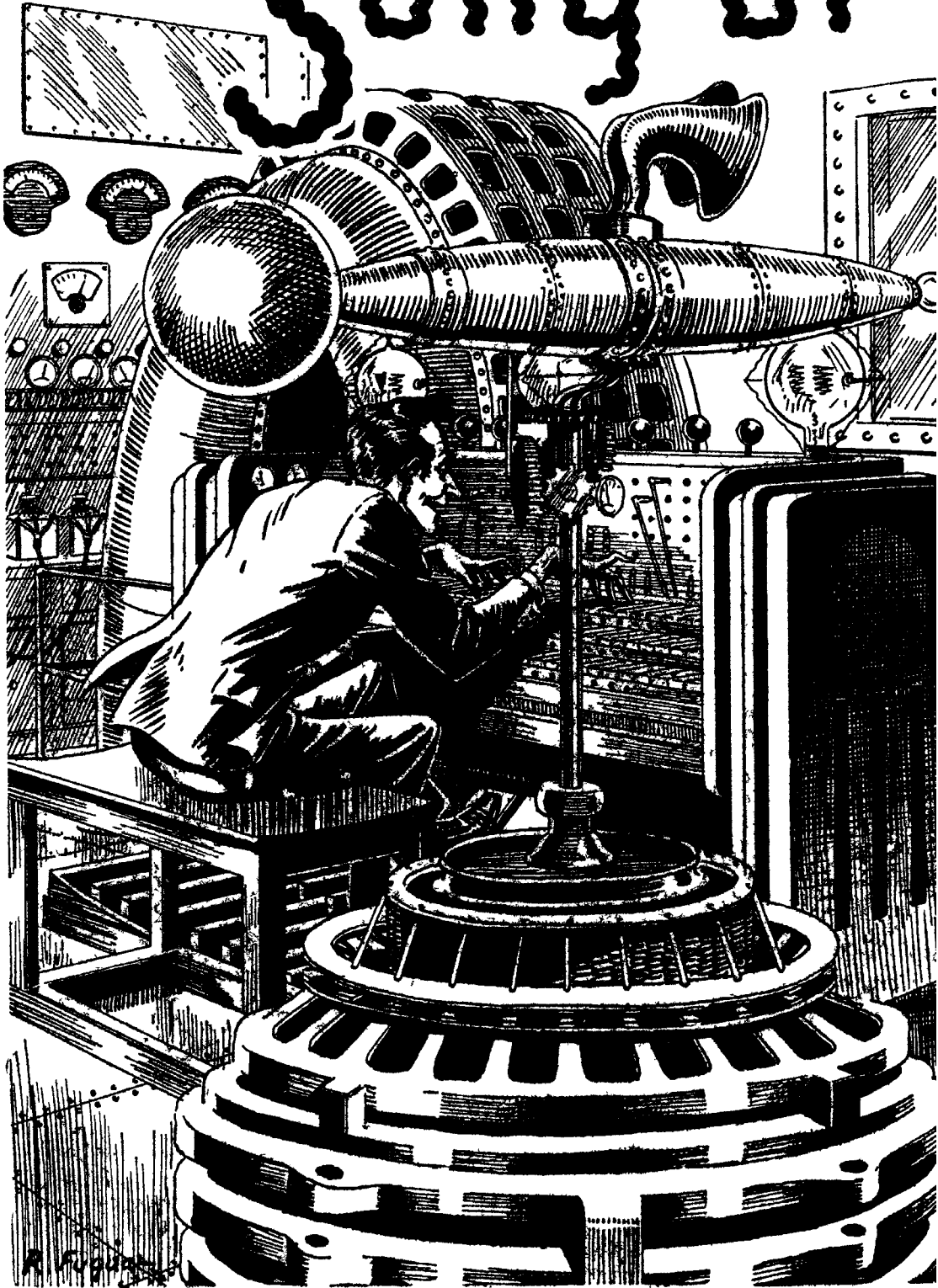


Song of Death

by Ed Earl Repp

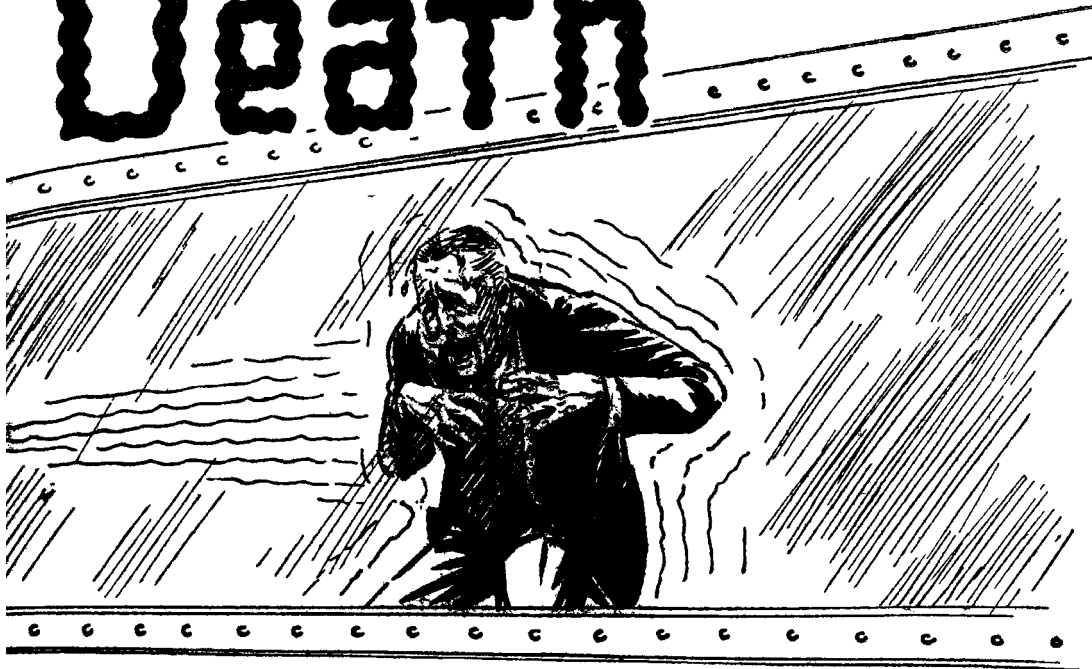
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Song of



Now rollicking mirth swelled from the organ in forceful tones

Death



By **ED EARL REPP**

An amazing death came to the rats when Vance turned the supersonic cannon on them. But the real test came when he used the vibrations on a greater scale—to torture and murder a man.

CHAPTER I Time for Murder

IT never occurred to Vance, until the morning when Dyson's car rolled up before the house, that there might be a practical use of the thing he had discovered. But as he stood there in the second story window looking down onto the graveled horseshoe drive, the plan hit him with such force that he trembled visibly. His face became alive with an intensity that made his sallow skin grow tight over his cheek-bones.

A practical use—there was the test of every laboratory achievement, to determine whether or not it was a worthwhile one. He had thought this one just a freak of acoustical science. He had toyed with it in the laboratory until he knew it had

great possibilities as a show-trick, but such a use as the one that now occurred to him had been undreamed-of. But there is always a useful purpose for any new discovery, he had found, however impractical it may seem.

And the purpose to which Vance was going to put his discovery was murder.

He turned, now, and left his bedroom. His face was still sleep-wrinkled and his hair tousled, though it was ten o'clock. He hurried down the hall, descended the stairs, and went to open the front door. Dyson stood there, framed blockily in the portal, when he opened it. His face was sullen and contemptuous, and his clipped gray moustache seemed to bristle with distaste. Dyson's skin was healthy-looking and firm, and his eyes, though he was over sixty, were as clear and sharp as those of a much younger man.

Vance put a smile on his lips as he invited, "Come on in. It's good to see you, Father."

"Don't 'Father' me," Dyson clipped. "Just remember Ellen's dead, now. I'm no longer any kin of yours, in-law or otherwise."

Vance moistened his lips. Within one second of their meeting for the first time in a year, the old trouble had risen again and left them both standing tense and angry. They stood for a second glaring at each other. Then Vance raised his

shoulders and let them fall. "As you like," he said. "But don't forget that I've suffered too. I loved Ellen. Her death was as much a shock to me as it was to you."

Dyson's fine lips lifted in a sneer. "I'd smash your yellow face in for that," he breathed. "But I don't even want to soil my hands with you. You loved Ellen, did you? You loved her so much you broke her heart and sent her back to me after two hellish years with you! Two years! I wonder how any woman could stand two days!"

A cold rage built up in Vance's thin body. His skinny fists clenched as he faced the older man, and then he turned and muttered, "Let's sit down, anyway. No use digging up old grievances."

But as he led the way to the library he would have liked to have turned on Dyson and beaten the life out of him. Only he knew he couldn't. His father-in-law was an ex-military man, and certain life-long habits, such as physical fitness, he had carried into private life when he retired. He knew that Dyson, with all his sixty-three years, could whale the daylights out of him, though he was scarcely thirty. But then he remembered the way those rats had died up in his laboratory—without a sign on their bodies—and he smiled thinly.

He knew that his father-in-law had never liked him, any more than he had cared for him. He remembered, too, the ill grace with which he had given his daughter to him in marriage four years ago. Well, maybe it had been a mistake at that.

Though, for the first few months after they were married, Vance and his wife had got along very happily. But after that a hundred little things had arisen between them that gradually turned Vance's love to hate, though Ellen still followed him around with a dog-like devotion that disgusted the scientist. She was one of those persons who are disgustingly cheerful in the morning, whereas Vance was never ready to wipe the scowl off his face before ten o'clock. Then, too, she carried the "married-lover" business to an extreme; every time he had to go down town for a few hours, she had to kiss him good-bye as though he were leaving for a year. God knows, there were many times when he wished he were!

In the first place, Vance reminded himself, he had only married her as a matter of convenience anyway. He needed money to carry on his

laboratory work in physics, and the idea of teaching in a university to get money for his experiments was distasteful to him. So, when he met the pretty young daughter of wealthy Henry Dyson, he got the idea of marrying her and letting her allowance support him in luxury.

A pang of regret gripped him as he offered Dyson a seat in the library. For the first time he wished he had put up with Ellen and not made life such a hell for her that she went back to her father. Because now, with her dead from an automobile accident, her father was going to throw him out...

Only the girl's intervention, for a love that she still had not lost, had made Dyson allow him to stay on here, with an allowance of a hundred a month. With Ellen dead, that intervention no longer mattered.

Dyson's low voice brought him out of his remorseful thoughts. "I only wish I were about ten years older," he was saying. "If I were, I'd kill you the way I would step on an ant. At that age, I wouldn't care so much about being hung for it. God knows you deserve killing if anyone ever did!"

Vance bristled, "You're going a little too far when you say that. After all, the worst you can say of me was that I told her I didn't love her any more. And women don't die of broken hearts these days."

"No," Dyson agreed, shaking his head slowly. "They don't die of broken hearts—but sometimes they kill themselves over scoundrels like you!"

"Kill themselves!" Vance gasped. He felt a cold feeling in his stomach. They'd told him Ellen died in an automobile accident.

"Yes. That accident could have been avoided. There wasn't a trace of skid marks on the road where her car went off the cliff. Ellen deliberately drove over the edge." Dyson's brown eyes burned into the other man's.

The scientist went rigid. His nature was shocked to its very bottom by the terrible news, for he could not escape the thought that it was he who had caused Ellen to kill herself.

Dyson went on grimly, "That's why I came here this morning, to tell you that. Perhaps you have human feelings enough to realize what kind of a thing you've done." He stood up and reached for his hat. "There's another reason I came here,

Vance,” he went on with obvious relish of his position. “I came to tell you to be out in two weeks. This is my property, and my house. If you aren’t out in two weeks I’ll come in and break every damned piece of equipment you’ve got here.”

Vance was shocked out of his horror. He had expected the blow, but not to be thrown out so quickly. “Two weeks!” he echoed, running his bony fingers through his hair. “Why—it’ll take me a couple of months to pack everything and move out.”

Dyson shrugged. “That’s your problem,” he said.

A crafty look flitted over the scientist’s lips. “You’ll be hurting more than just me if you enforce that threat,” he warned Dyson. “I’ve made a discovery this week that can restore normal hearing to thousands of deaf persons. My work in acoustics, which you have always laughed at, is becoming practical now—practical enough for a business man like yourself to appreciate. But if you make me move out that quickly, many of my things will be ruined. It takes time to pack delicate instruments such as I use. Give me—a month, at least.”

Dyson regarded him calculatingly. He seemed to be weighing his words. Finally he replied, “All right—one month from today I’ll expect you out. I don’t for one minute think you’ve got anything that can help humanity, but even a man like you might stumble onto something sometimes. Just on the off chance that you have, I’ll give in. If you can really do what you say, my sacrifice will have been worthwhile.”

Vance smiled his thanks—a smile that they both knew was forced. He was thinking how gullible Dyson was, for his invention was scarcely what he had represented it to be. With it, he could very easily deafen a person, even kill rats in the fraction of a second—but as for restoring hearing to anyone, that was sales talk.

He was still smiling when his father-in-law turned and left the room. With an attempt at hostly cordiality, he followed him to the vestibule, bade him good-bye, and closed the door behind him. Then, in a flash, his face darkened and an almost animal-like snarl escaped his lips. He shook as with ague. Then he got control of himself by an effort and turned hastily to the stairs.

CHAPTER II The Super-Sonic Machine

IT was like entering the cool sanctuary of a cathedral for him to go into the laboratory on the second floor. These were the only friends he owned, these shining articles of scientific equipment, these guinea pigs and rats on which he experimented. These—and his music—were his life. All of Vance’s waking moments were spent in the laboratory or at the console of the electric organ in the small room off his study. And the organ itself was very closely allied with his work.

He rubbed his hands as he glanced over the display. In the center of the long room was his sound projector, a gleaming, cigar-shaped affair mounted almost like a cannon. Beside it, in a shallow pit in the floor, was a battery of electric power equipment guarded by a brass rail. Off to his right, at the other end of the room, was the target at which he aimed the sound waves of his experiments. It consisted of a small barrel thickly lined with glass-fiber insulation. Around the walls, and in little islands about the floor, were other groups of scientific paraphernalia.

A look of triumph mingled with hate flitted across Vance’s sallow features as he recalled the way that rat had died in the target-barrel the other day. One shot from the high-powered sound “cannon” and it writhed for a second and then died. He had been stupefied for a while at the results. Then, on analyzing the animal’s brain, he began to understand. And it was the unbelievable condition of that dead rat’s brain that had given him the idea of doing away with Dyson.

With his father-in-law dead, he would be rich. The only living relative of the old man, he was in line to receive everything, even if he had to sue to get it. Hence it was imperative that he do away with him immediately, before he could be put out and perhaps get word of the trouble into the papers. Things like that always looked bad in case a lawsuit was necessary.

For a second a feeling of despair clutched at his heart. One month to build a lethal weapon out of a scientific toy! It was a task that would have defeated the average scientist at the outset. But Vance was far above the average scientist—in some ways—and he knew it could be done. He knew, too, that if he could perfect that discovery

he had recently made, he could kill Dyson without leaving a scar, a bruise, a trace of poison, or any other indication of how it had been done.

Nothing but a peculiar condition of the brain, as in the case of the rat. For the animal had looked perfectly all right until he opened the skull, and there he found the secret of its death. The brain was almost as hard as clay! Instead of the customary jelly-like consistency, the little gray mass of protoplasm was hard and almost unyielding!*

It seemed only logical, therefore, that if the sound waves could be greatly magnified, a human brain could be similarly affected.

Suddenly he went into his workrooms and fell to work again. The belief that he was on the right track stimulated him to intense work, for the prize was indeed worth his labors.

Until midnight Vance did not leave the laboratory. He moved about it like some weird scientist of another world, calculating furiously for hours at a time, then leaping up to make some change in his sound cannon. The shadow from his long figure fell across the floor in a grotesque pattern.

By midnight he knew he was working on the wrong assumption. He stood wearily in the center of the big room clutching the sheaf of papers covered with his calculations in his hand, staring down at them with his head bowed. His tests had showed him far off the track. The theory he was basing his work on was that any tone, intensified sufficiently, could cause chemical changes in any body. He had doubled the intensity of his sound cannon. And even that was insufficient to kill a guinea pig!

He could kill a rat with half the power, but the guinea pig remained untouched. Obviously he was going in the wrong direction. For at this rate it would take a force sufficient to crumble a brick

wall, in order to touch the human brain!

With a muttered oath, Vance shambled from the laboratory and went to bed.

Contrary to the usual practice of the scientist, he was out of bed at eight o'clock the next morning, and hard at work by eight-thirty.

Hoping that it might have been his machinery, and not his calculations, which were wrong, he took his sound projector apart and gave it a thorough overhauling. It was simple in construction though complex in operation. It appeared exactly like a cigar with a large marble affixed to the rear end, and pivoted through the middle on an axis. The part of it where the axis passed through was open on the top, for the entrance of sound waves. These waves, of super-sonic, or inaudible, frequency, were projected down into it from an amplifier on the ceiling; then, as they passed into its interior, a powerful arrangement of electron multipliers and cathode tubes, augmented by a device of Vance's own invention for condensing the molecules of air in the super-sonic waves, met the sound waves with a terrific drive of power. The result caused the harmless stream of inaudible sounds to be hurled from the open end of the sound cannon in an almost solid bolt of sound.

When these projectiles struck a rat, the animal was instantly killed. But even a double charge of power was insufficient to kill a guinea pig. That was wrong, Vance knew. And yet when the machine was reassembled and tried once more, it still held true.

In despair he plunged into his calculations again and sought for some solution to the problem. No philanthropic scientist battling to give humanity a cure for some disease ever labored any harder than did Vance, whose sole aim was to kill a man. He worked without eating until ten o'clock that night. His face grew more sallow than ever and became stubbled with a growth of blond beard. Finally, when his hands shook so that he could no longer write, he flung the papers to the floor and left the laboratory.

In despair he sought the consolation of music. He made his way wearily to his little conservatory off the study and flipped the switch that started the generators in the small electric organ. He sat down and adjusted the stops and draw-bars. Fatigue flowed through his body like

* Drs Flosdorf and Chambers, of the University of Pennsylvania, and Professor Szent-Gyorgi, of Szeged University, in Hungary, have discovered that certain high tones, intensified greatly, can coagulate proteins, crack vegetable oils—even soft-boil eggs! It is their belief that these changes take place because of kinetic action of the molecules composing the substances, just as heat affects them in the same way and for the same reason.—Davis, Watson, *The Advance of Science*, pp. 147-8.

an electric current, leaving him almost limp from his long hours of labor.

His fingers touched lightly over the keys. Almost instantly the fatigue left him like a garment sliding from his shoulders. His playing became animated. The strains of a movement from Tschaiikowsky's *Fifth Symphony* filled the room with sonorous power. Vance's long figure swayed gracefully at the console as though wafted this way and that by the force of the composition.

The song ended, and he drifted immediately into the sad measures of *Valse Triste*. The sweet, melancholy tones of the organ swelled and fell in slow cadences, swaying Vance's emotions with every changing mood. The avaricious mask that covered his finer features seemed to slide off as the beauty of the music touched his soul. For a moment his pale blue eyes were dark with passion that belied his character, covered by the husk of greed, and his lips were half parted in ecstasy as he gazed upward at the sound-window above him. His hands seemed acting without any directing impulses from his brain. Over the shining ivories they drifted gracefully, reaching now and then to adjust a stop or change the position of a draw-bar.

And then, as though a malignant force had seized him, Vance's thin body lurched from the seat. He stood erect, trembling, the music dying with a burst of sound. Gone was the ecstatic, godlike expression of his face; in its place was a malicious visage that was sharp with cunning and cruel in its implication of danger. His lips gleamed with saliva.

"Why not?" Vance muttered to himself. "*Why not!*"

For his mind had not been idle while he sat at the console. It had been in an inactive state, resembling sleep, and yet as ready to register any stray thought that presented itself as a photographic plate is able to seize a nebulous ray of light in the very instant it is made manifest. And the very sweetness of the music had given him the answer to the problem before him....

While he sat half-dreaming at the organ, the scientist's keenly analytic mind had been considering, unconscious even to himself, a number of facts that seemed somehow to fall together. The failure of a mighty surge of power to affect a guinea pig—a stray sentence he had been impressed by in a work on acoustics—the

effect of the music on his emotion.* Taken separately, the facts seemed disjointed. Considered together, his shrewd brain had acted as a catalyst to fuse the mass of facts into a homogeneous group of facts that led him definitely nearer the solution.

Eager to fix the facts in his mind before he could lose the thread, he rushed upstairs, seized a pencil and a pad of paper, and commenced scribbling every thought that came into his head.

His notes made, Vance's fingers dropped the pencil and he stood up, paced back and forth through the laboratory. He stopped at the sound cannon and stared at it owlishly. Suddenly he swore and struck it with his foot. "Useless!" he muttered. "It must be completely done over. It's got to be stronger, bigger—more deadly. Then we'll see whether or not I am the fool Dyson takes me for!"

* The mystery of how certain musical compositions affect the emotions has never been solved. For that matter, the question of how we hear is still a mystery. The nerves in the ear are too sluggish to carry to the brain any musical tone higher than seven or eight hundred cycles. Dr. Troland of Harvard thought that nerves act in pairs or threes, taking turns at carrying the impulses to the brain. Yet investigation shows that over 2,800 cycles this theory is wrong, too.

The solution is obvious and easily apparent, when we consider that the ear is adapted only to the hearing of low-frequency sounds. Since the nerves of the eardrum are incapable of carrying these tones—it must be *the brain itself* which picks them up!

We know that sounds which the ear is unable to register *do* reach the brain. The only way they could do this, therefore, is to penetrate the skull as an X-ray penetrates bone, and to act directly on the cranial centers responsive to such tones. The reason for the strong effects of various types of music on the emotions is simply that the combinations of sounds in the compositions react together to produce sounds of super wave length, capable of penetrating to the brain. It follows, therefore, that the rat was killed because the sounds used penetrated directly to its brain, the high and low tones being sufficient to coagulate it. The guinea pig was not affected because the frequency was not one that could reach the brain matter. Vance's problem, therefore, is to find a combination of sounds that will act on the emotions of any subject, strongly, and then to intensify the sounds until the brain has been destroyed!—Author.

CHAPTER III The Machine Completed

IT took two weeks for the scientist to decide exactly what must be done and then to do it. For three days he sat almost incessantly at the organ, playing every different type of music in existence. He analyzed the effects of martial music, of dreamy lullabies, of sad compositions, of humorous pieces. And from them he isolated the elements that gave them the power they had.

When at last the new apparatus was finished, Vance regarded it with rightful pride. It was twice as long as the former sound-focusing machine, for he had employed Poisson's theory that "if the wave of sound be confined in a tube with a smooth interior, it may be conveyed to great distances without sensible loss of intensity".* Thus, by projecting the sound waves from a smooth tube with great force, they were carried along for a time almost as though they were still confined within the pipe.

The cannon was now twelve feet long, a gleaming silver cylinder about a foot thick. The rear end of it was a sphere three feet thick, in which all the apparatus was carried. He had carried his small electric organ up to the laboratory and hooked it up with the projector, so that every conceivable sound he might require was at his finger-tips. The controls of the projector were even mounted on the upper end of the manuals, within easy reach.

Seated at the organ, he could command a wide view through the big windows fronting the street. From here he could see children returning home from school, laborers going to work, and off across the sloping valley the business district of the city.

Only one thing remained to be done—the machine must be tested before he could put it in operation. Just how to test it he was uncertain for a time. Then his eyes caught a flash of color on the street below, and he smiled bleakly as he realized the perfect chance for a test had come. Five school children were walking past the house, engaged in animated talk and kicking at rocks and anything else that presented itself. Hurriedly, Vance went to the organ and slid onto the seat.

His long fingers trembled a little as he flipped the generator switch and selected his tones. It was no matter of guesswork with him. He knew exactly which notes he needed to produce his effects.

Another switch caused the great cylinder to revolve slowly on its axis and then to point down at the boys on the sidewalk. A low humming arose as the ultra-powerful electron magnifiers and cathode tubes went into action.

Now he struck a chord, using only five tones. A weird, sonorous sound rolled from the sound cannon. The entire room seemed to tremble slightly as the lowest tone, a frequency of only eight vibrations per second, or half as many as are necessary for the human ear to detect, rolled its silent thunder through the atmosphere. To the boys on the street, the sound must have seemed like nothing more destructive than a vacuum cleaner running somewhere and a truck rumbling by down the block. But suddenly it happened.

One second the five small boys had been talking and laughing in the good humor common to boys just let out of school, and the next they were like angry animals. With one accord they turned on each other and fell to pummeling with flying fists and screaming with insane rage. Two of them fell to the pavement and rolled, kicking and squirming, into the street. The other three formed a milling huddle of enraged, shrill voices and struggling bodies.

In the next moment the fighting stopped. The youngsters looked foolish, and then, abruptly, they broke into gales of laughter. Their boyish cries of merriment filled the street with sound—and yet there was no sound of genuine amusement in it. It was as though they were being forced to laugh by some power greater than they were. The laughter became shrill and forced, but the boys continued to scream their amusement until several were lying on the ground contorted with delighted gasps, clutching their sides.

The ray of intense sound had changed to a higher pitch. The low rumble had ceased. For Vance, sitting erect and stiff on the bench, had flicked two new stops and struck a new chord. His pale face was lighted up with intense enjoyment. The pale eyes burned with an unholy fire as he watched the proof of his success. He was playing on the helpless victims' emotions as he played on

* Tyndall, John, *Sound*.

the organ. A mere flick of his finger would change them into savage animals again, seeking to tear each others' eyes out.

A queer breathlessness caught him as he realized that only a forward tipping of his foot, resting on the volume pedal, would kill every one of them. He had struck the proper sound frequency to reach their brains directly, with no regard for tympanum or ear fluid. Now, if he increased the power to the terrific intensity required, their brains would be destroyed as the rat's was!

Elation filled him at that thought. Dyson's days were marked. His life was to be the price of trying to throw him out of his home. He was going to meet a death no mortal ever had—a death by music, but an unholy music that would make a fiend of him, or a Pan, and whose sweetest tones would be as deadly as the venom of a cobra.

With a sudden whim, Vance raised his hand and pressed in two draw-bars, then adjusted a third. He reached out and twisted the switch that operated the projector. The gleaming tube swung about to follow the boys. A movement of his foot, and the new sound-bolt struck the children. The laughter ceased. In its wake came a sound of soft sobbing.

The essence of sadness was being instilled in their brains. Tears of sorrow took the place of the tears of joy of a moment before. Small shoulders shook with racking sobs.

Finally, convinced of his success, Vance shut off the motors. A smile of derision touched his lips as he watched the boys awake. Shame-faced expressions came over their tear- and dirt-streaked countenances. Bewildered by something they could not understand, they shuffled off down the street in silence.

Vance turned away. He regarded the instrument-filled laboratory with complete satisfaction. Another week and the plan would be ready. For he was not quite prepared for Dyson yet. A few changes in the study downstairs, and then the organ would be ready to play its song of Death, for an audience of one....

CHAPTER IV The Melody of Death

HE was alone, in the laboratory, when the doorbell rang a week later. Vance's whole body trembled with expectation. With an effort he controlled himself and hurried to let Dyson in.

His father-in-law had got his telegram, he decided. That, in itself, had been a master stroke. A curt note to the elderly man saying he had found a number of letters and things belonging to Ellen, and that he would destroy them unless called for by Friday, had turned the trick.

When he opened the door he was perfectly calm—outwardly, at least. He nodded curtly, "Come in. I see you got my wire."

Dyson's face was dark with fury as he reached forward and seized the scientist by the throat. "I got it, Vance," he breathed, "and I've come here to take those letters and then give you a beating you'll never get over. I knew you were worthless, but..."

"I'm warning you," Vance cut in huskily, striving to control his quivering underlip, "that unless you release me right now you'll never see the letters. Nor the picture she had taken just before she left me!"

The elderly militarist looked at the younger man as though he would crush him right then. His eyes pinched dangerously. Then he let his hand drop. The club was held by the weakling in this battle. "All right," he bit out. "Give them to me. Then get out and keep out of my sight, if you value your life."

Vance's heart leaped. The old fool was playing right into his hands! He turned away quickly to hide the triumph in his eyes. "Wait in the study," he growled. "I'll be right down with them."

But scarcely had the door closed behind Dyson as he went into the small, walnut-paneled room than he sprang into action. He rushed down the hall to the room where the organ had been reinstalled. He closed the door behind him softly and hurried to the switchboard across from him. His hand swung a bar-like switch down and there was a loud snap from somewhere in the wall.

Vance's lips were half parted in a smile. The man in the study was there for good. The turning of the switch had thrown bolts into every door,

locking him securely. Now he drove a huge knife-switch home. A loud humming of electric motors filled the room. For a second, nothing happened.

In the next moment the wall between the study and the anteroom commenced to slide down through the floor. Between the two sections of panelling a thick glass shield remained. After a moment Dyson's startled figure was seen standing in the middle of the other room staring transfixedly at the vanishing wall. He jerked around as a sound grated behind him.

Vance had operated another motor that exposed the huge second cannon behind the organ. The long, silver snout of it moved forward toward the glass panel, turned toward Dyson slowly.

Quickly Vance dashed to the organ and seated himself. He could see Dyson's mouth shouting at him through the glass wall, but the words were inaudible because of mineral-wool insulation in the walls. His long, tapering fingers touched the controls.

After a moment he commenced playing. Dyson stopped his shouting and gesticulating. He looked startled as the sounds came from the projector. The scientist's playing grew faster. He burst into a lively number of his own composition, full of breathless runs and cadences. The militarist could be seen to stiffen and throw his shoulders back. His fine face glowed with alertness and well-being. Suddenly he did an about-face.

"Now, march, damn you!" Vance shouted. "March, like the would-be soldier you are!" His fingers flashed over the keys in a stirring march overtone by strange chords.

Dyson's figure was a pathetic sight as he marched back and forth down the room, the great sound cannon always following him like a vigilant eye. He looked like some old man playing soldier like a six-year-old boy. His erect, white head, thrown back, bobbed rhythmically. Up and down, back and forth, he led his imaginary battalions, shouting orders, executing weird maneuvers.

Vance laughed until the tears streamed down his face. Tired of it at last, he switched to a humorous composition. On the upper manual he set the keys needed to produce the tones that would irritate the nerve centers of Dyson's brain. Then, to the rollicking tune that swelled from the organ, the elder man commenced to laugh. He

screamed with merriment. He slapped his knee and doubled over as the breath was goaded from his lungs like a depressed bellows. Finally he fell on the floor and lay there writhing in agony, but still shouting insane laughter.

But Vance did not let him die of strangulation, which would have occurred in a few more moments. He burst into a new piece. The room commenced to vibrate slightly from the power of the sound-waves driving out of the mouth of the cannon. Even the organ bench shook a little as the floor was agitated.

Dyson felt the tones immediately. Anger distorted his face and pulled his mouth wide open into a savage snarl. Louder and louder the music grew, while he grew more and more insane with fury and raced back and forth, pounding the wall that separated him from his murderer, not knowing why he did it. All reason was blasted from his mind by the bolt of solid sound that pounded at him from the projector which followed him everywhere.

Vance's foot commenced to tilt the power pedal still further. The whole house was trembling now from the deep tones. They were inaudible, and yet the whole body seemed to hear them. Dyson's knees buckled and he went down on hands and knees, still raging, but growing weaker. His body shook as with ague.

Vance's fingers flashed over the keys in a wild song that filled the house with mad echoes, shaking the windows and rattling the doors. He threw his head back and laughed in defiance of Dyson's attempts to break through and kill him. All the joy of triumphing over this man who had challenged him was in his eyes, and all the greed in his soul was in his saliva-gleaming lips. He looked down to the manual for a moment, then glanced back to see what effect the change of chords he had just made would produce.

Suddenly a curse came from his lips. Dyson had staggered out of the sound beam and was showing signs of recovery. With a savage snarl Vance reached for the direction control and swung it hard over. At the same time his foot shoved the volume control farther open.

"My God!" A start of horror racked him. The sound cannon had not moved. The vibrations must have torn the wires loose that controlled that part of its mechanism! Desperately he shoved the

volume pedal wide open. The house shook violently. Abruptly, there was a shrill screech of collapsing metal.

Too late Vance saw what he had done. The tremendous force of the sound waves had cracked the sound cannon. Before he could move to turn off the power a change came over him. It seemed as though a hot ice pick was being driven through his brain. He felt a stiffness coming over his limbs and he tried to move far enough to reach the switches, but he was powerless. Even in his ghastly predicament he was able to figure out what had happened. The beam of the music was touching and freezing his own brain. Unless he could stop it instantly he was lost!

With a final attempt to save himself, he crashed his hands, fingers splayed, down upon the

keys. There was a roar of sound from the cannon. An almost visible beam of power shot from it straight into the man at the organ.

The organ itself leaped from the floor six inches and vibrated. Suddenly the music stopped. The death instrument had been destroyed. But Vance did not move from the bench.

He just sat there for a long moment, and then his body seemed to coil up almost like a piece of spaghetti. He slid from the bench and lay sprawled on the floor. His face was white and ghastly. There was something in his blank look that seemed to indicate that his brain was completely destroyed. And there was something in the limp look of his arms and legs that seemed to show that he had not a whole bone in his body.