret, the more who can give it away. In other words, a ring, like a chain, is only as strong as its weakest section. In the second place, Raphael Poe didn't need any assistance in the first place.

That is, he needed no more assistance than most magicians do—a skill in the audience. In this particular case, the skill was his brother, Leonard Poe.

Operation Mapcase was as ultra-secret as it could possibly be. Although there were perhaps two dozen men who knew of the existence of the operation by its code name, such as the Naval officers who had helped get Raphael Poe to his destination, there were only five men who really knew what Operation Mapcase was all about.

Two of these were, of course, Raphael and Leonard Poe. Two others were the President of the United States and the Secretary of Defense. The fifth was Colonel Julius T. Spaulding, of United States Army Intelligence.

On the seventh day after Raphael Poe's arrival in Moscow, the other four men met in Blair House, across the street from the White House, in a room especially prepared for the purpose. No one but the President

knew the exact purpose of the meeting, although they had an idea that he wanted more information of some kind.

The President himself was the last to arrive. Leaving two Secret Service men standing outside the room, he carefully closed the door and turned to face the Secretary of Defense, Colonel Spaulding, and Leonard Poe. "Sit down, gentlemen," he said, seating himself as he spoke.

"Gentlemen, before we go any further, I must conduct one final experiment in order to justify Operation Mapcase. I will not explain it just yet." He looked at Lenny Poe, a small, dark-haired man with a largish nose. "Mr. Poe, can you contact your brother at this moment?"

Lenny Poe was a man who was not overawed by anyone, and had no inclination to be formal, not even toward the President. "Yeah, sure," he said matter-of-factly.

The President glanced at his watch. "It is now five minutes of ten. That makes it five minutes of six in the evening in Moscow. Is your brother free to move around? That is, can he go to a certain place in the city?"

Lenny closed his eyes for a moment, then opened them. "Rafe says he can go any place that the average citizen would be allowed to go."

"Excellent," said the President. He gave Lenny an address—an intersection of two streets not far from Red Square. "Can he get there within fifteen minutes?"

"Make it twenty," said Lenny.

"Very well. Twenty minutes. When he gets there, I'll ask you to relay further instructions."

Lenny Poe closed his eyes, folded his arms, and relaxed in his chair. The other three men waited silently.

Nineteen minutes later, Lenny opened his eyes and said: "O.K. He's there. Now what?"

"There is a lamppost on that corner, I believe," said the President. "Can your brother see it?"

Lenny closed his eyes again. "Sure. There's a guy leaning against it."

The President's eyes brightened. "Describe him!"

Lenny, eyes still closed, said: "Five feet ten, heavy set, gray hair, dark-rimmed glasses, brown suit, flashy necktie. By the cut of his clothes, I'd say he was either British or American, probably American. Fifty-five or fifty-six years old."

It was obvious to the Secretary of Defense and to Colonel Spaulding that the President was suppressing some inward excitement.

"Very good, Mr. Poe!" he said. "Now, you will find a box of colored pencils and a sketch pad in that desk over there. Can you draw me a fairly accurate sketch of that man?"

"Yeah, sure." Lenny opened his eyes, moved over to the desk, took out the pencils and sketch pad, and went to work. He had to close his eyes occasionally, but his work was incredibly rapid and, at the same time, almost photographically accurate.

As the picture took form, the President's inward excitement increased perceptibly. When it was finally finished, Lenny handed the sketch to the President without a word.

The President took it eagerly and his face broke out in his famous grin. "Excellent! Perfect!" He looked at Lenny. "Your brother hasn't attracted the man's attention in any way, has he?"

"Nope," said Lenny.

"Fine. The experiment is over. Relay my thanks to your brother. He can go ahead with whatever he was doing now."

"I don't quite understand," said the Secretary of State.

"I felt it necessary to make one final experiment of my own devising," the President said. "I wanted Raphael Poe to go to a particular place at a particular time, with no advance warning, to transmit a picture of something he had never seen before. I arranged this test myself, and I am positive that there could be no trickery."

"Never seen before?" the Secretary repeated bewilderedly. He gestured at the sketch. "Why, that's obviously Bill Donovan, of the Moscow delegation. Poe could have seen a photograph of him somewhere before."

"Even so," the President pointed out, "there would be no way of knowing that he would be at that spot. But that's beside the point. Look at that necktie!"

"I had noticed it," the Defense Secretary admitted.

It was certainly an outstanding piece of neckwear. As drawn by Leonard Poe, it was a piece of brilliant chartreuse silk, fully three and a half inches wide at its broadest. Against that background, rose-pink nude girls were cavorting with pale mauve satyrs.

"That tie," said the President, "was sent to me fifteen years ago by one of my constituents, when I was in Congress. I never wore it, of course, but

it would have been criminal to have thrown away such a magnificently obscene example of bad taste as that.

"I sent it to Donovan in a sealed diplomatic pouch by special courier, with instructions to wear it at this time. He, of course, has no idea why he is standing there. He is merely obeying orders.

"Gentlemen, this is completely convincing to me. Absolutely no one but myself knew what I had in mind. It would have required telepathy even to cheat.

"Thank you very much, Mr. Poe. Colonel Spaulding, you may proceed with Operation Mapcase as planned."

Dr. Malekrinova, will you initial these requisition forms, please."

Dr. Sonya Malekrinova, a dowdy-looking, middle-aged woman with unplucked eyebrows and a mole on her chin, adjusted her steel-rimmed glasses, took the proffered papers from the clerk, ran her eyes over them, and then put her initials on the bottom of each page.

"Thank you, Comrade Doctor," said the clerk when she handed back the sheaf of papers.

"Certainly, Comrade."

And the two of them went about their business.

Not far away, in the Cathedral of St. Basil, Vladimir Turenski, alias Raphael Poe, was also apparently going about his business. The cathedral had not seen nor heard the Liturgy of the Russian Orthodox Church or any other church, for a good many decades. The Bolsheviks, in their zeal to protect the citizens of the Soviet Unions from the pernicious influence of religion, had converted it into a museum as soon as possible.

It was the function of *Tovarishch* Turenski to push a broom around the floors of the museum, and this he did with great determination and efficiency. He also cleaned windows and polished metalwork when the occasion demanded. He was only one of a large crew of similarly employed men, but he was a favorite with the Head Custodian, who not only felt sorry for the simple-minded deaf-mute, but appreciated the hard work he did. If, on occasion, Comrade Turenski would lean on his broom and fall into a short reverie, it was excusable because he still managed to get all his work done.

Behind Comrade Turenski, a guide was explaining a display to a group of tourists, but Turenski ignored the distraction and kept his mind focused on the thoughts of Dr. Sonya Malekrinova.

After nearly ten months of patient work, Raphael Poe had hit upon something that was, to his way of thinking, more important than all the information he had transmitted to Washington thus far.

Picking brains telepathically was not, even for him, an easy job. He had the knack and the training but, in addition, there was the necessity of establishing a rapport with the other mind. Since he was a physicist and not a politician, it was much easier to get information from the mind of Sonya Malekrinova than to get it from the Premier. The only person with whom he could keep in contact over any great distance was his brother, and that only because the two of them had grown up together.

He could pick up the strongest thoughts of any nearby person very easily. He did not need to hear the actual words, for instance, of a nearby conversation in order to follow it perfectly, because the words of verbal communication were strong in a person's mind.

But getting deeper than that required an increasing amount of understanding of the functioning of the other person's mind.

His ability to eavesdrop on conversations had been of immense benefit to Washington so far, but it was difficult for him to get close enough to the higher-ups in the Soviet government to get all the data that the President of the United States wanted.

But now that he had established a firm mental linkage with one of the greatest physicists in the Soviet Union, he could begin to send information that would be of tremendous value to the United States.

He brushed up a pile of trash, pushed it into a dust pan, and carried it off toward the disposal chute that led to the trash cans. In the room where the brooms were kept, he paused and closed his eyes.

Lenny! Are picking this up?

Sure, Rafe. I'm ready with the drawing board anytime you are.

As Dr. Sonya Malekrinova stood in her laboratory looking over the apparatus she was perfecting for the glory of the Soviet State, she had no notion that someone halfway around the world was also looking at it over her shoulder—or rather, through her own eyes.

Lenny started with the fives first, and worked his way up to the larger denominations.

"Five, ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five, thirty—forty, fifty, sixty... ." he muttered happily to himself. "Two fifty, three, three-fifty, four, four-fifty."

It was all there, so he smiled benevolently at the man in the pay window. "Thank you muchly." Then he stepped aside to let another lucky man cash a winning ticket.

His horse had come in at fifteen, six-ten, four-fifty for Straight, Place, and Show, and sixty bucks on the nose had paid off very nicely.

Lenny Poe took out his copy of the *Daily Racing Form* and checked over the listing for the next race.

Hm-m-m, ha. Purse, \$7500. Four-year-olds and up: handicap. Seven furlongs. Turf course. Hm-m-m, ha.

Lenny Poe had a passion for throwing his money away on any unpredictable event that would offer him odds. He had, deep down, an artistic soul, but he didn't let that interfere with his desire to lay a bet at the drop of an old fedora.

He had already decided, several hours before, that Ducksoup, in the next race, would win handily and would pay off at something like twenty or twenty-five to one. But he felt it his duty to look one last time at the previous performance record, just to be absolutely positive.

Satisfied, he folded the *Racing Form*, shoved it back into his pocket, and walked over to the fifty-dollar window.

"Gimmie nine tickets on Ducksoup in the seventh," he said, plonking the handful of bills down on the counter.

But before the man behind the window grating could take the money, a huge, hamlike, and rather hairy hand came down on top of his own hand, covering it and the money at the same time.

"Hold it, Lenny," said a voice at the same time.

Lenny jerked his head around to his right and looked up to see a largish man who had "cop" written all over him. Another such individual crowded past Lenny on his left to flash a badge on the man in the betting window, so that he would know that this wasn't a holdup.

"Hey!" said Lenny. His mind was thinking fast. He decided to play his favorite role, that of the indignant Italian. "Whatsa da matta with you, hah? Thisa no a free country? A man gotta no rights?"

"Come on, Mr. Poe," the big man said quietly, "this is important."

"Poe? You outta you mind? Thatsa name of a river—or a raven. I'm a forgetta which. My namesa Manelli!"

"*Scusi, signore,*" the big man said with exaggerated politeness, "*ma se lei è veramente italiano, non' è l'uomo che cerchiamo.*"

Lenny's Italian was limited to a handful of words. He know he was trapped, but he faced the situation with aplomb. "Thatsa lie! I was inna Chicago that night!"

"*Ah! Cosè credero. Avanti, saccentone.*" He jerked his thumb toward the gate. "Let's go."

Lenny muttered something that the big man didn't quite catch.

"What'd you say?"

"Upper United States—the northern United States," Lenny said calmly shoving his four hundred fifty dollars into his pocket. "That's where Chicago is. Never mind. Come in, boys; back to the drawing board."

The two men escorted Lenny to a big, powerful Lincoln; he climbed into the back seat with the big one while the other one got behind the wheel.

As soon as they had left the racetrack and were well out on the highway, the driver said: "You want to call in, Mario? This traffic is pretty heavy."

The big man beside Lenny leaned forward, over the back of the front seat, unhooked the receiver of the scrambler-equipped radiophone, and sat back down. He thumbed a button on the side of the handset and said: "This is Seven Oh Two." After a short silence, he said: "You can call off the net. You want him brought in?" He listened for a moment. "O.K. Are we cleared through the main gate? O.K. Off."

He leaned forward to replace the receiver, speaking to the driver as he did so. "Straight to the Air Force base. They've got a jet waiting there for him."

He settled back comfortably and looked at Lenny. "You could at least tell people where you're going."

"Very well," said Lenny. He folded his arms, closed his eyes, and relaxed. "Right now, I'm going off to dreamland."

He waited a short while to see if the other would say anything. He didn't, so Lenny proceeded to do exactly what he had promised to do.

He went off to dreamland.

He had not been absolutely sure, when he made the promise, that he would actually do just that, but the odds were in favor of it. It was now one o'clock in the morning in Moscow, and Lenny's brother, Raphael, was a man of regular habits.

Lenny reached out. When he made contact, all he got was a jumble of hash. It was as though someone had made a movie by cutting bits and snippets from a hundred different films, no bit more than six or seven frames long, with a sound track that might or might not match, and projected the result through a drifting fog, using an ever-changing lens that rippled like the surface of a wind-ruffled pool. Sometimes one figure would come into sharp focus for a fraction of a second, sometimes in color, sometimes not.

Sometimes Lenny was merely observing the show, sometimes he was in it.

Rafe! Hey, Rafe! Wake up!

The jumble of hash began to stabilize, becoming more coherent—

Lenny sat behind the far desk, watching his brother come up the primrose path in a unicycle. He pulled it to a halt in front of the desk, opened the pilot's canopy, threw out a rope ladder, and climbed down. His gait was a little awkward, in spite of the sponge-rubber floor, because of the huge flowered carpetbag he was carrying. A battered top hat sat precariously on his blond, curly hair.

"Lenny! Boy, am I glad to see you! I've got it! The whole trouble is in the wonkler, where the spadulator comes across the trellis grid!" He lifted the carpetbag and sat it down on the lab table. "Connect up the groffle meter! We'll show those pentagon pickles who has the push-and-go here!"

"Rafe," Lenny said gently, "wake up. You're dreaming. You're asleep. I want to talk to you."

"I know." He grinned widely. "And you don't want any back talk from me! Yok-yok-yok! Just wait'll I show you!"

In his hands, he held an object which Lenny did not at first understand. Then Rafe's mind brought it into focus.

"This"—Rafe held it up—"is a rocket motor!"

"Rafe, wake up!" Lenny said.

The surroundings stabilized a little more.

"I will in just a minute, Lenny." Rafe was apologetic. "But let me show you this." It did bear some resemblance to a rocket motor. It was about as long as a man's forearm and consisted of a bulbous chamber at one end, which narrowed down into a throat and then widened into a hornlike exhaust nozzle. The chamber was black; the rest was shiny chrome.

Rafe grasped it by the throat with one hand. The other, he clasped firmly around the combustion chamber. "Watch! Now watch!"

He gave the bulbous, rubbery chamber a hard squeeze—

"SQUAWK!" went the horn.

"Rafe!" Lenny shouted. "Wake up! WAKE UP!"

Rafe blinked as the situation clarified. "What? Just A Second. Lenny. Just... ."

"... *A second.*"

Raphael Poe blinked his eyes open. The moon was shining through the dirty windows of the dingy little room that was all he could call home—for a while, at least. Outside the window were the gray streets of Moscow.

His brother's thoughts resounded in his fully awake brain. *Rafe! You awake?*

Sure. Sure. What is it?

The conversation that followed was not in words or pictures, but a weird combination of both, plus a strong admixture of linking concepts that were neither.

In essence, Lenny merely reported that he had taken the day off to go to the races and that Colonel Spaulding was evidently upset for some reason. He wondered if Rafe were in any kind of trouble.

No trouble. Everything's fine at this end. But Dr. Malekrinova won't be back on the job until tomorrow afternoon—or, thisafternoon, rather.

I know, Lenny replied. That's why I figured I could take time off for a go at the ponies.

I wonder why they're in such a fuss, then? Rafe thought.

I'll let you know when I find out, Lenny said. Go back to sleep and don't worry.

In a small office in the Pentagon, Colonel Julius T. Spaulding cradled the telephone on his desk and looked at the Secretary of Defense. "That was the airfield. Poe will be here shortly. We'll get to the bottom of this pretty quickly."

"I hope so, Julius," the Secretary said heavily. "The president is beginning to think we're both nuts."

The colonel, a lean, nervous man with dark, bushy eyebrows and a mustache to match, rolled his eyes up toward the ceiling. "I'm beginning to agree with him."

The Defense Secretary scowled at him. "What do you mean?"

"Anybody who takes telepathy seriously is considered a nut," said the colonel.

"True," said the Secretary, "but that doesn't mean we *are* nuts."

"Oh, yeah?" The colonel took the cigar out of his mouth and gestured with it. "Anybody who'd do something that convinces all his friends he's nuts must be nuts."

The Secretary smiled wanly. "I wish you wouldn't be so logical. You almost convince me."

"Don't worry," said the colonel. "I'm not ready to have this room measured for sponge-rubber wallpaper just yet. Operation Mapcase has helped a lot in the past few months, and it will help even more."

"All you have to do is get the bugs out of it," said the Secretary.

"If we did that," Colonel Spaulding said flatly, "the whole operation would fold from lack of personnel."

"Just carry on the best you can," the Secretary said gloomily as he got up to leave. "I'll let you handle it."

"Fine. I'll call you later."

Twenty minutes after the Defense Secretary had gone, Lenny Poe was shown into Colonel Spaulding's office. The agent who had brought him in closed the door gently, leaving him alone with the colonel.

"I told you I'd be back this evening. What were you in such a hurry about?"

"You're supposed to stay in touch," Colonel Spaulding pointed out. "I don't mind your penchant for ponies particularly, but I'd like to know where to find you if I need you."

"I wouldn't mind in the least, colonel. I'd phone you every fifteen minutes if that's what you wanted. Except for one thing."

"What's that?"

Lenny jerked a thumb over his shoulder. "Your linguistically talented flatfeet. Did you ever try to get into a floating crap game when you were being followed by a couple of bruisers who look more like cops than cops do?"

"Look, Poe, I can find you plenty of action right here in Washington, if it won't offend your tender sensibilities to shoot crap with a senator or two. Meanwhile, sit down and listen. This is important."

Lenny sat own reluctantly. "O.K. What is it?"

"Dr. Davenport and his crew are unhappy about that last batch of drawings you and I gave 'em."

"What's the matter? Don't they like the color scheme? I never thought scientists had any artistic taste, anyway."

"It's got nothing to do with that. The—"

The phone rang. Colonel Spaulding scooped it up and identified himself. Then: "What? Yeah. All right, send him in."

He hung up and looked back at Lenny. "Davenport. We can get his story firsthand. Just sit there and look important."

Lenny nodded. He knew that Dr. Amadeus Davenport was aware that the source of those drawings was Soviet Russia, but he did not know how they had been obtained. As far as he knew, it was just plain, ordinary spy work.

He came in briskly. He was a tall, intelligent-looking man with a rather craggy face and thoughtful brown eyes. He put a large brief case on the floor, and, after the preliminaries were over, he came right to the point.

"Colonel Spaulding, I spoke to the Secretary of Defense, and he agreed that perhaps this situation might be cleared up if I talked directly with you."

"I hope so," the colonel said. "Just what is it that seems to be bothering you?"

"These drawings," Davenport said, "don't make any sense. The device they're supposed to represent couldn't do anything. Look; I'll show you."

He took from his brief case photostatic copies of some of the drawings Lenny had made. Five of them were straight blueprint-type drawings; the sixth was a copy of Lenny's near-photographic paintings of the device itself.

"This component, here," he said, gesturing at the set of drawings, "simply baffles us. We're of the opinion that your agents are known to the Soviet government and have been handed a set of phony plans."

"What's it supposed to do?" Lenny asked.

"We don't know what it's *supposed* to do," the scientist said, "but it's doubtful that it would *actually* do anything." He selected one of the photocopies. "See that thing? The one shaped like the letter Q with an offset tail? According to the specifications, it is supposed to be painted emerald green, but there's no indication of what it is."

Lenny Poe reached out, picked up the photocopy and looked at it. It was—or had been—an exact copy of the drawing that was used by Dr. Sonya Malekrinova. But, whereas the original drawing has been labeled entirely in Cyrillic characters, these labels were now in English.

The drawings made no sense to Lenny at all. They hadn't when he'd made them. His brother was a scientist, but Lenny understood none of it.

"Who translated the Russian into English?" he asked.

"A Mr. Berensky. He's one of our best experts on the subject. I assure you the translations are accurate, Dr. Davenport said.

"But if you don't know what that thing is," the colonel objected, "how can you say the device won't work? Maybe it would if that Q-shaped thing was—"

"I know what you mean," Davenport interrupted. "But that's not the only part of the machine that doesn't make any sense."

He went on to explain other discrepancies he had detected in the drawings, but none of it penetrated to Lenny, although Colonel Spaulding seemed to be able to follow the physicist's conversation fairly readily.

"Well, what's your suggestion, doctor?" the colonel asked at last.

"If your agents could get further data," the physicist said carefully, "it might be of some use. At the same time, I'd check up on the possibility that your agents are known to the NKVD."

"I'll see what can be done," said the colonel. "Would you mind leaving those copies of the drawings with me for a while?"

"Go right ahead," Davenport said. "One other thing. If we assume this device is genuine, then it must serve some purpose. It might help if we knew what the device is supposed to *do*."

"I'll see what can be done," Colonel Spaulding repeated.

When Davenport had gone, Spaulding looked at Poe. "Got any explanation for that one?"

"No," Lenny admitted. "All I can do is check with Rafe. He won't be awake for a few hours yet. I'll check on it and give you an answer in the morning."

Early next morning, Colonel Spaulding walked through his outer office. He stopped at the desk where the pretty brunette WAC sergeant was typing industriously, leaned across the desk, and gave her his best leer. "How about a date tonight, music lover?" he asked, "'*Das Rheingold*' is playing tonight. A night at the opera would do you good."

"I'm sorry, sir," she said primly, "you know enlisted women aren't allowed to date officers."

"Make out an application for OCS. I'll sign it."

She smiled at him. "But then I wouldn't have any excuse for turning you down. And then what would my husband say?"

"I'll bribe him. I'll send *him* to OCS."

"He's not eligible. Officers are automatically disqualified."

Colonel Spaulding sighed. "A guy can't win against competition like that. Anything new this morning?"

"Mr. Poe is waiting in your office. Other than that, there's just the routine things."

He went on into his office. Lenny Poe was seated behind the colonel's desk, leaning back in the swivel chair, his feet on the top of the desk. He was sound asleep.

The colonel walked over to the desk, took his cigar from his mouth, and said: "*Good* morrhning, Colonel Spaulding!"

Lenny snapped awake. "I'm not Colonel Spaulding," he said.

"Then why are you sitting in Colonel Spaulding's chair?"

"I figured if I was asleep nobody'd know the difference." Lenny got up and walked over to one of the other chairs. "These don't lean back comfortably. I can't sleep in 'em."

"You can sleep later. How was your session with Rafe?"

Lenny glowered glumly. "I wish you and Rafe hadn't talked me into this job. It's a strain on the brain. I don't know how he expects anyone to understand all that garbage."

"All what garbage?"

Lenny waved a hand aimlessly. "All this scientific guff. I'm an artist, not a scientist. If Rafe can get me a clear picture of something, I can copy it, but when he tries to explain something scientific, he might as well be thinking in Russian or Old Upper Middle High Martian or something."

"I know," said Colonel Spaulding, looking almost as glum as Lenny. "Did you get anything at all that would help Dr. Davenport figure out what those drawings mean?"

"Rafe says that the translations are all wrong," Lenny said, "but I can't get a clear picture of just what *is* wrong."

Colonel Spaulding thought for a while in silence. Telepathy—at least in so far as the Poe brothers practiced it—certainly had its limitations. Lenny couldn't communicate mentally with anyone except his brother Rafe. Rafe could pick up the thoughts of almost anyone if he happened to be close by, but couldn't communicate over a long distance with anyone but Lenny.

The main trouble lay in the fact that it was apparently impossible to transmit a concept directly from Brain A to Brain B unless the basic building blocks of the concept were already present in Brain B. Raphael Poe, for instance, had spent a long time studying Russian, reading Dostoevski, Tolstoy, and Turgenyev in the original tongue, familiarizing himself with modern Russian thought through the courtesy of *Izvestia*, *Pravda*, and *Krokodil*, and, finally, spending time in the United Nations building and near the Russian embassy in order to be sure that he could understand the mental processes involved.

Now, science has a language of its own. Or, rather, a multiplicity of languages, each derived partly from the native language of the various scientific groups and partly of borrowings from other languages. In the physical sciences especially, the language of mathematics is a further addition.

More than that, the practice of the scientific method automatically induces a thought pattern that is different from the type of thought pattern that occurs in the mind of a person who is not scientifically oriented.

Lenny's mind was a long way from being scientifically oriented. Worse, he was a bigot. He not only didn't know why the light in his room went on when he flipped the switch, he didn't *want* to know. To him, science was just so much flummery, and he didn't want his brain cluttered up with it.

Facts mean nothing to a bigot. He has already made up his mind, and he doesn't intend to have his solid convictions disturbed by anything so unimportant as a contradictory fact. Lenny was of the opinion that all mathematics was arcane gobbledygook, and his precise knowledge of the mathematical odds in poker and dice games didn't abate that opinion one whit. Obviously, a mind like that is utterly incapable of understanding a projected thought of scientific content; such a thought bounces off the impregnable mind shield that the bigot has set up around his little area of bigotry.

Colonel Spaulding had been aware of these circumstances since the inception of the Operation Mapcase. Even though he, himself, had never experienced telepathy more than half a dozen times in his life, he had made a study of the subject and was pretty well aware of its limitations. The colonel might have dismissed—as most men do—his own fleeting experiences as "coincidence" or "imagination" if it had not been for the things he had seen and felt in Africa during World War II. He had only been a captain then, on detached duty with British Intelligence, under crusty old Colonel Sir Cecil Haversham, who didn't believe a word of "all that mystic nonsense." Colonel Haversham had made the mistake of alienating one of the most powerful of the local witch doctors.

The British Government had hushed it all up afterwards, of course, but Spaulding still shuddered when he thought of the broken-spirited, shrunken caricature of his old self that Colonel Haversham had become after he told the witch doctor where to get off.

Spaulding had known that there were weaknesses in the telepathic communication linkage that was the mainspring of Operation Mapcase, but he had thought that they could be overcome by the strengths of the system. Lenny had no blockage whatever against receiving visual patterns and designs. He could reproduce an electronic wiring diagram perfectly because, to him, it was not a grouping of scientific symbols, but a design of lines, angles, and curves.

At first, it is true, he had had a tendency to change them here and there, to make the design balance better, to make it more aesthetically satisfying to his artistic eye, but that tendency had been easily overcome, and Colonel Spaulding was quite certain that that wasn't what was wrong now.

Still—

"Lenny," he said carefully, "are you sure you didn't jigger up those drawings to make 'em look prettier?"

Lenny Poe gave the colonel a look of disgust. "Positive. Rafe checked 'em over every inch of the way as I was drawing them, and he rechecked again last night—or this morning—on those photostats Davenport gave us. That's when he said there was something wrong with the translations.

"But he couldn't make it clear just what was wrong, eh?"

Lenny shrugged. "How anybody could make any sense out of that gobbledegook is beyond me."

The colonel blew out a cloud of cigar smoke and looked thoughtfully at the ceiling. As long as the diagrams were just designs on paper, Lenny Poe could pick them up fine. Which meant that everything was jim-dandy as long as the wiring diagrams were labeled in the Cyrillic alphabet. The labels were just more squiggles to be copied as a part of the design.

But if the labels were in English, Lenny's mind would try to "make sense" out of them, and since scientific concepts did *not* "make sense" to him, the labels came out as pure nonsense. In one of his drawings, a lead wire had been labeled "simply ground to powder," and if the original drawing hadn't been handy to check with, it might have taken quite a bit of thought to realize that what was meant was "to power supply ground." Another time, a GE 2N 188A transistor had come out labeled GEZNISSA. There were others—much worse.

Russian characters, on the other hand, didn't have to make any sense to Lenny, so his mind didn't try to force them into a preconceived mold.

Lenny unzipped the leather portfolio he had brought with him—a specially-made carrier that looked somewhat like an oversized brief case.

"Maybe these'll help," he said.

"We managed to get two good sketches of the gadget—at least, as much of it as that Russian lady scientist has put together so far. I kind of like the rather abstract effect you get from all those wires snaking in and around, with that green glass tube in the center. Pretty, isn't it?"

"Very," said the colonel without conviction. "I wonder if it will help Davenport any?" He looked at the pictures for several seconds more, then, suddenly, his eyes narrowed. "Lenny—this piece of green glass—the thing's shaped like the letter Q."

"Yeah, sort of. Why?"

"You said it was a tube, but you didn't make it look hollow when you drew it."

"It isn't; it's solid. Does a tube have to be hollow? Yeah, I guess it does, doesn't it? Well, then, it isn't a tube."

Colonel Spaulding picked up the phone and dialed a number.

"Colonel Spaulding here," he said after a moment. "Let me speak to Dr. Davenport." And, after a wait: "This is Colonel Spaulding, doctor. I think we may have something for you."

"Good morning, colonel. I'm glad to hear that. What is it?"

"The Q-shaped gadget—the one that you said was supposed to be painted emerald green. Are you *sure* that's the right translation of the Russian?"

"Well ... uh—" Davenport hesitated. "I can't be sure on my own say-so, of course. *I* don't understand Russian. But I assure you that Mr. Berensky is perfectly reliable."

"Oh, I have no doubt of that," Colonel Spaulding said easily. "But, tell me, does Mr. Berensky know how to read a circuit diagram?"

"He does," Davenport said, somewhat testily. "Of course, he wasn't shown the diagram itself. We had the Russian labels copied, and he translated from a list."

"I had a sneaking suspicion that was it," said Spaulding. "Tell me, doctor, what does L-E-A-D spell?"

"Lead," said the doctor promptly, pronouncing it *lead*. Then, after a pause, he said: "Or lead," this time pronouncing it *led*. "It would depend on the context."

"Suppose it was on a circuit diagram," the colonel prompted.

"Then it would probably be *lead*. What's all this leading up to, colonel?"

"Bear with me. Suppose you had a cable coming from a storage battery, and you wanted to make sure that the cable was reasonably resistant to corrosion, so you order it made out of the metal, lead. It would be a *led leed*, wouldn't it?"

"Um-m-m ... I suppose so."

"You might get pretty confused if you didn't have a circuit diagram in front of you to tell you what the label was talking about, mightn't you?"

"I see what you mean," the scientist said slowly. "But we can't show those circuit diagrams to Berensky. The Secretary of Defense himself has classified them as Class Triple-A Ultra-Hyper Top Secret. That puts them just below the Burn-The-Contents-Before-Reading class, and Berensky doesn't have that kind of clearance."

"Then get somebody else," Colonel Spaulding said tiredly. "All you need is a man who can understand technical Russian and has a top-level secrecy clearance. If we haven't got at least one man in these United States with such simple qualifications as those, then we might as well give the country over to the Reds or back to the Redskins, since our culture is irretrievably doomed." And he lowered the phone gently to its cradle.

"There's no such word as 'irretrievably'," Lenny pointed out.

"There is now," said Colonel Spaulding.

Raphael Poe moseyed through the streets of Moscow in an apparently aimless manner. The expression on his face was that of a reasonably happy moron.

His aimless manner was only apparent. Actually, he was heading toward the Lenin Soviet People's Higher Research Laboratories. Dr. Sonya Borisovna Malekrinova would be working late this evening, and he wanted to get as close as possible in order to pick up as much information as he could.

Rafe had a great deal of admiration for that woman, he admitted to himself. She was, granted, as plain as an unsalted *matzoh*. No. That was an understatement. If it were possible to die of the uglies, Sonya Borisovna would have been dangerously ill.

Her disposition did nothing to alleviate that drawback. She fancied herself as cold, hard, analytical, and ruthless; actually she was waspish, arrogant, overbearing, and treacherous. What she considered in herself

to be scientific detachment was really an isolation born of fear and distrust of the entire human race.

To her, Communism was a religion; "*Das Kapital*" and "*The Communist Manifesto*" were holy writ enshrining the dogmata of Marxism-Leninism, and the conflict with the West was a *jihad*, a holy war in which God, in His manifestation as Dialectic Materialism, would naturally win out in the end.

All of which goes to show that a scientific bent, in itself, does not necessarily keep one from being a bigot.

Rafe's admiration for the woman stemmed solely from the fact that, in spite of all the powerful drawbacks that existed in her mind, she was still capable of being a brilliant, if somewhat erratic scientist.

There was a more relaxed air in Moscow these days. The per capita production of the Soviet Union still did not come up to that of the United States, but the recent advances in technology did allow a feeling of accomplishment, and the hard drive for superiority was softened a trifle. It was no longer considered the height of indolence and unpatriotic time-wasting to sit on a bench and feed pigeons. Nor was food so scarce and costly that throwing away a few bread crumbs could be considered sabotage.

So Rafe Poe found himself a quiet corner near the Lenin Soviet People's Laboratories, took out a small bag of dried breadcrumbs, and was soon surrounded by pigeons.

Dr. Malekrinova was carefully calibrating and balancing the electronic circuits that energized and activated and controlled the output of the newly-installed beam generator—a ring of specially-made greenish glass that had a small cylinder of the same glass projecting out at a tangent. Her assistant, Alexis, a man of small scientific ability but a gifted mechanic, worked stolidly with her. It was not an easy job for Alexis; Sonya Borisovna was by no means an easy woman to work with. There was, as there should have been, a fifty-fifty division in all things—a proper state of affairs in a People's Republic. Alexis Andreyevich did half the physical work, got all the blame when things went wrong, and none of the credit when things went right. Sonya Borisovna got the remaining fifty percent.

Sonya Borisovna Malekrinova had been pushing herself too hard, and she knew it. But, she told herself, for the glory of the Soviet peoples, the work must go on.

After spending two hours taking down instrument readings, she took the results to her office and began to correlate them.

Have to replace that 140-9.0 micromicrofarad frequency control on stage two with something more sensitive, she thought. And the field modulation coils require closer adjustment.

She took off her glasses and rubbed at her tired eyes while she thought. *Perhaps the 25 microfarad, 12 volt electrolytic condenser could be used to feed the pigeons, substituting a breadcrumb capacitor in the sidewalk circuit.*

She opened her eyes suddenly and stared at the blank wall in front of her. "Pigeons?" she said wonderingly. "Breadcrumb capacitor? Am I losing my mind? What kind of nonsense is that?"

She looked back down at her notes, then replaced her glasses so that she could read them. Determined not to let her mind wander in that erratic fashion again, she returned her attention to the work at hand.

She found herself wondering if it might not be better to chuck the whole job and get out while the getting was good. *The old gal, she thought, is actually tapping my mind! She's picking up everything!*

Sonya Borisovna sat bolt upright in her chair, staring at the blank wall again. "Why am I thinking such nonsense?" she said aloud. "And why should I be thinking in English?" When her words registered on her ears, she realized that she was actually *speaking* in English. She was thoroughly acquainted with the language, of course, but it was not normal for her to think in it unless she happened to be conversing with someone in that tongue.

The first whisper of a suspicion began to take form in the mind of Dr. Sonya Borisovna Malekrinova.

Half a block away, Raphael Poe emptied the last of his breadcrumbs on the sidewalk and began walking away. He kept his mind as blank as possible, while his brow broke out in a cold sweat.

That," said Colonel Julius Spaulding scathingly, "is as pretty a mess as I've seen in years."

"It's a breadboard circuit, I'll admit," Dr. Davenport said defensively, "but it's built according to the schematics you gave us."

"Doctor," said the colonel, "during the war the British dropped our group a radio transmitter. It was the only way to get the stuff into Africa

quickly. The parachute failed to open. The transmitter fell two thousand feet, hit the side of a mountain, and tumbled down another eight hundred feet. When we found it, four days later, its wiring was in better shape than that thing is in now."

"It's quite sufficient to test the operation of the device," Davenport said coldly.

Spaulding had to admit to himself that it probably was. The thing was a slapdash affair—the colonel had a strong feeling that Davenport had assigned the wiring job to an apprentice and gave him half an hour to do the job—but the soldering jobs looked tight enough, and the components didn't look as though they'd all been pulled out of the salvage bin. What irritated Colonel Spaulding was Davenport's notion that the whole thing was a waste of time, energy, money, and materials, and, therefore, there was no point in doing a decent job of testing it at all.

He was glad that Davenport didn't know how the information about the device had been transported to the United States. As it was, he considered the drawings a hoax on the part of the Russians; if he had been told that they had been sent telepathically, he would probably have gone into fits of acute exasperation over such idiocy.

The trouble with Davenport was that, since the device didn't make any sense to him, he didn't believe it would function at all.

"Oh, it will do *something*, all right," he'd said once, "but it won't be anything that needs all that apparatus. Look here—" He had pointed toward the schematic. "Where do you think all that energy is going? All you're going to get is a little light, a lot of heat, and a couple of burned out coils. I could do the same job cheaper with a dozen 250 watt light bulbs."

To be perfectly honest with himself, Spaulding had to admit that he wasn't absolutely positive that the device would do anything in particular, either. His own knowledge of electronic circuitry was limited to ham radio experience, and even that was many years out of date. He couldn't be absolutely sure that the specifications for the gadget hadn't been garbled in transmission.

The Q-shaped gizmo, for instance. It had taken the better part of a week for Raphael Poe to transmit the information essential to the construction of that enigmatic bit of glass.

Rafe had had to sit quietly in the privacy of his own room and print out the specifications in Russian, then sit and look at the paper while Lenny copied the "design." Then each paper had to be carefully

destroyed, which wasn't easy to do. You don't go around burning papers in a crowded Russian tenement unless you want the people in the next room to wonder what you're up to.

Then the drawings Lenny had made had had to be translated into English and the piece carefully made to specifications.

Now here it was, all hooked up and, presumably, ready for action. Colonel Spaulding fervently hoped there would *be* some action; he didn't like the smug look on Dr. Amadeus Davenport's face.

The device was hooked up on a testing-room circuit and controlled from outside. The operation could be watched through a heavy pane of bulletproof glass. "With all that power going into it," Davenport said, "I don't want anyone to get hurt by spatters of molten metal when those field coils blow."

They went outside to the control console, and Dr. Davenport flipped the energizing switch. After the device had warmed up on low power, Davenport began turning knobs slowly, increasing the power flow. In the testing room, the device just sat there, doing nothing visible, but the meters on the control console showed that something was going on. A greenish glow came from the housing that surrounded the Q-shaped gadget.

"Where the Russians made their mistake in trying to fool anyone with that thing was in their design of that laser component," said Dr. Davenport. "Or, I should say, the thing that is supposed to look like a laser component."

"Laser?" said Colonel Spaulding uncomprehendingly.

"It means 'light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation'," Davenport explained. "Essentially, a laser consists of a gas-filled tube or a solid ruby bar with parallel mirrors at both ends. By exciting the atoms from outside, light is generated within the tube, and some of it begins to bounce back and forth between the mirrors at the ends. This tends to have a cascade effect on the atoms which have picked up the energy from outside, so that more and more of the light generated inside the tube tends to be parallel to the length of the tube. One of the mirrors is only partially silvered, and eventually the light bouncing back and forth becomes powerful enough to flash through the half-silvered end, giving a coherent beam of light."

"Maybe that's what this is supposed to be," said the colonel.

Davenport chuckled dryly. "Not a chance. Not with an essentially circular tube that isn't even silvered."

Lenny Poe, the colonel noticed, wasn't the only person around who didn't care whether the thing he referred to as a "tube" was hollow or not.

"Is it doing anything?" Colonel Spaulding asked anxiously, trying to read the meters over Davenport's shoulder.

"It's heating up," Davenport said dryly.

Spaulding looked back at the apparatus. A wisp of smoke was rising slowly from a big coil.

A relay clicked minutely.

WHAP!

For a confused second, everything seemed to happen at once.

But it didn't; there was a definite order to it.

First, a spot on the ceramic tile wall of the room became suddenly red, orange, white hot. Then there was a little crater of incandescent fury, as though a small volcano had erupted in the wall. Following that, there was a sputtering and crackling from the innards of the device itself, and a cloud of smoke arose suddenly, obscuring things in the room. Finally, there was the crash of circuit-breakers as they reacted to the overload from the short circuit.

There was silence for a moment, then the hiss of the automatic fire extinguishers in the testing room as they poured a cloud of carbon dioxide snow on the smoldering apparatus.

"There," said Davenport with utter satisfaction. "What did I tell you?"

"You didn't tell me this thing was a heat-ray projector," said Colonel Spaulding.

"What are you talking about?" Dr. Davenport said disdainfully.

"Develop the film in those automatic cameras," Spaulding said, "and I'll show you what I'm talking about!"

As far as Colonel Spaulding was concerned, the film showed clearly what had happened. A beam of energy had leaped from the "tail" of the Q-tube, hit the ceramic tile of the wall, and burned its way through in half a second or so. The hole in the wall, surrounded by fused ceramic, was mute evidence of the occurrence of what Spaulding had seen.

But Dr. Davenport pooh-poohed the whole thing. Evidence to the contrary, he was quite certain that no such thing had happened. A piece of hot glass from a broken vacuum tube had done it, he insisted.

A piece of hot glass had burned its way through half an inch of tile? And a wall?

Davenport muttered something about the destructive effects of shaped charges. He was more willing to believe that something as wildly improbable as that had happened than admit that the device had done what Colonel Spaulding was quite certain it had done.

Within three hours, Davenport had three possible explanations of what had happened, each of which required at least four unlikely things to happen coincidentally.

Colonel Spaulding stalked back to his office in a state of angry disgust. Just because the thing was foreign to Davenport's notions, he had effectively tied his own hands—and Colonel Spaulding's, too.

"Where's Lenny Poe?" he asked the WAC sergeant. "I want to talk to him."

She shook her head. "I don't know, sir. Lieutenant Fesner called in half an hour ago. Mr. Poe has eluded them again."

Colonel Spaulding gazed silently at the ceiling for a long moment. Then: "Sergeant Nugget, take a letter. To the President of the United States, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D.C.

"Dear Sir. Consider this my resignation. I have had so much experience with jackasses lately that I have decided to change my name to Hackenbush and become a veterinarian. Yours truly, et cetera. Got that?"

"Yes, sir," said the sergeant.

"Burn it. When Fumblefingers Fesner and his boys find Lenny Poe again, I want to know immediately."

He stalked on into his office.

Raphael Poe was beginning to feel distinctly uncomfortable. Establishing a close rapport with another mind can be a distinct disadvantage at times. A spy is supposed to get information without giving any; a swapping of information is not at all to his advantage.

It was impossible to keep his mind a perfect blank. What he had to do was keep his strongest surface thoughts entirely on innocuous things. The trouble with that was that it made it extremely difficult to think

about some way to get out of the jam he was in. Thinking on two levels at once, while not impossible, required a nicety of control that made wire-walking over Niagara look easy.

The thing to do was to make the surface thoughts automatically repetitive. A song.

*"In a hall of strange description (Antiquarian Egyptian),
Figuring his monthly balance sheet, a troubled monarch sat
With a frown upon his forehead, hurling interjections horrid
At the state of his finances, for his pocketbook was flat."*

Simultaneously, he kept a picture in his mind's eye. It had to be something vivid that would be easy to concentrate on. The first thing that came to mind was the brilliant necktie that the President had used in his test several months before. He conjured it up in all its chartreuse glory, then he animated it. Mauve satyrs danced with rose-pink nymphs and chased them over the yellow-green landscape.

*"Not a solitary single copper cent had he to jingle
In his pocket, and his architects had gone off on a strike,
Leaving pyramids unfinished, for their wages had diminished,
And their credit vanished likewise, in a way they didn't like."*

Rafe could tell that Dr. Malekrinova's mind was trying to reject the alien ideas that were coming into her mind. She wasn't consciously trying to pick up Rafe's thoughts. But the rejection was ineffective because of its fascination. The old business about the horse's tail. If you see a white horse, you'll soon get rich if you can keep from thinking about the horse's tail until it's out of sight. The first thought that comes to mind is: "I mustn't think about the horse's tail." A self-defeating proposition.

If Sonya Borisovna had been certain that she was receiving the thoughts telepathically, she might have been able to reject them. But her mind rejected the idea of telepathy instead, so she was susceptible to the thoughts because she thought they were her own.

The cavorting of the nymphs and satyrs became somewhat obscene, but Rafe didn't bother to correct it. He had more to worry about than offending the rather prim mind of Dr. Malekrinova.

*"It was harder for His Royal Highness than for sons of toil,
For the horny-handed workmen only ate three figs per day,*

*While the King liked sweet potatoes, puddings, pies, and canned tomatoes,
Boneless ham, and Bluepoint oysters cooked some prehistoric way."*

What to do now? Should he try to get out of Russia? Was there any quick way out?

He had all the information he needed on the heat-beam projector that Dr. Malekrinova was building. The theory behind it was perfectly clear; all it needed was further experimentation. If it worked out according to theory, it would be an almost perfect defense against even the fastest intercontinental ballistic missiles.

*"As he growled, the Royal grumbler spied a bit of broken tumbler
In a long undusted corner just behind the chamber door.
When his hungry optics spied it, he stood silently and eyed it,
Then he smote his thigh with ecstasy and danced about the floor."*

Maybe he should try to make a run for the American Embassy. No. No one there knew him, and they probably couldn't get him out of the country, anyway. Besides, it would take him too long to explain the situation to them.

*"By the wit Osiris gave me! This same bit of glass shall save me!
I shall sell it as a diamond at some stupendous price!
And whoe'er I ask to take it will find, for his own sweet sake, it
Will be better not to wait until I have to ask him twice!"*

The theory behind the heat projector was simply an extension of the laser theory, plus a few refinements. Inside a ring made of the proper material, the light, acted upon by exterior magnetic fields, tended to move in a circle, so that the photon cascade effect was all in one direction instead of bouncing back and forth between a pair of mirrors. That light could be bent around corners by making it travel through a glass rod was well known, and the Malekrinova Q-tube took advantage of that effect.

In a way, the principle was similar to that of the cyclotron, except that instead of spinning ions around in a circle to increase their velocity a beam of coherent light was circulated to increase its intensity.

Then, at the proper moment, a beam of intense coherent light shot out of the tangent that formed the tail of the Q-tube. If the material of the Q

was properly constructed and contained atoms that fluoresced strongly in the infra red, you had a heat beam that delivered plenty of power. And, since the radiation was linear and "in step," the Q-tube didn't heat up much at all. The cascade effect took most of the energy out as radiation.

*"Then a Royal Proclamation was dispatched throughout the nation,
Most imperatively calling to appear before the King.
Under penalties most cruel, every man who sold a jewel
Or who bought and bartered precious stones, and all that sort of
thing."*

But knowing all that didn't help Raphael Poe or the United States of America one whit if the information couldn't be gotten out of Russia and into Colonel Spaulding's hands. Lenny had told him of the trouble the colonel was having with Dr. Davenport.

If he could only communicate with Lenny! But if he did, Dr. Malekrinova would pick up every bit of it, and that would be the end of that. No, he had to figure out some way to get himself and the information both out of the country.

Meanwhile, he had to keep thinking of an animated necktie. And he had to keep singing.

*"Thereupon, the jewelers' nether joints all quaked and knocked together,
As they packed their Saratogas in lugubrious despair.
It was ever their misfortune to be pillaged by extortion,
And they thought they smelled a rodent on the sultry desert air."*

Lenny Poe shoved open the door of Colonel Spaulding's outer office with a violence that startled Sergeant Nugget.

"Is Spaulding in?" he barked.

"I think he's expecting you," she said. There was no time to buzz the colonel; Poe was already opening the door.

"Rafe's in trouble!" Lenny said hurriedly, slamming the door behind him.

"Where have you been?" snapped the colonel.

"Never mind that! Rafe's in trouble, I said! We've gotta figure a way to get him out of it!"

Colonel Spaulding dropped all thought of bawling out Poe. "What'd he say? What's the trouble?"

"All he's doing is broadcasting that necktie—like an animated cartoon in technicolor. And he's singing."

"Singing? Singing what?"

*"As they faced the Great Propylon, with an apprehensive smile on,
Sculptured there in heiroglyphics six feet wide and nine feet high
Was the threat of King Rameses to chop every man to pieces
Who, when shown the Royal diamond, would dare refuse to buy."*

Colonel Spaulding blinked. "That's pretty. What does it mean?"

"Nothing; it's a song, that's all. That female Russian scientist can read Rafe's mind, and he's broadcasting this stuff to cover up!"

Quickly, he told Spaulding what the situation was as he had been able to piece it together from Rafe's secondary thoughts.

"Ye Gods!" Colonel Spaulding slapped at his brow. Then he grabbed for the telephone and started dialing.

Lenny dropped into one of the chairs, closed his eyes, and concentrated.

Rafe! Rafe! Listen to me! Rafe!

*"Then the richest dealer, Mulai Hassan, eyed the gem and coolly
Said, 'The thing is but a common tumbler-bottom, nothing more!'
Whereupon, the King's Assassin drew his sword, and Mulai Hassan
Never peddled rings again upon the Nile's primeval shore."*

But below the interference came Rafe's thoughts. And the one thing of primary importance to him was to get the information on the heat-beam generator to the United States.

No bigotry, no matter how strong, is totally impregnable. Even the most narrow-minded racial bigot will make an exception if a person of the despised race risks his own life to save the life of the bigot or someone the bigot loves. The bigotry doesn't collapse—not by a long shot. But an exception is made in that one case.

Lenny Poe made an exception. Any information that was worth his brother's life was *Important!* Therefore, it was not, could not be, scientific gobbledegook, no matter how it sounded.

Rafe, give it to me! Try me! I can copy it!

*"Then Abdullah abd Almahdi faintly said the stone was shoddy,
But he thought that, in a pinch, he might bid fifty cents himself.
There ensued a slight commotion where he could repent the notion,
And Abdullah was promoted to the Oriental Shelf."*

Rafe! Stop singing that stupid song and give me the stuff! She can't learn anything if you just think about that theory stuff. She already knows that! Come on! Give!

Lenny Poe grabbed a pencil and a sheaf of paper from the colonel's desk and began writing frantically as the *Song of the Egyptian Diamond* stopped suddenly.

Words. Nonsense words. That's all most of the stuff was to Lenny. It didn't matter. He spelled them as he thought they should be, and if he made a mistake, Rafe would correct him.

Rafe tried to keep a picture of the words as they would look if printed while he thought them verbally, and that helped. The information came across in the only way it could come across—not as concepts, but as symbols.

Lenny hardly noticed that the Secretary of Defense and the President had come into the room. He didn't even realize that Colonel Spaulding was feeding him fresh sheets of paper.

Lenny didn't seem to notice the time passing, nor the pain in his hand as the muscles tired. He kept writing. The President left with the Defense Secretary and came back again after a while, but Lenny ignored them.

And when it was over, he pushed pencil and paper aside and, massaging his right hand with his left, sat there with his eyes closed. Then, slowly, a smile spread over his face.

"Well, I'll be damned," he said slowly and softly.

"Mr. Poe," said the President, "is there any danger that your brother will be captured within the next hour?"

Lenny looked up with a startled grin. "Oh. Hi. I didn't notice you, Mr. President. What'd you say?"

The President repeated his question.

"Oh. No. There's nothing to worry about. The little men in white coats came after Dr. Malekrinova. She started screaming that telepathic spies were stealing her secret. She smashed all her apparatus and burned all her papers on top of the wreckage before they could stop her. She keeps shouting about a pink-and-purple orgy and singing a song about glass diamonds and Egyptian kings. I wouldn't say she was actually insane, but she is *very* disturbed."

"Then your brother is safe?"

"As safe as he ever was, Mr. President."

"Thank Heaven for that," said the President. "If they'd ever captured him and made him talk—" He stopped. "I forgot," he said lamely after a moment.

Lenny grinned. "That's all right, Mr. President. I sometimes forget it myself. But it was his handicap, I guess, that made him concentrate on telepathy, so that he doesn't need his ears to hear what people are saying. Maybe I could read minds the way he does if I'd been born that way.

"Come to think of it, I doubt if the Russians would have believed he was a spy if they'd caught him, unless they really did believe he was telepathic. A physical examination would show immediately that he was born without eardrums and that the inner ear bones are fused. They wouldn't try to make a man talk if an examination showed that he really was a deaf-mute."

The buzzer on the colonel's intercom sounded. "Yes?" said Spaulding.

"Dr. Davenport is here," said Sergeant Nugget. "He wants to talk to you."

"Send him in," said Colonel Spaulding gleefully. "I have a nice scientific theory I want to shove down his throat."

Also available on Feedbooks:

- "*On the Origin of Species, 6th Edition*", Charles Darwin
- "*The Sorrows of Young Werther*", Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
- "*Fathers and Sons*", Ivan Sergeyevich Turgenev
- "*Refuge*", Richard Herley
- "*War and Peace*", Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy
- "*The Divine Comedy*", Dante Alighieri
- "*The Ant King and Other Stories*", Benjamin Rosenbaum
- "*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*", Frederick Douglass
- "*An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge*", Ambrose Bierce
- "*Macbeth*", William Shakespeare



www.feedbooks.com
Food for the mind