

ENJOY, ENJOY

by Frederik Pohl

Terry Carr is one of the true gentlemen of the science-fiction field. Editors have trouble being beloved; what they do cuts too close to the writers' bones for comfort. I do not believe there is an editor in the world who some writer, somewhere, does not wish dead. On those grounds I feel sure that there must therefore be some people who hate Terry Carr, but I've never met one. Perhaps the reason is that he has never been in charge of a major magazine or boss of a large book publishing company; he has put in his editorial time as editorial consultant, anthologist, assistant to other editors, proprietor of a special line of his own within a larger group, and these are not the exposed mountaintops where the ravaging lightnings strike. However, they are good places for someone to be whose biggest interest is in finding and showcasing bright new talent. That's something Terry does extremely well. Devotees still fondly remember the Carr "Ace Special series of a decade and a half ago, when Terry took his chances on such unknowns as Ursula K. LeGuin, Joanna Russ, R. A. Lafferty, and a lot of others whose subsequent careers show how good an editor he really is. So when Terry Carr asks me for something, I try to deliver; and when he told me he was putting together a new anthology of original stories called *Fellowship of the Stars*, I was pleased to offer him this one-and delighted when he accepted it.

Booze, broads, big cars, the finest of food, waterbeds filled with vintage champagne. Those were some of the things that went with Tud Cowpersmith's job. The way he got the job was by going to a party in Jackson Heights. The way he happened to be at the party was that he had no choice.

It wasn't a bad party, for a loft in Jackson Heights. It wasn't a bad loft. The windows at one end looked out on the tracks of the IRT el, but they had been painted over with acrylics to look like stained glass. Every twenty minutes you got a noise like some very large person stumbling by with garbage-can lids for shoes, but except for that the el might as well not have been there. Anyway, at that end of the loft the stereo speakers stood four feet high on the floor, so the noise didn't matter all that much. You couldn't possibly talk at that end. Cowpersmith wanted, eventually, to talk, as soon as the person he wanted to talk to showed up, so he drifted to the other end.

There the noise was more or less bearable, and there the windows were still clear. They were even clean. He could see through them down on a sort of communal garden, three or four backyards for three or four different old apartment buildings thrown together: a tiny round plastic swimming pool, now iced over with leaves and boughs frozen into it; bare trees that probably had looked very nice in the summer. To get to the windows at that end you had to thread your way through a sort of indoor jungle, potted plants presumably carried in from the garden for the cold weather. And there, on a chrome-rimmed, chrome-legged kitchen table, the host and hostess were rolling joints. They greeted Cowpersmith- "Want a hit?

"Thanks.

-but the pot did not ease him. He was looking for somebody. That was the reason he was there.

The person he was looking for was named Murray. Murray was an old, old... friend? Something like that. What he basically was was somebody who owed Cowpersmith fifty dollars, from a time when fifty hadn't seemed like an awful lot. Cowpersmith had heard, the day before, that Murray was in town, and tracked him down to a hotel on Central Park South.

After some deliberation he had telephoned Murray. He really hated doing it. He needed the fifty, but in his view the odds against getting it were so bad that he didn't like the risk of investing a dime in a phone

call. The dime was, after all, real money. There was no way to flash a revoked American Express card at the phone booth, as he had done with the last two restaurants and the airline that had brought him back from Chicago, where the last of his bankroll had melted away. But the odds had paid off! Murray was in, and obliging- "What fifty?"

"Well, don't you remember, you met that Canadian girl-

"Oh, Christ, sure. Was it only fifty? Must be some interest due by now, Tud. Tell you what-

-and the way it worked out they were to meet at this party, and Cowpersmith would collect not fifty but a hundred dollars.

That required some decision making, too, because there was the investment for a subway token to be considered. But Murray had sounded prosperous enough for a gamble. Only no Murray. Cowpersmith took another hit from a girl wearing batik bellbottoms and a halter top and glared around the room. Through the roar of Alice Cooper he realized she was talking to him.

"What?"

"I said, is your name Ted?"

"Tud.

"Turd?"

"Tud Cowpersmith, he yelled over the androgynous rock. "It's a family name, Tudsbury.

She reached up close to his ear-she was not more than five feet tall-and shouted, "If you're a friend of Murray's he's looking for you. He allowed her to lead him around the buttress of the stairwell, for the first time noticing that her armpits were unshaven, the hair on her head stuck out in tiny, tied witch curls, and she was quite pretty.

And there was Murray, knotting his wild red eyebrows hospitably. "Hey, Tud. Looking great, man! Long time.

"You're looking fine too, said Cowpersmith, although it wasn't really true. Murray looked a little bit fine and a lot prosperous; the medallion that hung over his raw-silk shirt was clearly gold, and he wore a very expensive- looking, though ugly, thick wristwatch. The thing was he also looked about fifteen years older than he had eighteen months before. They sat in two facing armchairs, one a broken lounge, the other so overstuffed that the stuffing was curling out of it. The girl sat cross-legged between them on the floor, and Murray idly played with her tied curls.

Cooper had changed to the New York Queens and somebody had turned the volume down, or else the shelter of the stairwell did the same thing for them. Cowpersmith got several words of what Murray was saying.

"A job? Cowpersmith repeated. "What kind of a job?"

"The finest fucking job in all the world, said Murray, and laughed and laughed, poking the girl's shoulder. When he had calmed down, he said, "What do you work for, Tud?"

Cowpersmith said angrily, "God, *you* know. I worked for the advertising agency until they took cigarette ads off TV, then I was with the oil company until-

"No, no. For what *purpose*.

Cowpersmith shrugged. "Money?"

"Sure, but what do you do with the money?"

"Pay bills? he guessed.

"No, no, damn it! *After* you do all the lousy stuff like that. What do you do with the *extra* money? Like when you were still pulling down twenty-five K at the agency and everything was on the expense account anyway?"

"Oh, sure. It had been so long ago Cowpersmith had almost forgotten. "Fun. Good food. Plays. Girls. Cars-

"Right on, cried Murray, "and that's what everyone else works for, too. Everybody but me! That's what my job *is*. I don't have to work *for* those things, because I work at them. I don't imagine you're going to believe this, Tud, but it's true, he added as an afterthought.

Cowpersmith looked down at the girl and swallowed hard. A dismal vision flashed through his mind, of the five crumpled twenties in his pocket turning out to be joke money that, turned over, might say *April Fool* or, held for ten minutes, might evaporate their ink, leaving bare paper and ruin. "I don't have any idea of what you're talking about, he said to Murray, but still looking at the girl.

"You think I'm stoned, Murray said accurately.

"Well-

"I don't blame you. Look. Well, let's see. Shirley, he said, half laughing, "how do we explain this? Try it this way, he went on, not waiting for her help, "suppose you had all the money in the world. Suppose you had more money than you even wanted, right?"

"I follow you. I mean, as a theoretical thing.

"And then suppose you had like an accident. Crashbang; you're in a car accident or a piano falls on you. Quadriplegic. Can't have any fun anymore. Got that?"

"Bad scene, said Cowpersmith, nodding.

"All right, but even though you can't do much yourself anymore, there's a way you can have *some* fun vicariously. Like you're not going to Ibiza yourself, but you're seeing slides of it, or something. You can't get the kicks a normal person can, but you can get something, maybe not much but better than nothing, out of what other people do. Now, in that position, Tud, what would you do?"

"Kill myself.

"No you wouldn't, for Christ's sake. You'd hire other people to have fun for you. And then with this process- he patted the ugly thing that looked like a wristwatch, but Cowpersmith now realized was not-

you can play back their fun, and maybe it isn't much, but it's all the jollies you can ever get. Right, Shirley?

She shook her head and said sweetly. "Shit.

"Well, anyway, it's *something* like that. I guess. It's kind of secret, I think probably because it's someone like Howard Hughes or maybe one of the Roekefellers that's involved. They won't say. But the job's for real, Tud. All I have to do is have all the fun I can. They pick up the tab, it all goes on the credit card, and they get the bill, and they pay it. As long as I wear this thing, that's all I have to do. And every Friday, besides all that, five hundred in cash.

There was a pause while Bette Midler flowed over and around them from the speakers and Cowpersmith looked from the girl to his friend, waiting for the joke part. At last he said, "But *nobody* gets a job like that.

"Wrong, friend," said Shirley. "You did. Just now. If you want it. I'll take you there tomorrow morning.

Behind the door stenciled *E.T.C. Import-Export Co., Ltd.* there was nothing more than a suite of offices sparsely occupied and eccentrically furnished. Hardly furnished at all, you might say. There was nobody at the reception desk, which Shirley walked right past, and no papers on the desk of the one man anywhere visible. "I've got a live one for you, Mr. Morris, Shirley sang out. "Friend of Murray 's.

Mr. Morris looked like a printing salesman, about fifty, plump, studying Cowpersmith over half glasses. "Good producer, he agreed reluctantly. "All right, you're hired. And he counted out five hundred dollars in bills of various sizes and pushed them across the desk to Cowpersmith.

Cowpersmith picked up the money, feeling instantly stoned. "Is that all there is to it?

"No! Not for me, I've got all the paperwork now, your credit card, keeping records-

"I mean, like, don't you want me to fill out an application form?

"Certainly not. He opened his desk drawer and pulled out a wristwatch-shaped thing. Cowpersmith could not see all of the inside of the drawer from his angle, but he was nearly sure there was nothing else in it. He handed it to Cowpersmith and said, "Once you put it on it won't come off by itself, but we'll unlock it any time you want to quit. That's all. Go have fun. By which, he added, "I don't actually mean screwing, because we've got plenty of records of that already.

"What then? asked Cowpersmith, disconcerted.

"Hell, man! Up to you. Water skiing, skin diving, breaking the bank at Monte Carlo . What do you dream about, when things look bad'? You do dream, don't you?

"Well, sure, but- Cowpersmith hesitated, thinking. "I always wanted to eat at La Tour d'Argent. And, uh, there's this crazy poison fish they have in Japan-

"Sounds good, the man said without enthusiasm. "I'll have your card delivered to you at your hotel tomorrow.

"Yes, but wait a minute. What's the catch'?

"No catch, Tud, said Shirley, annoyed. "Jesus, what does it take to convince you?"

"Nothing like this ever happened to me before. There has to be something wrong with it.

"No there doesn't, said Mr. Morris, "and I have to get busy on your card.

Cowpersmith found himself standing up. "No, wait, he said. "How-how long does the job last?"

Shrug. "Until you get bored, I guess.

"Then what?"

"Then you turn in your recordings. And you take your last week's pay and go look for another job.

"Recordings? Cowpersmith looked down at his wrist, where, without thinking about it, he had clasped on the metal object. is this a tape recorder?"

"I'm not into that part of it, Mr. Morris said. "I only know my job, and I've just done it. Good-by.

And that was all she wrote. At Shirley's urging, Cowpersmith checked into a small but very nice hotel on the Upper East Side, went to a massage parlor, ice-skated at Rockefeller Center, and met Shirley for a late drink in a Greek bar in Chelsea. "Good start, she said. "Now you're on your own. Got any plans?"

"Well, he said experimentally, "I think I can still make the Mardi Gras in Rio. And I heard about a safari tour to Kenya-

"Travel, huh. Why not?" She finished her drink. "Well, we'll keep in touch--

"No, take it easy, he said. "I don't understand some things.

"There isn't any reason for you to understand. Just enjoy.

"I tried to call Murray, but he's gone off somewhere-

And you're going too, right? Look, she said, "you're going to ask some probably very important questions, to you, but all I know's my own job

"Which is?"

"-which is none of your business. Go enjoy. When Mr. Morris wants to be in touch with you he'll be in touch with you. No. Don't ask how he'll find you. He'll find you. And so good night.

And so, for eight dynamite months, Tud Cowpersmith enjoyed. He did everything he had ever wanted to do. He made the carnival in Rio and discovered hearts-of-palm soup in a restaurant overlooking the Copacabana beach. He rode a hydrofoil around Leningrad and toured the Hermitage, bloated on fresh caviar. Gypsy violins in Soho, pounded abalone on Fisherman's Wharf, a nude-encounter weekend at Big Sur, high-stakes gambling in Macao. First-class stewardesses on half a dozen airlines began to recognize him, in half a dozen languages. Shirley turned up once, in his suite at the George Cinq, but only to tell him he was doing fine. Another time he thought he saw Murray pushing a scooter at the Copenhagen airport, but he was going one way and Murray another, and there was no way for Cowpersmith to get off the moving person carrier to catch him. He took up motorcycle racing and tried to enjoy listening to the

harpsichord and, in spite of what Morris had said, repeatedly and enthusiastically enjoyed a great deal of sex. It was at the time of his second case of gonorrhoea that he began to feel enough was very nearly enough, and then one morning his phone rang.

"Cowpersmith? said Mr. Morris' tinny little voice, very far away. "You don't seem to be having a lot of fun right now. Are you about ready to quit?"

Although the pleasure had not been quite as much pleasure lately, the prospect of losing it was very much pain. "No! yelled Cowpersmith. "What are you talking about? Hell, man, you should see the girl I just- He looked around; he was alone in the big bed. "I mean, I've got this date-

"No, whispered the small voice, "that's not good enough. Your EI's been down for three weeks now. Not below the threshold yet. We can still get a little good stuff from you. But the quality's definitely down, Cowpersmith, and something's got to be done about it.

Dismayed, Cowpersmith sat up and swung his feet over the side of the bed. "How do you know about-what is it, my EI?"

"Emotional index? Well, what do you think, man? We continuously monitor the product, and it just isn't what we want.

"Yeah, Cowpersmith conceded. "Look, I just woke up and I'm a little fuzzy, but- He got out of bed, car- rying the phone, and sat in a chair by the window. Outside was Grosvenor Square , with a demonstration going on in front of the American Embassy, so he knew he was in the Europa in London .

"But what, Cowpersmith?"

"But I'll think of something. Hold on.

By this time the staff of the hotel had learned to value him and understand his likes, so the floor waiter, alerted by the incoming phone call, was bringing in his black coffee, American style, with two large glasses of fresh orange juice. Cowpersmith swallowed a little of one and a little of the other and said, "Listen, can you give me an idea of what he likes?"

"Who likes?"

"Whoever it is is paying for all this stuff.

"I can't discuss our clients, said Mr. Morris. "They told me not to.

"Well, can you give me some idea?"

"No. I don't know what you've been doing; the monitor doesn't show that. It shows where you are and how you're feeling. That's it. We won't know exactly what you've been up to until the debriefing, when they study the recordings. Me, I'll never know. Not my department.

"Well, don't you have *any* idea what kind of stuff they like?"

"Mostly, any kind of stuff they haven't had before.

"Hah! Cowpersmith thought wildly. "Listen, how's this? Has anybody just sort of sat and meditated for

you?

Pause. "You mean like religious meditation? Like some kind of guru?"

"Well, yes. Or just sitting and thinking, like, you know, Thoreau at Walden Pond .

"I give it forty-eight hours, said Mr. Morris.

"Or-well, how about skin diving? Again. The doctor told me to lay off for a little while until my ear healed up after Bermuda, but I heard about this neat stuff at the Great Barrier Reef, and-

"Cowpersmith, said the tiny voice, "you know what you're costing? Not counting the half a thousand a week in cash. Your charge has been running over forty-eight hundred a week, on the average. You got to show more than some spearfishing maybe a couple weeks from now. You got to show *today*. And tomorrow. And every day. So long.

So Cowpersmith kept at it. The meditation didn't seem to be going well after the first hour, so he hired a new travel consultant and for a while things looked bright. Or bright enough. Maybe. He backpacked across the Trinity Mountains and flew to Naples for a swim in the Blue Grotto. He ate couscous and drank akvavit and smoked Acapulco gold, all in their native environment. Then he took a pack mule through the Montana hills, and flew back to Naples for four hours of clambering around the ruins of Pompeii, and hit Paris for nightclubs and Waikiki for surfing...

... But a couple of wipeouts at Diamond Head made his ear feel worse, and one nightclub turned out to be an awful lot like another, except that where the toilet jokes were in French he couldn't understand them. He knew the phone was going to ring again. He didn't need the little machine on his wrist to tell him he was down. He *felt* down.

So he came to a decision, and just sat in his hotel room, sullenly waiting. He had already put eleven thousand dollars in a numbered bank account in Bern and paid off all his old debts, and if it was over it was over.

But he didn't want it to be over.

The more he thought about it, the more he didn't want it to be over.

It was, after all, the finest fucking job in all the world, and everything Murray had said about it was true. No more headwaiters falling all over themselves? No more pretty women to take to the clubs, to the tracks, to bed? He ordered up a couple of bottles of brandy and worked himself up to a weeping drunk and when, the next morning, it was inevitably followed by a dry-mouthed, burning-bellied hangover, he sat wallowing in the misery of his thousand-franc-a-day suite, shaking and enfeebled, barely moving to order up food, and more booze, and more food. The longer he sat, the worse he felt. And the next day. And the next day. And- And by the fifth day, after most of a week of solid,

sullen misery, he realized that his phone had not rung. Why not? He certainly wasn't enjoying.

He didn't understand why, but when it came through to his mind that it was so, he didn't really care why. Hope was back. The magic money machine had not turned itself off! So he cleaned himself up. He got himself dressed. He waved off the floor waiter and the major-domo and the concierge and went out for a walk, a perfectly dull, uninteresting, unexciting walk, up the Champs Elysees to the Lido Arcade. He ate a quiche and drank a beer and dropped in on a flick. It was an old Barbra Streisand with French

subtitles; he had seen it before, and he didn't care. It bored the ears off him. He enjoyed being bored very much.

But when he got back to the hotel, New York was on the line.

"For homey pleasures, said Mr. Morris' small, distant voice, "you don't get paid this kind of money. You want a McDonald's hamburger, quit and come back.

"I had this feeling you'd call, Cowpersmith acknowledged. "What can I say? I've had it with joy. It is no fun anymore.

"So quit. This was your second warning anyhow, and you don't get but three.

"All right, said Cowpersmith, after a moment of digesting that bit of information. "But tell me one thing. Last week I was *really* down; how come you didn't fire me then?"

"Last week? Last week you were *great*. I thought you knew, pleasure isn't the only sensation they like.

You mean you'll pay me for misery? "One of our best units, said the little voice in his ear, "was terminal stomach cancer. They paid him five grand a week plus full medical every week he didn't take painkillers.

That took a moment to digest too, and it went down hard, but Cowpersmith began to see hope. "Well, I don't want to go that far-

"Whatever you were doing last week was far enough, I'd say.

Then maybe I could-

"Sure, said Mr. Morris. "Nice talking to you. Third strike is out.

Ensued some of the most depressing weeks of Cowpersmith's life. Not miserable. At least not reliably miserable; he could not even be sure, from day to day, that he was quite bugged enough to register a decent misery on his wristband, and that in itself was discouraging. He tried everything he could think of. Inspiration struck, and he made a quick list of all the things he had been putting off because they were awful: went to the dentist, had a barium enema, got tattooed. That took care of three days, and, looking back at them honestly, he had to admit they were not memorably bad, merely lousy. He flew back to Washington and spent two afternoons in the Senate gallery-merely tedious; after the first half hour he stopped hearing what was being said and caught himself drowsing off. He flanged together two stereo systems and poured thirty watts of acid rock into one earpiece and Mahler into the other and came out with only a headache. He invented excuses to go in and out of Kennedy airport, with special emphasis on the Customs line and the hack-stands, but after a while even that anger diminished. Food. Remembering all the enjoyment he had had from good food, he looked for dyspepsia and displeasure from bad. He ate a haggis in Glasgow, flew to Heathrow and had brawn for dinner, caught a commuter flight to Paris and had an American breakfast at Orly. None of it worked very well. It proved to be harder to make oneself unhappy than to find joy, which had, after all, lasted for the best part of a year. The other thing was that deliberately making oneself unhappy made one, well, unhappy. It was not a way he liked to live. He discovered that twenty cups of coffee a day, sixty cigarettes, and a maximum of three hours of sleep gave him a perpetual headachy feeling that made everything an annoyance, but the other side of the coin was that nothing was much *more* than an annoyance; he was simply too beat to care. In desperation he returned to the States and delved into copies of the underground press, answering all the ads he could find for "instruction, "discipline, and so on, but that mostly got him a large number of FBI men and postal



inspectors, and the S-M experiences were basically, he thought, pretty God-awful anyway. So he was not all that surprised when, less than five weeks from the second warning, his phone rang again. He was in Waikiki, where he had been nerving himself up to trying to get his ear hurting again in the surf, and he was frankly grateful to be spared it.

"Third time's the charm, said the little voice. "Come home, come home for debriefing.

"I'm fired, right?"

"Well, said distant Mr. Morris judiciously, "you stop working for us as soon as you're debriefed. But you get a year's severance pay, which comes to, let's see, twenty-six K.

"Wow! cried Cowpersmith. And then, "Uh. Say. Was that, you know, just to give me a high?"

"No, although you did register a beaut. No, it's real. You just have to turn over the recording, and you're on your own.

"Well, said Cowpersmith, picking up the phone and walking out onto the lanai. "Well, he said, surrendering a dream, "I guess that's about it, then. Isn't it? I'll catch the first plane tomorrow-

"No, said Mr. Morris, "you won't do that, you'll catch the next plane right now. We've arranged for your tickets; they'll be at the desk when you check out. Which should be in fifteen minutes.

And five minutes after he hung up, the Uikai bellman was at the door, eager for Cowpersmith's one beaten bag. Mr. Morris had been very thorough. They not only had Cowpersmith's ticket at the desk, they had an envelope with two twenty-dollar bills and ten singles, for tips and miscellaneous. And they also had their instructions about his credit card. "I'm very sorry, said the clerk politely, "but as of the time you settle your account with us your card is canceled. And we have to pick it up. It's part of our contract with the company- "Well, fine, said Cowpersmith. "Tell you what. I forgot to pick up a couple little things in the shops, so let me have the card for a minute *before* I finish settling up.

"So sorry, said the clerk. "You already have.

And now, when it was all over, Cowpersmith spent his time in the taxi to the airport thinking of things he could have done but had not. He got onto the plane in a daze of missed menus and untried wines, and had to be prodded sharply by the stewardess before he realized he was in the wrong part of the airplane. "Sorry, he mumbled, allowing himself to be led aft. He glanced around with some wonder. He had almost forgotten that there were parts of a 707 where people sat three abreast.

At Kennedy he was met: Shirley.

He stared at her through gummed eyelids. By the sun it was late afternoon, but by the clock of his body it was eight in the morning after a night with no more sleep than a man can get sitting in a coach seat between a fat plumber on a group tour and a small boy who alternated snoring and leaping about. "Had fun? she asked, steering him toward a chauffeur-driven Bentley.

"You know better than I, he said bitterly, trying to take the wristband off and slap it in her palm. The gesture failed, because it still would not come open.

"You'll feel better when we get going, she said. "I've got a Thermos of coffee. It's about an hour's drive.

"I know, I know, grumped Cowpersmith, who had, after all, been in and out on the Kennedy-Manhattan run more times than he could count. But when the chauffeur took a right-hand turn where there had always been a left, he realized he did not know. It did not seem important, and he drowsed until the car stopped, doors opened- "Here's your boy, Morrie.

"Looks like we'll have to carry him in.

-and he opened his eyes to see Mr. Morris and the chauffeur tugging at him.

"Em all right, he said with dignity, and halfway up the pebbled walk looked around and said. "Where is this place, anyway? Porticoed porch, ivied walls, he had not seen it before.

"Where you get debriefed, said Shirley, pausing at the door. "So long, Tud.

He hesitated. "You're not coming in? Will I see you again?

"I'll see you, she said, patted his shoulderblade and returned to the car.

Sensory impressions smote him: An entrance hall, with a staircase winding up under a huge canvas-shrouded painting in a gilt frame. A library of glassed-in shelves, mostly empty, with drop-clothed chairs around a cold and swept fireplace. A dining hall, and beyond it a closed door.

"Does he live in this place, whoever he is? asked Cowpersmith, staring about.

Mr. Morris sighed. "There is no he, ' he said patiently. "There are they.' They are here, some of them ... This is the part I hate, he added morosely.

"Why ?"

"Well, you're going to ask a lot of questions again. You all do. And you're going to figure you've done your bit, now you have a right to know. Right? And maybe in a sense you do, although it's pretty pointless. . . Anyway. What we do now, we take the recordings from you, and when we've got enough to make a shipment, we send them off. I don't know where, exactly. I don't know what they do with them, exactly. But it's a big business with them.

"Big business? Misconceptions and erroneous as- sumptions were splintering in Cowpersmith's brain.

"Well, like a TV network. I mean, I think they kind of broadcast them, sort of like a *National Geographic* television special: sensory impressions from all over, strange pleasures of the aborigines-

"I *never*, said Cowpersmith positively, apprehensions dissolving the sleep from his mind, "heard any broadcast like that.

"No. Not on this planet, no.

Cowpersmith swallowed, choking on apprehensions and the splinters of former certainties.

"The mistake you made, said Mr. Morris sympathetically, "is that you assumed the people who hired you were human beings. They're not. No. You wouldn't think so if you'd seen one. They, uh. . . Well, they look a little bit like fish and a little bit like the devil. All red, you see. And not very big-

"But Murray said-

"Oh, Christ, said Mr. Morris, "how could Murray know? If it's any consolation to you, when he was debriefed he was as surprised as you are. It gets everybody the same way.

"Bloody charming, said Cowpersmith bitterly. "Now I'm an agent of a foreign power. I wouldn't be surprised if the FBI picks me up about this.

"I would, said Mr. Morris. "In there, go on.

"Where?

"There. Through the door.

"What do we do in there? Cowpersmith demanded, truculent because the only alternative was being terrified.

"You turn over the recording to them and that's that." said Mr. Morris.

Cowperstnith swallowed again, choking this time on plain panic. He wished that the car hadn't gone away. Still, he thought, they had to be somewhere on Long Island. Maybe Sands Point? Maybe Patchogue. And he still had most of the fifty dollars, plus whatever had been left in his coat, plus, of course, that Swiss bank account. There would be a taxi...

"Okay, he said, tugging at the wristband. "Let's get it over with and I'll get out of here.

"Oh, said Mr. Morris, annoyed, "what are you doing? That's not the recording. That's only the monitor, so we could tell how you were doing and where you were. You turn over the recording in there.

And he opened the door behind the dining hall.

Two men in white stepped through. They were not smiling. They were without expression, like saloon bouncers or dog catchers.

The room behind them looked like an operating chamber: bright lights over a flat white table. Rows of transparent jars lined the shelves around the room. They came in two sizes:

In the large (there were two of them) red and hideous things stirred uneasily, looking out toward Cowpersmith with great pale eyes.

In the smaller jars, of which there were more than a dozen- Were the floating objects in them *really* human heads?

And that one there, next to the brighter of the two red creatures, the one with the wild red eyebrows-wasn't it very familiar?

It was too late to turn; the men were reaching out for him as Mr. Morris said from behind him, sadly, disclaimingly, "What better recording could they have than the one in your own brain?"