

The Candle Lighter THE TRUSTEESHIP DIRECTOR fished out a pack of cigarettes and offered them to Jaffa Doane. "I heard your speech last night," he said. "Cigarette?" "I don't smoke," said Jaffa Doane. "It was a good speech." The Director lit his cigarette thoughtfully, flicked the match away. Doane waited with patience in his eyes an expression that seemed very much out of place on the face of Jaffa Doane. But Doane had practiced patience before the Director's "invitation" had reached him that morning. He knew it was coming; you can't tell blunt truths on a world hookup and not expect to make a stir. The Director said, "I've checked your record, Doane. It's a good one. You have consistently fought for a lot of things that I happen to believe in myself. Naturally, I think you're off base this time, but I was with you on the Kaffirs; I was with you on the Ainus; I'll be with you again. I'm sure. In fact, if you look it up in the books of your Equality League, you'll find that I sent in my two dollars dues long ago." He peered at Doane under his eyebrows and chuckled. "Don't look so surprised." "I can't help it," Doane said severely. "After what your administration has done to the Martians" "The Martians! Why, those Never mind." He clamped the words down in his throat. "Just what," he demanded, "have we done to them?" Doane leaned forward. "Turned them into savages! Exploited them, degraded them, reduced them to barbarism. Do you want the entire catalogue, sir? / know how the Mars Trusteeship has been run! The Administrators have made themselves gods, sir, gods! Their every whim is a commandment. That's what you've done!" The Director managed a smile, though his nostrils were flaring. "I said I heard your speech," he reminded Doane. "You had some suggestions to make, didn't you?" "I did," said Doane proudly. "And among them, you suggested that we remove Administrator Kellem and replace him with someone acceptable to the Equality League." "It was. Kellem's handling of the General Mercantile incident was" "I know," the Director interrupted, and for the first time his smile relaxed. "I have here a radiogram from the Administration Comzone on Mars. Read it, Mr. Doane." Doane took it suspiciously, but as he read, he began to beam. MEDICAL CHECKUP SHOWS LOW-PRESSURE ASTHMA APPROACHING TERTIARY STAGE, INCURABLE AND DANGEROUS WITHOUT IMMEDIATE PERMANENT RETURN TO EARTH. REQUEST IMMEDIATE CLEARANCE FOR REPLACEMENT AND RETIREMENT. KELLEM, MARS Doane gloated, "He's retiring! Low-pressure asthma, my foot! I thought the stink from General Mercantile would drive him out!" The Director said in a level tone, "Kellem almost died last week, Doane." "All right." Doane shrugged. "It makes no difference. In any case, I demand to be consulted in choosing his successor." The Director eyed him. "You do, do you?" He pressed a button on his desk and said, "Ask Ne Mieek to come in." A sexy contralto replied, "Yes, sir." The Director looked at Doane. "Ever seen a Martian?" he asked. "You take such an interest in them, I wonder if you've ever met one. Face-to-face, I mean; the pictures don't quite do them justice. No? Well, it's about time you did." He stood up and gestured toward the door. "Jaffa Doane," he said, "meet Ne Mieek." Doane rose and turned to see who was coming in. He swallowed. "How do you do," he managed to say. A suppressed sighing sound came from the thing that dragged itself through the doorway. Doane thought it formed words in a sort of airless whisper, the sound that might be made by a man with a slashed throat. It went: "GI'd f n'w y" The vowels were almost inaudible, the consonants as though they were being forced out against a gag. It was English, all right; you could make it out if you tried. But if the thing's words were understandable, its expression was not. As the Director had said, you had to meet a Martian in the flesh; photos did not give more than a hint. On the squashed, whitely translucent face was what Doane thought a grin of savage glee, while the huge dull eyes held inexpressible sorrow. Neither interpretation, Doane told himself, meant much; that was anthropomorphic thinking, and dangerous. But those looks took a little getting used to, all the same. "Don't try to shake hands with him, Mr. Doane," said the Director. "He hasn't any." It was true. Four supple, articulated tentacles waved around the Martian's midsection, but there were

no hands or arms. The pear-shaped body was supported on stubby little legs which had neither knee nor ankle, as far as Jaffa Doane could see. The Director was saying, "Ne Mieek is the Martian legate here in Washington and, like Kellem, the strain of an alien environment has hurt his health. He'll be going back to Mars on your ship, Doane, and you'll be working with him." "Working with him?" Doane gasped. The Director allowed himself a look of surprise. "Haven't you figured it out yet, Doane? Since we must replace Kellem anyhow, we have decided to grant the Equality League's request. We are picking a man for the post that the League is certain to approve because he is the president of it I mean you, Mr. Doane." "Me? Me? But I've never been on Mars!" "In eighteen days," said the Director, "you will no longer be able to make that statement. That is, unless you refuse the appointment." Jaffa Doane stood up and there was corrosive anger in his voice. "You'd like that, wouldn't you? You want me to turn it down, so you can tell the news services what a lot of hot air the president of the Equality League really is. Well, I can recognize a shoddy little political trick when I see one. You hand me a political hot potato, throw me in on a job that your fat-cats have finally messed up to the point where there are riots and investigations. If things go wrong, I'm the goat that shuts up the Equality League. If things go right, your administration gets the credit." "I take it you refuse," said the Director. "No, sir! I don't refuse! It's a cheap trick and I'll make you wish you'd never thought of it. I accept!" He looked over his shoulder at the Martian who had become, in the space of a heartbeat, one of his charges. Jaffa Doane couldn't help wincing a little they did look so much like ragged corpses! But he said, "Come along, Ne Mieek. We're going to your home." For more than a million members of the Equality League, Jaffa Doane was a severe and shining leader; his words were trumpet calls and his surging drive for justice was a bright flame. One or two of the members, however, took a more personal view of their president, among them a young lady whose name was Ruth-Ann Wharton. On the books, she was listed as Mr. Doane's personal secretary, but it had been several months now since she had first begun to contemplate a promotion for herself. It had occurred to her that the eighteen-day flight to Mars on the shuttle rocket might provide the time and leisure for Jaffa Doane to notice just what a pearl he had as a secretary. But it had been a disappointing voyage; Doane had kept to his stateroom most of the way. A hatful of hours out of Marsport, Ruth-Ann was banging on her boss's stateroom door. "Jaffa," she called plaintively, and not for the first time, "Ne Mieek and another Martian are waiting for you. Please hurry." Doane's low, controlled voice said, "I'll be there in a moment, Miss Wharton." She scowled at the door. "Ill give you exactly one minute." But she didn't give him that much. She hammered again. "Jaffa, they're waiting." Pause. Then the calm, relaxed voice. "Yes, of course. One moment." Ruth-Ann stamped her foot. "Oh, darn you!" she said and did what she had wanted to do in the first place. She turned the knob and walked in. "They've been waiting half an hour and Ne Mieek says it's very important." The room was in semi-darkness, lit only by the light from the corridor outside. From the rumpled heap of bedclothing, Jaffa Doane's voice said placidly, "I'm aware of that, Miss Wharton." Her hands found the light switch. The bedclothing erupted and Jaffa Doane sat up, leaning on an elbow, blinking at her. "What?" he croaked blearily. "Say, haven't I asked you to call me only from the outside?" "You have," she said hotly, flinging back the ray-screen on the port. The tempered glass was treated to filter out most of the glare, but the direct sunlight lit up the little room like a movie set. "Get up," she ordered. "If you're not outside and fully dressed in five minutes, I'm coming back and I'll dress you myself. Anyway, Jaffa, it looks as if it really is important. Ne Mieek is sighing and talking about your duty to your job. And the other Martian well, it's hard to tell, everything considered, but he looks sick." "Sick?" Jaffa Doane yawned and scratched. "Sick how?" Ruth-Ann shook her head. "Come on out and see for yourself." Looking hazily at his face in the mirror of the tiny washroom as he shaved, Jaffa

Doane decided that Ruth-Ann, after all, was right. He did have a tendency to be not difficult, exactly, not grumpy or nasty, but a little hard to wake up in the mornings. And besides, this was an important day. He was about to meet his charges. He wiped off the depilatory and stubble and stood erect, eyes burning into his own reflection in the mirror. The sound of his stateroom door made him jump. "I'm coming right out!" he yelled. In the room that had been fitted out as his office for the duration of the trip and which he had hardly set foot in Ne Mieek and Ruth-Ann were waiting. With them was another Martian and, looking at him, Jaffa Doane knew what the girl had meant when she said there was something wrong. A strapping young adult Martian, with a life expectancy of hundreds of years, somewhat resembles a wilting fungus; but this one looked rotten. "Good morning, Ne Mieek," Jaffa Doane said courteously. "What can I do for you?" The Martian's wheezy voice was somewhat easier to understand in the spaceship's half-and-half atmosphere pressure an even eight pounds to the square inch, composition largely helium than it had been when he was laboring to force his voice into the dense Earth air. "Indeed you can, honored sir. Gadian Pluur has the sickness and wishes Your Honor to cure him in the way that is known." Jaffa Doane's eyebrows went up. "Cure him? You mean you want me to call a doctor?" "Ah, no," whispered the Martian. "Your Honor will cure him yourself, surely." Ruth-Ann was signaling. "You don't know what he wants, do you?" she said in a low tone. "Good heavens, no." She nodded smugly. "He wants you to touch this other one. That's all, just touch him." "Touch him?" Doane stared at the Martian. "Ne Mieek, are you out of your mind?" "Not so," the Martian whispered indignantly, the mad face working. "It is our custom, as is known. The Administrator Kellem and the Admiral Rosenman who was his assistant have always healed those ill of the sickness." "Barbarous," marveled Jaffa Doane, forgetting to be angry. "And you, an intelligent man an intelligent Martian like you, you believe in this?" "There is nothing to believe or disbelieve," sighed Ne Mieek, his tentacles agitated, the pale eyes desolate. "It is our custom since the first of your honored administrators came." Doane shook his head wonderingly. "Touch him," Ruth-Ann advised. "But" "Go ahead, touch him!" Doane frowned. "Miss Wharton, this is a matter of principle. I am responsible not only to the Trusteeship Director, but to the League, and I certainly couldn't justify" "Touch him!" The girl's face was set. Doane was about to reply, but the ship gave a gentle course-correcting lurch and everyone in the little room staggered slightly everyone but the sick Martian, Gadian Pluur, who staggered halfway across the room and brushed against Doane's fingers. Jaffa Doane jerked back his hand. It had been a curious sensation, almost like an electric shock, but not localized he could feel a tiny tingle up his backbone and at the base of his skull. "Thanks to Your Honor," whispered Ne Mieek. And the two Martians slipped slowly out, leaving Jaffa Doane staring frustratedly after them. "But I have a speech all ready," Doane objected reasonably. "Jfs not just a lot of glowing promises and empty words, but facts. It tells how I am going to put a stop to" he hesitated over the word "the indiscretions of the previous Administrators." Admiral Rosenman said cheerfully, "Fine." He was a chunky man with a big head of curly white hair. And he wore the severe uniform as though he had been born with it on. "But you can't get out of the Conjunction Offering." "That's nothing short of murder! And my speech" "It's merely an execution, Mr. Doane. The Martian has had his trial and he has been convicted. It's up to you." "But I'm not a hangman!" "You're the Earth Administrator on Mars and one of your duties is carrying out the decisions of the Martian courts." Doane glowered. "What's he convicted of?" he demanded suspiciously. "What's the difference? Under the Martian laws, it's a crime punishable by death. They call it bad thinking." "Bad thinking." Doane shook his head and walked over to the window of the Ad-Building office that was now his. The orange sandscape, dotted with smoke-trees, hurt his eyes; it was the Martian idea of a formal park, in the heart of the little city of Marsport, and it was a great honor to have one's office looking out over it. Or so the Martians thought. They also thought it

was an honor to be the executioner in what seemed to have some of the aspects of a ritual murder. "I can't even see the conjunction of the moons," Doane said peevishly. "The Martians can. Both moons are perfectly visible to them." "And this Conjunction Offering is traditional? What did they do back forty or fifty years ago, before the first Earthmen got here?" Admiral Rosenman shrugged and glanced at the clock. "You ought to be getting ready," he said. "Am I dismissed?" "You're dismissed," Doane said ungraciously and frowned at the Admiral's back as he left, using the weaving, flat-footed Mars walk that Doane had not yet mastered. He sat down at his desk, carefully allowing for the light gravitation and misjudged it, as he had six times before, and bumped his shin against the desk, as he had six times before. Ruth-Ann Wharton said sympathetically, "It takes a little getting used to. Do you want me to come to the Conjunction Offering with you?" "No!" "There's no need to take my skin off." He said stiffly, "I am sorry, Miss Wharton. Perhaps I'm a little upset." "I understand, Jaffa." "It didn't seem like this back on Earth," he said morosely, staring out at the smoke-trees. "You haven't heard the worst of it. Miss Wharton. Not only do I have to slit some poor devil's throat this evening not only am I expected to perform the laying on of hands like somebody from the Dark Ages but look at this!" He turned to his desk and picked up a thick sheaf of papers. "Duties for the Earth Administrator! The most ridiculous mass of superstitious nonsense I ever saw. If this is the way Kellem kept the Martians down, I can understand why there were riots at the General Mercantile base." "At Niobe? But those were Earthmen involved in the brawl, Jaffa, not Martians." "How do you know?" he asked pugnaciously. "Because Kellem's publicity men said so? All we know for sure is that there was trouble. There's bound to be trouble when you try to keep an intelligent, civilized race like Ne Miek's down with barbarous tricks like these." He glanced at the list and flinched. "Well, there's an end to it," he said grimly. "Kellem's gone and I'm here now. I'll be at the Conjunction Ceremony tonight, all right, and I'll start things rolling right then and there. You'll see! I'm telling you, Miss Wharton, Mars is going to what's the matter?" he demanded irritably. "You look like you've got a question." The girl nodded emphatically. "I have. Why do you call me Miss Wharton instead of Ruth-Ann?" The Conjunction Offering was to take place in what the Martians had named the Park of Sparse Beauty. "It's sparse enough," Jaffa Doane said from the rostrum, watching the Martians gather before him. "But is it beautiful enough?" Admiral Rosenman asked sourly, "Are you ready for the ceremony?" "Oh, quite ready," said Jaffa Doane. He started to hum to himself with a satisfied air, but you do not hum with oxygen plugs in your nostrils. He coughed and choked, and looked at the Admiral suspiciously. But the Admiral wasn't laughing. The Admiral didn't think he had very much to laugh about. He had been on duty on Mars for seven years, surviving five Administrators, only one of whom had completed his three-year term. He had formed certain conclusions about the Martians and one of them was that they weren't too likely to get along well with the likes of Jaffa Doane. . . . It was dark and the Martians carried torches not flaming brands, for flames do not thrive in Mars' thin atmosphere, but glowing balls of punk from the little bushes that grew wild in the wide reaches between settlements. The scene was hardly brightly illuminated. Martian eyes were not human eyes, though, and to them, Doane realized, it might have been bright as day. He looked fruitlessly at the spot in the sky where the two moons were supposed to be in conjunction with a particular star. One moon was visible, the other not. The star might or might not be visible with all the stars in the Martian sky, one more or less made very little difference. But to the Martians, of course, with their very much more acute vision, both moons were as visible as Luna from Earth and each star of the tens of thousands was an individual in its own right. Jaffa Doane sighed. It was hard remembering all the differences between Martians and Earthmen and trying to remember, at the same time, the diamond-clear principles of the Equality League, which said that the differences were as nothing. . . . There was no sound of trumpets, no burst

of prompted applause from the idly drifting audience, but all of a sudden the ceremony seemed to have begun. Ne Miecek appeared on the high platform where the Earth party was standing. "In three of your minutes and eleven seconds, as is known to Your Honor," he said, "the conjunction will occur. This is he who is to die." He stepped aside to reveal another Martian, who gestured courteously with his tentacles. "This is Fnihi Bel." The condemned Martian said politely, "It is an honor to meet Your Honor. I am most sorry for the circumstances." Doane looked embarrassedly at Ruth-Ann and the Admiral. He had had no lessons in how Jack Ketch greeted his clients; there was no precedent in his experience with the Equality League to guide him in the proper conduct of the maul-man meeting the steer at the top of the slippery chute. But the Martian was tactful. He said, "Since I shall not have the power afterward, let me now thank Your Honor for the greatest of favors." "For killing you?" Doane blurted, scandalized. He made a face expressing his mood about the enforced subjection of the Martians; it was wasted on the Martians who expressed their feelings with formalized gestures of the tentacles, but not on Admiral Rosenman, who licked his lips and started to speak. But not soon enough. "Fnihi Bel," Doane said compassionately, "under the authority vested in me as Administrator, I grant a stay of execution pending review of your case. You shall not die tonight." Admiral Rosenman swore and looked helplessly at Ruth-Ann. "If the crazy idiot had only talked it over first! No, not him! He made up his mind ten years before he ever saw a Martian and nothing's going to change it, especially facts!" "What facts?" asked Ruth-Ann hotly. "You never told him anything." "It's all in the files." "Which he hasn't had a chance to look at. Honestly, Admiral, you're unreasonable." Ruth-Ann looked fretfully out the window. It was nearly daybreak; the sharp Martian dawn had popped into light over the horizon minutes before. "Do you suppose he's all right?" The Admiral growled and flipped the switch on the intercom. "Any word?" The uniformed man whose face appeared in the screen said, "Not yet, sir. The Administrator was seen about an hour ago near the Shacks. A detail has gone to search the area, but they haven't reported in yet." "All right," the Admiral grumbled, clicking off. "What are the Shacks?" Ruth-Ann wanted to know. "Abandoned part of town. The Martians gave it up years ago. Nobody lives there now. Unpleasant place. Serves him right, the" "Watch yourself!" Ruth-Ann warned. "He's your boss!" The Admiral glowered at her, but stopped. He yawned and stretched. "Not used to staying up all night any more," he said. "Kind of takes it out of me, but Go ahead!" he snapped as the intercom called his name. "Administrator Doane has been located by the search party, sir," said the officer. "Any orders?" "Hold him there," roared the Admiral. "And get a car in front of the door in thirty seconds I'm going to meet him!" He clicked off the switch as Ruth-Ann corrected, "We're going to meet him, Admiral! If that big stuffed-shirt thinks he can scare me out of my wits and stir up every Martian from here to" "Hey, wait a minute!" the Admiral protested. "I thought you wouldn't let me call him names!" "That's you," Ruth-Ann said shortly. "The rules are different for me. Come on, Admiral. What are you waiting for?" They found Earth Administrator Jaffa Doane sitting on the ramp before an abandoned and decrepit Martian dwelling, staring into space. Admiral Rosenman dismissed the detail and helped the Administrator into the pressurized car. Doane's attention was elsewhere. Rosenman had to remind him even to take the oxygen plugs out of his nostrils. "Thanks," said Doane absently. And, after a pause, "I messed it up, didn't I?" "You did," the Admiral told him. "You messed it up enough to put forty-eight Martians in the hospital the Earth hospital." Doane blinked. "For physical injuries," the Admiral explained. "The Martians don't ordinarily hospitalize for that; a couple of hours of what they call good thinking and they can patch almost anything that's wrong with themselves. But these were pretty well beat up, mostly from running into moving vehicles, and I don't think there's a Martian within fifty miles that's capable of good thinking right now." Jaffa Doane shook his head. "I don't get it," he complained. "All I did was try to save a man's life. Maybe I was

wrong I don't know. But how could it make so much trouble? Rioting like crazy people. Getting themselves run over and all because of a thing like that. I could understand it if they were ignorant natives, only they're not ignorant; they have a civilization of their own. How can these silly customs mean so much to them?" The Admiral exploded, "Don't you understand yet? It is not just a silly custom! They were crazy, all right, but not because you violated a silly tabu because you did the thing that was bound to drive them insane. You pushed them across the brink. They were sick. Infected by you." "But" "Don't argue with me! Sickness is not only of the body; even an Earthman can have mental illnesses, too. And Martians have no other kind. Shock them and they get sick. When they're sick, they need to be healed. If you break a leg, you splint it; if a Martian's mind is injured, it needs to be splinted with a stronger, stabler mind. "Think back to the ship, Doane! When Ne Miek begged you to touch the other Martian, did you think it was only a primitive custom? It was not. It was splinting and healing. When you made contact with him, his mind was braced against yours and you were the one who helped him grow well." Doane swallowed. "All right," he said reasonably. "Granted. But that's one thing and murder is another. What about the one I was supposed to kill?" "The same principle, Doane. Even a Martian doesn't live forever and when he is too sick to be cured, he has to die. The only way a Martian can die is by being physically destroyed. He can't kill himself. No Martian can. He can't be killed by another Martian the shock would destroy him. So you're elected, Doane the strongest, stablest being on Mars the Earth Administrator." Doane protested, "But what about the time before the Earthmen were here? How did they manage?" Rosenman shrugged. "They didn't have Earthmen to do the dirty work, so they used Martians, of course." "But you said" "I know what I said. Take a look around you, Doane." He gestured out the window at the rickety, abandoned buildings called the Shacks. Compared with the clean, functional lines of the rest of the Martian architecture, the Shacks were a hideous blot. They leaned and they staggered. They were put together at random distances out of random materials. They looked unfit for even human habitation, much less Martian. "This is where they lived, the Outcasts," Rosenman said. "The strongest and healthiest of every generation, selected by rigorous tests and segregated into a caste of Healers. It was an honor to be a Healer, Doane the greatest, most tragic honor that a Martian could attain. Read the Martian literature. It has noble stories in it, the Healers who sacrificed themselves for others. They were untouchables. There were a couple of hundred of them all the time, right here in the Shacks, injured mentally every time they had to put an incurable out of his misery, until they were beyond repair and had to be destroyed after a few years of agonizing service." "And when we came, we became the untouchables?" Rosenman hesitated. "Well, not exactly," he said, a little less roughly. "We took over the functions of the Healers to some extent, yes. After all, we Earthmen aren't as sensitive; and just for that reason, we're more stable. But, of course, even we crack up when the pressure is too great. Suppose the picture was different, Doane; suppose it was the Martians who were stronger and stabler, and suppose they came to Earth and showed us a way of emptying our asylums. "We use psychiatrists because they're all we have all the Martians had were the Healers. But the Healers weren't altogether satisfactory, as you can see, because it's an expensive cure that merely passes the disease on to someone else. Our psychiatrists aren't as effective as they should be, either they're human, too; they have their own problems, which seriously interfere with and become intermingled with those of their patients. "If the Martians had come to us with a real cure, not the half-cure that psychiatrists are capable of, we'd be stupid to go on using inadequate therapy. And the Martians aren't stupid. In fact, that's the mistake you and your Equality League made." The Administrator flared, "That's enough, Resenman! The Equality League never" "Wait a minute! Admit it, Doane you came here all full of red-hot ideas- about how the Earth masters should be kind to their Martian slaves. No, don't argue; that's how it looked to you. Think it over. But the

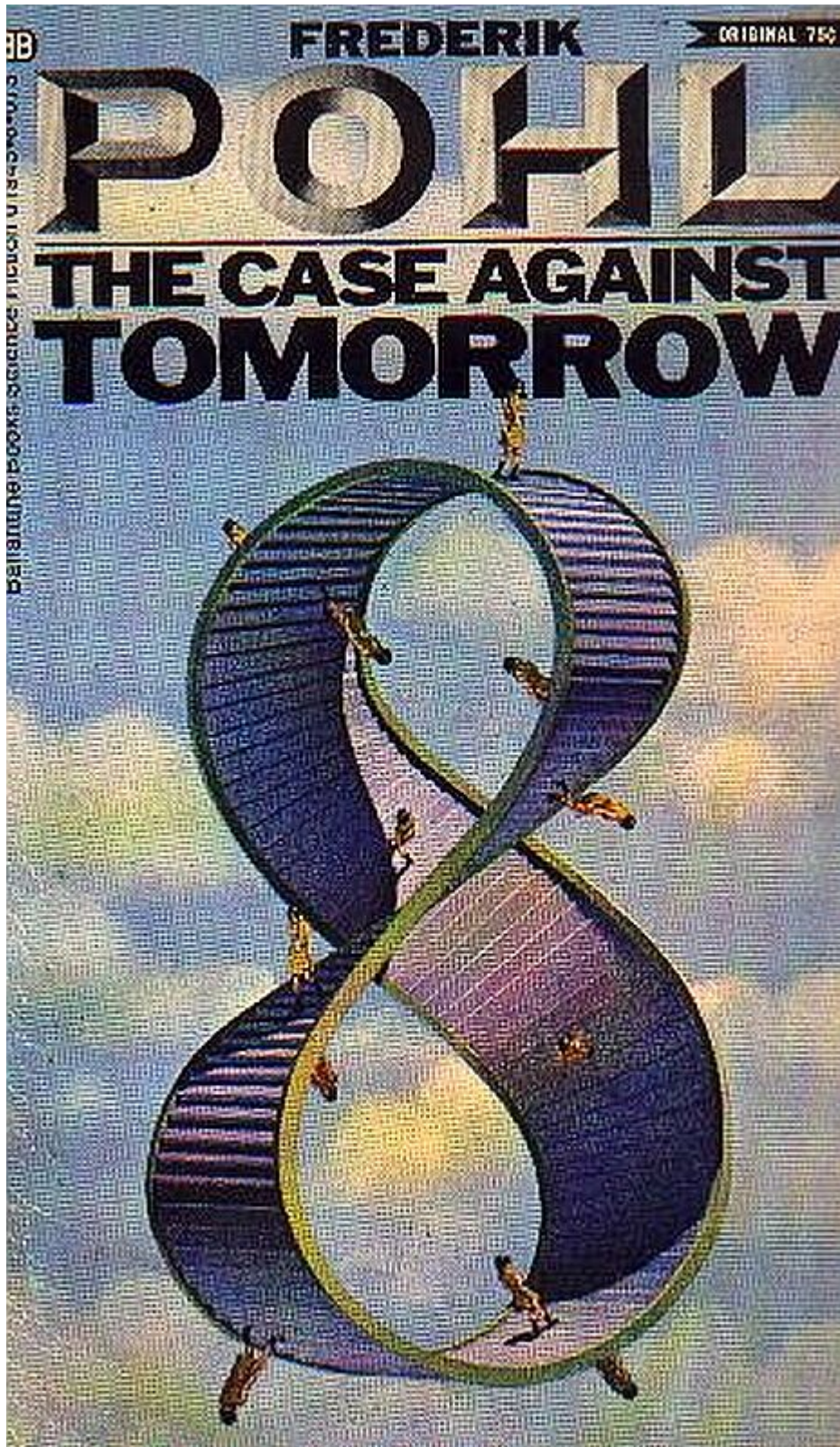
Martians aren't slaves, you see. In many ways, they're more cultured and smarter and a lot more sensitive than you and I. In some ways, in fact, they remind me of my grandfather." "Your what?" Doane gasped, baffled. "My grandfather. He was a very religious man," the Admiral explained reminiscently. "Every Friday night, we'd have the candles for the Sabbath, andwell, I don't know how familiar you are with the ritual, but on the Sabbath, the truly orthodox aren't allowed to work from sundown to sundown'. Not even lighting the candles. So my grandfather used to hire an Irish kid from the neighborhood to be our candle lightera shabbas goy, he called him. "Marty Madden, the boy's name was. Marty wasn't any better than we were or any worsel don't think my grandfather ever thought that. But he was, in that one way, different; he could do something for us that we weren't allowed to do for ourselves. So, naturally, he did it. Just as you and I, Doane, do things for the Martians that they can't do for themselves." The Admiral started the car for the trip back. "I used to know Marty pretty well," he said. "We went to the same school during the week. In a way, I was sorry for himhe missed all the fun of the feasts and so on. In another way, I envied him, because he could do things I couldn't. But I never thought that so many years later, forty million miles from Mosholu Parkway, I'd be taking his job away from him . . ." They rode back to the Administration Building in silence for most of the way, while Jaffa Doane digested some of the most ill-tasting realizations of his career. As the building came into sight, he shook himself and sat up. "All right," he said humbly, "I'll start all over. Make believe I landed this morning. Where do I start?" Rosenman smiled and leaned over to pat his shoulder. "You'll do," he promised. "Where you start is in the clinic. You'll find about fifty Martians with some degree of shock, needing the healing touch of a sound mind like yours. It won't be too bad. You'll have a headache afterward, but you can take a minor discomfort like that, can't you?" "Gladly!" Doane said. "That's the least I can do. I want to apologize to both of you. You, too, Ruth-Ann. I've been about as big a self-centered, wrong-headed" She cut him off. "Oh, don't get all wound up. You're a bit of a phony, heaven knows" she ignored the strangled noise he made"but there are worse. Deep down inside, you're quite a guy. You wouldn't be as much of a man as you are if you didn't have a little ham in you, and a touch of pig-headedness, too. I've given the matter a lot of thought, you see." Rosenman grinned at Doane's expression. "She's right," he agreed. "Between us, we'll get you straightened out, so don't worry about it. Two more years here ought to do it. Basically, your ideas are rightthe Martians ought to learn to get by on their own feet. You can start finding out how they can do it. It'll be good for you. When the two years of your term are up, you'll go home with a better, more human understanding of what's what, ready to settle down to a normal, productive existence on Earth with your wife and family." Doane yelped, "Hold on there! I haven't got a. wife, much less a family!" Ruth-Ann patted his arm reassuringly. "You're not home yet," she said.

The Census Takers IT GETS TO BE A MADHOUSE around here along about the end of the first week. Thank heaven we only do this once a year, that's what I say! Six weeks on, and forty-six weeks offthat's pretty good hours, most people think. But they don't know what those six weeks are like. It's bad enough for the field crews, but when you get to be an Area Boss like me it's frantic. You work your way up through the ranks, and then they give you a whole C.A. of your own; and you think you've got it made. Fifty three-man crews go out, covering the whole Census Area; a hundred and fifty men in the field, and twenty or thirty more in Area Command and you boss them all. And everything looks great, until- Census Period starts and you've got to work those hundred and fifty men; and six weeks is too unbearably long to live through, and too

impossibly short to get the work done; and you begin living on black coffee and thiamin shots and dreaming about the vacation hostel on Point Loma. Anybody can panic, when the pressure is on like that. Your best field men begin to crack up. But you can't afford to, because you're the Area Boss. ... Take Witeck. We were Enumerators together, and he was as good a man as you ever saw, absolutely nerveless when it came to processing the Overs. I counted on that man the way I counted on my own right arm; I always bracketed him with the greenest, shakiest new cadet Enumerators, and he never gave me a moment's trouble for years. Maybe it was too good to last; maybe I should have figured he would crack. I set up my Area Command in a plush penthouse apartment. The people who lived there were pretty well off, you know, and they naturally raised the dickens about being shoved out. "Blow it," I told them. "Get out of here in five minutes, and we'll count you first." Well, that took care of that; they were practically kissing my feet on the way out. Of course, it wasn't strictly by the book, but you have to be a little flexible; that's why some men-become Area Bosses, and others stay Enumerators. Like Witeck. Along about Day Eight things were really hotting up. I was up to my neck in hurry-ups from Regional Control we were running a little slow when Witeck called up. "Chief," he said, "I've got an In." I grabbed the rotary file with one hand and a pencil with the other. "Blue card number?" I asked. Witeck sounded funny over the phone. "Well, Chief," he said, "he doesn't have a blue card. He says" "No blue card?" I couldn't believe it. Come in to a strange C.A. without a card from your own Area Boss, and you're one In that's a cinch to be an Over. "What kind of a crazy C.A. does he come from, without a blue card?" Witeck said, "'He don't come from any C.A., Chief. He says" "You mean he isn't from this country?" "That's right, Chief. He-" "Hold it!" I pushed away the rotary file and grabbed the immigration roster. There were only a couple of dozen names on it, of course we have enough trouble with our own Overs, without taking on a lot of foreigners, but still there were a handful every year who managed to get on the quotas. "I.D. number?" I demanded. "Well, Chief," Witeck began, "he doesn't have an I.D. number. The way it looks to me" Well, you can fool around with these irregulars for a month, if you want to, but it's no way to get the work done. I said: "Over him!" and hung up. I was a little surprised, though; Witeck knew the ropes, and it wasn't like him to buck an irregular on to me. In the old days, when we were both starting out, I'd seen him Over a whole family just because the spelling of their names on their registry cards was different from the spelling on the checklist. But we get older. I made a note to talk to Witeck as soon as the rush was past. We were old friends; I wouldn't have to threaten him with being Overed himself, or anything like that. He'd know, and maybe that would be all he would need to snap him back. I certainly would talk to him, I promised myself, as soon as the rush was over, or anyway as soon as I got back from Point Loma. I had to run up to Regional Control to take a little talking-to myself just then, but I proved to them that we were catching up and they were only medium nasty. When I got back Witeck was on the phone again. "Chief," he said, real unhappy, "this In is giving me a headache. I" "Witeck," I snapped at him, "are you bothering me with another In? Can't you handle anything by yourself?" He said, "It's the same one. Chief. He says he's a kind of ambassador, and" "Oh," I said. "Well, why-the devil don't you get your facts straight in the first place? Give me his name and I'll check his legation." "Well, Chief," he began again, "he, uh, doesn't have any legation. He says he's from the" he swallowed "from the middle of the earth." "You're crazy." I'd seen it happen before, good men breaking under the strain of census taking. They say in cadets that by the time you process your first five hundred Overs you've had it; either you take a voluntary Over yourself, or you split wide open and they carry you off to a giggle farm. And Witeck was past the five hundred mark, way past. There was a lot of yelling and crying from the filter center, which I'd put out by the elevators, and it looked like Jumpers. I stabbed the transfer button on the phone and called to Carias, my number-two man: "Witeck's flipped or something. Handle it!" And

then I forgot about it, while Carias talked to Witeck on the phone; because it was Jumpers, all right, a whole family of them. There was a father and a mother and five kids five of them. Aren't some people disgusting? The field Enumerator turned them over to the guard they were moaning and crying and came up and gave me the story. It was bad. "You're the head of the household?" I demanded of the man. He nodded, looking at me like a sick dog. "We weren't Jumping," he whined. "Honest to heaven, mister you've got to believe me. We were" I cut in, "You were packed and on the doorstep when the field crew came by. Right?" He started to say something, but I had him dead to rights. "That's plenty, friend," I told him. "That's Jumping, under the law: Packing, with intent to move, while a census Enumeration crew is operating in your locale. Got anything to say?" Well, he had plenty to say, but none of it made any sense. He turned my stomach, listening to him. I tried to keep my temper you're not supposed to think of individuals, no matter how worthless and useless and generally unfit they are; that's against the whole principle of the Census but I couldn't help telling him: "I've met your kind before, mister. Five kids! If it wasn't for people like you we wouldn't have any Overs, did you ever think of that? Sure you didn't you people never think of anything but yourself! Five kids, and then when Census comes around you think you can get smart and Jump." I tell you, I was . shaking. "You keep your little beady eyes peeled, sneaking around, watching the Enumerators, trying to count how many it takes to make an Over; and then you wait until they get close to you, so you can Jump. Ever stop to think what trouble that makes for us?" I demanded. "Census is supposed to be fair and square, everybody an even chance and how can we make it that way unless everybody stands still to be counted?" I patted Old Betsy, on my hip. "I haven't Overed anybody myself in five years," I told him, "but I swear, I'd like to handle you personally!" He didn't say a word once I got started on him. He just stood there, taking it. I had to force myself to stop, finally; I could have gone on for a long time, because if there's one thing I hate it's these lousy, stinking breeders who try to Jump when they think one of them is going to be an Over in the count-off. Regular Jumpers are bad enough, but when it's the people who make the mess in the first place Anyway, time was wasting. I took a deep breath and thought things over. Actually, we weren't too badly off; we'd started off Overing every two-hundred-and-fiftieth person, and it was beginning to look as though our preliminary estimate was high; we'd just cut back to Overing every three-hundredth. So we had a little margin to play with. I told the man, dead serious: "You know I could Over the lot of you on charges, don't you?" He nodded sickly. "All right, I'll give you a chance. I don't want to bother with the red tape; if you'll take a voluntary Over for yourself, we'll start the new count with your wife." Call me soft, if you want to; but I still say that it was a lot better than fussing around with charges and a hearing. You get into a hearing like that and it can drag on for half an hour or more; and then Regional Control is on your tail because you're falling behind. It never hurts to give a man a break, even a Jumper, I always say as long as it doesn't slow down your Census. Carias was waiting at my desk when I got back; he looked worried about something, but I brushed him off while I initialed the Overage report on the man we'd just processed. He'd been an In, I found out when I canceled his blue card. I can't say I was surprised. He'd come from Denver, and you know how they keep exceeding their Census figures; no doubt he thought he'd have a better chance in my C.A. than anywhere else. And no doubt he was right, because we certainly don't encourage breeders like him actually, if he hadn't tried to Jump it was oddson that the whole damned family would get by without an Over for years. Carias was hovering right behind me as I finished. "I hate these voluntaries," I told him, basketing the canceled card. "I'm going to talk to Regional Control about it; there's no reason why they can't be processed like any other Over, instead of making me okay each one individually. Now, what's the matter?" He rubbed his jaw. "Chief," he said, "it's Witeck." "Now what? Another In?" Carias glanced at me, then away. "Uh, no, Chief. It's the same one. He claims he comes from, uh, the center of the earth." I swore out loud.

"So he has to turn up in my C.A.!" I complained bitterly. "He gets out of the nuthouse, and right away" Carias said, "Chief, he might not be crazy. He makes it sound pretty real." I said: "Hold it, Carias. Nobody can live in the center of the earth. It's solid, like a potato." "Sure, Chief," Carias nodded earnestly. "But he says it isn't. He says there's a what he calls neutronium shell, whatever that is, with dirt and rocks on both sides of it. We live on the outside. He lives on the inside. His people" ; ; t "Carias!" I yelled. "You're as bad as <Rteck. This guy turns up, no blue card, no I.D. number, no credentials of any kind. What's he going to say, 'Please sir, I'm an Over, please process me'? Naturally not! So he makes up a crazy story, and you fall for it!" "I know, Chief," Carias said humbly. "Neutronium shell!" I would have laughed out loud, if I'd had the time. "Neutronium my foot! Don't you know it's hot down there?" "He says it's hot neutronium," Carias said eagerly. "I asked him that myself. Chief. He said it's just the shell that" "Get back to work!" I yelled at him. I picked up the phone and got Witeck on his wristphone. I tell you, I was boiling. As soon as Witeck answered I lit into him; I didn't give him a chance to get a word in. I gave it to him up and down and sidewise; and I finished off by giving him a direct order. "You Over that man," I told him, "or I'll personally Over you! You hear me?" There was a pause. Then Witeck said, "Jerry? Will you listen to me?" That stopped me. It was the first time in ten years, since I'd been promoted above him, that Witeck had dared call me by my first name. He said, "Jerry, listen. This is something big. This guy is really from the center of the earth, no kidding. He" "Witeck," I said, "you've cracked." "No, Jerry, honest! And it worries me. He's right there in the next room, waiting for me. He says he had no idea things were like this on the surface; he's talking wild about cleaning us off and starting all over again; he says" "/ say he's an Over!" I yelled. "No more talk, Witeck. You've got a direct order now carry it out!" So that was that. We got through the Census Period, after all, but we had to do it shorthanded; and Witeck was hard to replace. I'm a sentimentalist, I guess, but I couldn't help remembering old times. We started even; he might have risen as far as I but of course he made his choice when he got married and had a kid; you can't be a breeder and an officer of the Census both. If it hadn't been for his record he couldn't even have stayed on as an Enumerator. I never said a word to anyone about his crackup. Carias might have talked, but after we found Witeck's body I took him aside. "Carias," I said reasonably, "we don't want any scandal, do we? Here's Witeck, with an honorable record; he cracks, and kills himself, and that's bad enough. We won't let loose talk make it worse, will we?" "Carias said uneasily, "Chief, where's the gun he killed himself with? His own processor wasn't even fired." You can let a helper go just so far. I said sharply, "Carias, we still have at least a hundred Overs to process. You can be on one end of the processing or you can be on the other. You understand me?" He coughed. "Sure, Chief. I understand. We don't want any loose talk." And that's how it is when you're an Area Boss. But I didn't ever get my vacation at Point Loma; the tsunami there washed out the whole town the last week of the Census. And when I tried Baja California, they were having that crazy volcanic business; and the Yellowstone Park bureau wouldn't even accept my reservation because of some trouble with the geysers, so I just stayed home. But the best vacation of all was just knowing that the Census was done for another year. Carias was all for looking for this In that Witeck was talking about, but I turned him down. "Waste of time," I told him. "By now he's a dozen C.A.'s away. We'll never see him again, him or anybody like him I'll bet my life on that."



My Lady Green Sleeves His NAME WAS LIAM O' LEARY and there was something stinking in his nostrils. It was the smell of trouble. He hadn't found what the trouble was yet, but he would. That was his business. He was a captain of guards in Estates- General Correctional Institution better known to its inmates as the Jugand if he hadn't been able to detect the scent of trouble brewing a cellblock away he would never have survived to reach his captaincy. And her

name, he saw, was Sue-Ann Bradley, Detainee No. WFA-656R. He frowned at the rap sheet, trying to figure out what got a girl like her into a place like this. And, what was more important, why she couldn't adjust herself to it, now that she was in. He demanded, "Why wouldn't you mop out your cell?" The girl lifted her head angrily and took a step forward. The block guard, Sodaro, growled wamingly, "Watch it, auntie!" O'Leary shook his head. "Let her talk, Sodaro." It said in the Civil Service Guide to Prison Administration: "Detainees will be permitted to speak in their own behalf in disciplinary proceedings." And O'Leary was a man who lived by the book. She burst out, "I never got a chance! That old witch Mathias never told me I was supposed to mop up. She banged on the door and said, 'Slush up, sister!' And then ten minutes later she called the guards and told them I refused to mop." The block guard guffawed. "Wipe talk! That's what she was telling you to do. Cap'n, you know what's funny about this? This Bradley is" "Shut up, Sodaro." Captain O'Leary put down his pencil and looked at the girl. She was attractive and young not beyond hope, surely. Maybe she had got off to a wrong start, but the question was, would putting her in the disciplinary block help straighten her out? He nibbed his ear and looked past her at the line of prisoners on the rap detail, waiting for him to judge their cases. He said patiently, "Bradley, the rules are you have to mop out your cell. If you didn't understand what Mathias was talking about you should have asked her. Now, I'm warning you, the next time" "Hey, Cap'n, wait!" Sodaro was looking alarmed. "This isn't a first offense. Look at the rap sheet yesterday she pulled the same thing in the mess hall." He shook his head reprovingly at the prisoner. "The block guard had to breakup a fight between her and another wench, and she claimed the same business said she didn't understand when the other one asked her to move along." He said virtuously, "The guard warned her then that next time she'd get the Green Sleeves for sure." Inmate Bradley seemed to be on the verge of tears. She said tautly, "I don't care. I don't care!" O'Leary stopped her. "That's enough! Three days in Block 0," he snapped, and waved her away. It was the only thing to do for her own sake as much as for his. He had managed, by strength of will, not to hear that she had omitted to say "sir" every time she spoke to him; but he couldn't keep it up forever, and he certainly couldn't overlook hysteria. And hysteria was clearly the next step for her. All the same, he stared after her as she left. He handed the rap sheet to Sodaro and said absently, "Too bad a kid like her has to be here. What's she m for?" "You didn't know, Cap'n?" Sodaro leered. "She's in for conspiracy to violate the Categorized Class laws. Don't waste your time with her, Cap'n she's a figger-lover!" Captain O'Leary took a long drink of water from the fountain marked "Civil Service." But it didn't wash the taste out of his mouth. What got into a girl to get her mixed up with that kind of dirty business? He checked out of the cell blocks and walked across the yard, wondering about her. She'd had every advantagedecent Civil Service parents, a good education, everything a girl could wish for. If anything, she had had a better environment than O'Leary himself, and look what she had made of it. "Evening, Cap'n." A bleary old inmate orderly stood up straight and touched his cap as O'Leary passed by. "Evening." O'Leary noted, with the part of his mind that always noted those things, that the orderly had been lealling on his broom until he'd noticed the captain coming by. Of course, there wasn't much to sweep the spray machines and sweeperdozers had been over the cobblestones of the yard twice already that day. But it was an inmate's job to keep busy. And it was a guard captain's job to notice when they didn't. There wasn't anything wrong with that job, he told himself. It was a perfectly good civil-service position better than post-office clerk, not as good as Congressman, but a job you could be proud to hold. He was proud of it. It was right that he should be proud of it. He was civilservice born and bred, and naturally he was proud and content to do a good, clean civil-service job. If he had happened to be born a figa clerk, he told himself; if he had happened to be born a clerk, why, he would have been proud of that too. There wasn't anything wrong with being a clerk or a mechanic or a soldier, or even a laborer

for that matter. Good laborers were the salt of the earth! They weren't smart, maybe, but they had a well, a sort of natural, relaxed joy of living. O'Leary was a broadminded man, and many times he had thought almost with a touch of envy how comfortable it must be to be a wipea laborer, he corrected himself. No responsibilities. No worries. Just an easy, slow routine of work and loaf, work and loaf. Of course, he wouldn't really want that kind of life, because he was Civil Service, and not the kind to try to cross over class barriers that weren't meant to be "Evening, Cap'n." He nodded to the mechanic inmate who was, theoretically, in charge of maintaining the prison's car pool, just inside the gate. "Evening, Conan," he said. Conan, now he was a big buck greaser, and he would be there for the next hour, languidly poking a piece of fluff out of the air filter on the prison jeep. Lazy, sure. Undependable, certainly. But he kept the cars going and, O'Leary thought approvingly, when his sentence was up in another year or so, he would go back to his life with his status restored, a mechanic on the outside as he had been inside, and he certainly would never risk coming back to the Jug by trying to pass as Civil Service or anything else. He knew his place. So why didn't this girl, this Sue-Ann Bradley, know hers? n Every prison has its Green Sleeves sometimes they are called by different names. Old Marquette called it "the canary"; Louisiana State called it "the red hats"; elsewhere it was called "the hole," "the snake pit," "the Klondike." When you're in it you don't much care what it is called; it is a place for punishment. And punishment is what you get. Block 0 in Estates-General Correctional Institution was the disciplinary block, and because of the green straitjackets its inhabitants wore it was called the Green Sleeves. It was a community of its own, an enclave within the larger city-state that was the Jug. And like any other community, it had its leading citizens . . . two of them. Their names were Sauer and Flock. Sue-Ann Bradley heard them before she reached the Green Sleeves. She was in a detachment of three unfortunates like herself, convoyed by an irritable guard, climbing the steel steps toward Block 0 from the floor below, when she heard the yelling. "Owoo-o-o," screamed Sauer from one end of the cell block; and "Yow-w-w!" shrieked Flock at the other. The inside deck guard of Block 0 looked nervously at the outside deck guard. The outside guard looked impassively back after all, he was on the outside. The inside guard muttered, "Wipe rats! They're getting on my nerves." The outside guard shrugged. "Detail, halt!" The two guards turned to see what was coming in as the three new candidates for the Green Sleeves slumped to a stop at the head of the stairs. "Here they are," Sodaro told them. "Take good care of 'em, will you? Especially the lady she's going to like it here, because there's plenty of wipes and greasers and figgers to keep her company." He laughed coarsely and abandoned his charges to the Block 0 guards. The outside guard said sourly, "A woman, for God's sake. Now, O'Leary knows I hate it when there's a woman in here. It gets the others all riled up." "Let them in," the inside guard told him. "The others are riled up already." - Sue-Ann Bradley looked carefully at the floor and paid them no attention. The outside guard pulled the switch that turned on the tanglefoot electronic fields that swamped the floor of the block corridor and of each individual cell. While the fields were on, you could ignore the prisoner they simply could not move fast enough, against the electronic drag of the field, to do any harm. But it was a rule that even in Block 0 you didn't leave the tangle fields on all the time only when the cell doors had to be opened or a prisoner's restraining garment removed. Sue-Ann walked bravely forward through the opened gate and fell flat on her face. It was like walking through molasses; it was her first experience of a tanglefoot field. The guard guffawed and lifted her up by one shoulder. "Take it easy, auntie. Come on, get in your cell." He steered her in the right direction and pointed to a greensleeved straitjacket on the cell cot. "Put that on. Being as you're a lady, we won't tie it up but the rules say you got to wear it, and the rules Hey! She's crying!" He shook his head, marveling. It was the first time he had ever seen a prisoner cry in the Green Sleeves. However, he was wrong. Sue-Ami's shoulders were shaking, but not from tears. Sue-Ann Bradley had got

a good look at Sauer and at Flock as she passed them by, and she was fighting off an almost uncontrollable urge to retch. Sauer and Flock were what are called prison wolves. They were laborers"wives," for short or at any rate they had been once; they had spent so much time in prisons that it was sometimes hard even for them to remember what they really were, outside. Sauer was a big, grinning redhead with eyes like a water moccasin. Flock was a lithe five-footer, with the build of a water moccasin and the sad, stupid eyes of a calf. Sauer stopped yelling for a moment. "Hey, Flock," he cried. "What do you want, Sauer?" called Flock from his own cell. "Didn't you see, Rock?" bellowed Sauer. "We got a lady with us! Maybe we ought to cut out this yelling so as not to disturb the lady!" He screeched with howling, maniacal laughter. "Anyway, if we don't cut this out, they'll get us in trouble. Flock!" "Oh, you think so?" shrieked Flock. "Jeez, I wish you hadn't said that, Sauer. You got me scared! I'm so scared I'm gonna have to yell!" The howling started all over again. The inside guard finished putting the new prisoners away and turned off the tangler field once more. He licked his lips. "Say, you want to take a turn in here for a while?" "Uh-uh," said the outside guard. "You're yellow," the inside guard said moodily. "Ah, I don't know why I don't quit this lousy job. Hey, you! Pipe down or III come in and beat your head off!" "Ee-ee-ee!" shrieked Sauer. "I'm scared!" Then he grinned at the guard, all but his water-moccasin eyes. "Don't you know you can't hurt a wipe by hitting him on the head, boss?" "Shut up!" yelled the inside guard. . . . Sue-Ann Bradley's weeping now was genuine. She simply could not help it. The crazy yowling of the hardtimers, Sauer and Flock, was getting under her skin. They weren't even human, she told herself miserably, trying to weep silently so as not to give the guards the satisfaction of hearing her. They were animals! Resentment and anger she could understand she told herself doggedly that resentment and anger were natural and right. They were perfectly normal expressions of the freedom-loving citizen's rebellion against the vile and stifling system of Categorized Classes. It was good that Sauer and Flock still had enough spirit to straggle against the vicious system But did they have to scream so? The senseless yelling was driving her crazy. She abandoned herself to weeping, and she didn't even care who heard her any more. Senseless! It never occurred to Sue-Ann Bradley that it might not be senseless, because noise hides noise. But then, she hadn't been a prisoner very long. m "I smell trouble," said O'Leary to the warden. "Trouble, trouble?" Warden Schluckebier clutched his throat and his little round eyes looked terrified as perhaps they should have. Warden Godfrey Schlackebier was the almighty Caesar of ten thousand inmates in the Jug, but privately he was a fussy old man trying to hold onto the last decent job he would have in his life. "Trouble? What trouble?" O'Leary shrugged. "Different things. You know Lafon, from Block A? This afternoon he was playing ball with the laundry orderlies in the yard." The warden, faintly relieved, faintly annoyed, scolded: "O'Leary, what did you want to worry me for? There's nothing wrong with playing ball in the yard. That's what recreation periods are for!" "No. You don't see what I mean, warden. Lafon was a professional on the outside an architect. Those laundry cons were laborers. Pros and wipes don't mix, it isn't natural. And there are other things." O'Leary hesitated, frowning. How could you explain to the warden that it didn't smell right? "For instance Well, there's Aunt Mathias in the women's block. She's a pretty good old girl that's why she's the block orderly, she's a lifer, she's got no place to go, she gets along with the other women. But today she put a woman named Bradley on report. Why? Because she told Bradley to mop up in wipe talk 117 and Bradley didn't understand. Now, Mathias wouldn't" The warden raised his hand. "Please, O'Leary," he begged. "Don't bother me about that kind of stuff." He sighed heavily and rubbed his eyes. He poured himself a cup of steaming black coffee from a brewpot, reached in a desk drawer for something, hesitated, glanced at O'Leary, then dropped a pale blue tablet into the cup. He drank it down eagerly, ignoring its temperature. He leaned back, looking suddenly happier and more assured. "O'Leary," he said, "you're a guard

captain, right? And I'm your warden. You have your job, keeping the inmates in line, and I have mine. Now, your job is just as important as my job," he said piously, staring gravely at O'Leary. "Everybody's job is just as important as everybody else's, right? But we have to stick to our own jobs. We don't want to try to pass." O'Leary snapped erect, abruptly angry. Pass! What the devil way was that for the warden to talk to him. "Excuse the expression, O'Leary," the warden said anxiously. "I mean, after all, 'Specialization is the goal of civilization,' right?" He was a great man for platitudes, was Warden Schluckebier. "You know, you don't want to worry about my end of running the prison. And I don't want to worry about yours. You see?" And he folded his hands and smiled like a civil-service Buddha. O'Leary choked back his temper. "Warden, I'm telling you that there's trouble coming up. I smell the signs." "Handle it, then!" snapped the warden, irritated at last. "But suppose it's too big to handle? Suppose" "It isn't," the warden said positively. "Don't borrow trouble with all your supposing, O'Leary." He sipped the remains of his coffee, made a wry face, poured a fresh cup and, with an elaborate show of not noticing what he himself was doing, dropped three of the pale blue tablets into it this time. He sat beaming into space, waiting for the jolt to take effect. "Well, then," he said at last. "You just remember what I've told you tonight, O'Leary, and we'll get along fine. 'Specialization is the' Oh, curse the thing." His phone was ringing. The warden picked it up irritably that was the trouble with those pale blue tablets, thought O'Leary; they gave you a lift, but they put you on edge. "Hello," barked the warden, not even glancing at the viewscreen. "What the devil do you want? Don't you know I'm What? You did what? You're going to WHAT?" He looked at the viewscreen at last with a look of pure horror. Whatever he saw on it, it did not reassure him. His eyes opened like clamshells in a steamer. "O'Leary," he said faintly, "my mistake." And he hung up more or less by accident; the handset dropped from his fingers. The person on the other end of the phone was calling from Cell Block 0. Five minutes before he hadn't been anywhere near the phone, and it didn't look as if his chances of ever getting near it were very good. Because five minutes before he was in his cell, with the rest of the hard-timers of the Green Sleeves. His name was Flock. He was still yelling. Sue-Ann Bradley, in the cell across from him, thought that maybe, after all, the man was really in pain. Maybe the crazy screams were screams of agony, because certainly his face was the face of an agonized man. The outside guard bellowed: "Okay, okay. Take ten!" Sue-Ann froze, waiting to see what would happen. What actually did happen was that the guard reached up and closed the switch that actuated the tangler fields on the floors of the cells. The prison rules were humanitarian, even for the dregs that inhabited the Green Sleeves. Ten minutes out of every two hours, even the worst case had to be allowed to take his hands out of the restraining garment. "Rest period" it was called in the rule book; the inmates had a less lovely term for it. At the guard's yell, the inmates jumped to their feet. Bradley was a little slow getting off the edge of the steel-slat bed nobody had warned her that the eddy currents in the tangler fields had a way of making metal smoke-hot. She gasped, but didn't cry out. Score one more painful lesson in her new language course. She rubbed the backs of her thighs gingerly and slowly, slowly. The eddy currents did not permit you to move fast. It was like pushing against rubber; the faster you tried to move, the greater the resistance. The guard peered genially into her cell. "You're okay, auntie." She proudly ignored him as he slogged deliberately away on his rounds. At least he didn't have to untie her, and practically stand over her while she attended to various personal matters, as he did with the male prisoners. It was not much to be grateful for, but Sue-Ann Bradley was grateful. At least, she didn't have to live quite like a fig like an underprivileged clerk, she told herself, conscience-stricken. Across the hall, the guard was saying irritably, "What the hell's the matter with you?" He opened the door of the cell with an asbestos-handled key held in a canvas glove. Flock was in that cell, and he

was doubled over. The guard looked at him doubtfully. It could be a trick, maybe. Couldn't it? But he could see Flock's face, and the agony in it was real enough. And Flock was gasping, through real tears: "Cramps. I!" "Ah, you wipes always got a pain in the gut." The guard lumbered around Rock to the drawstrings at the back of the jacket. Funny smell in here, he told himself not for the first time. And imagine, some people didn't believe that wipes had a smell of their own! But this time, he realized cloudily, it was a rather unusual smell. Something burning. Scorching almost like meat scorching. It wasn't pleasant. He finished untying Flock and turned away; let the stinking wipe take care of his own troubles. He only had ten minutes to get all the way around Block 0, and the inmates complained like crazy if he didn't make sure they all got the most possible free time. He was pretty good at snow-shoeing through the tangler field. He was a little vain about it, even; at times he had been known to boast of his ability to make the rounds in two minutes, every time. . . . Every time but this. For Flock moaned behind him, oddly close. The guard turned, but not quickly enough. There was Flock astonishing, he was half out of his jacket; his arms hadn't been in the sleeves at all! And in one of the hands, incredibly, there was something that glinted and smoked. "All right," croaked Flock, tears trickling out of eyes nearly shut with pain. But it wasn't the tears that held the guard, it was the shining, smoking thing, now poised at his throat. A shiv! It looked as though it had been made out of a bedspring, ripped loose from its frame God knows how, hidden inside the green-sleeved jacket God knows how filed, filed to sharpness over endless hours. No wonder Flock moaned! For the eddy-currents in the shiv were slowly cooking his hand; and the blister against his abdomen where the shiv had rested during other rest periods felt like raw acid. "All right," whispered Flock, "just walk out the door, and you won't get hurt. Unless the other screw makes trouble, you won't get hurt so tell him not to, you hear?" He was nearly fainting with the pain. But he hadn't let go. He didn't let go. And he didn't stop. IV And it was Flock on the phone to the warden Flock with his eyes still streaming tears. Flock with Sauer standing right behind him, menacing the two bound deck guards. Sauer shoved Flock out of the way. "Hey, warden!" he said and the voice was a cheerful bray, though the serpent eyes were cold and hating. "Warden, you got to get a medic in here. My boy Flock, he hurt himself real bad and he needs a doctor." He gestured playfully at the guards with the shiv. "I tell you, warden. I got this knife, and I got your guards here. Enough said? So get a medic in here quick you hear?" And he snapped the connection. O'Leary said, "Warden, I told you I smelled trouble!" The warden lifted his head, glared, started feebly to speak, hesitated, and picked up the long-distance phone. He said sadly to the prison operator: "Get me the Governor fast!" Riot! The word spread out from the prison on seven-league boots. It snatched the City Governor out of a friendly game of Seniority with his Manager and their wives and just when he was holding the Porkbarrel Joker concealed in the hole. It broke up the Base Championship Scramble Finals at Hap Arnold Field to the south, as half the contestants had to scramble in earnest to a Red Alert that was real. It reached to police precinct houses and TV newsrooms and highway checkpoints, and from there it filtered into the homes and lives of the nineteen million persons that lived within a few dozen miles of the Jug. Riot. And yet, fewer than half a dozen men were actually involved. A handful of men, and the enormous bulk of the city-state quivered in every limb and class. It was like a quarrel of fleas on the hide of a rhino! But a flea-bite can kill a rhino with the slow agony of communicated disease; and the city-state around the prison leaped in fear. In its ten million homes, in its hundreds of thousands of public places, the city-state's people shook under the impact of the news from the prison. For the news touched them where their fears lay. Riot! And not merely a street brawl among roistering wipes, or a barroom fight of greasers relaxing from a hard day at the plant the riot was down among the corrupt sludge that underlay the state itself. Wipes brawled with wipes, and no one cared; but in the Jug all classes were cast together. Thirty miles to

the south, Hap Arnold Field was a blaze of light. The airmen tumbled out of their quarters and dayrooms at the screech of the alert siren, and behind them their wives and children stretched and yawned and worried. An alert! The older kids fussed and complained and their mothers shut them up. No, there wasn't any alert scheduled for tonight; no, they didn't know where Daddy was going; no, the kids couldn't get up yet it was the middle of the night! And as soon as they had the kids back in bed, most of the mothers struggled into their own airwac uniforms and headed for the Briefing Area to hear. They caught the words from a distance not quite correctly. "Riot!" gasped an aircraftswoman first-class, mother of three. "The wipers! I told Charlie they'd get out of hand, and Alys, we aren't safe. You know how they are about GI women! I'm going right home and get a club and stand right by the door and" "Club!" snapped Alys, radarscope-sergeant, with two children querulously awake in her nursery at home. "What in God's name is the use of a club? You can't hurt a wiper hitting him on the head. You'd better come along to Supply with me and draw a gun you'll need it before this night is out!" But the airmen themselves heard the briefing loud and clear over the scramble-call speakers, and they knew it was not merely a matter of trouble in the wiper quarters. The Jug! The governor himself had called them out; they were to fly interdiction missions at such-and-such levels on such-and-such flight circuits around the prison. So the rockets took off on fountains of fire; and the jets took off with a whistling roar; and last of all the helicopters took off . . . and they were the ones who might actually accomplish something. They took up their picket posts on the prison perimeter, a pilot and two bombardiers in each copter, stone-faced, staring grimly alert at the prison below. They were ready for the break-out. But there wasn't any break-out. The rockets went home for fuel. The jets went home for fuel. The helicopters hung on still ready, still waiting. The rockets came back and roared harmlessly about, and went away again. They stayed away. The helicopter men never faltered and never relaxed. The prison below them was washed with light from the guard posts on the walls, from the cell blocks themselves, from the mobile lights of the guard squadrons surrounding the walls. North of the prison, on the long, flat, damp developments of reclaimed land, the matchbox row houses of the clerical neighborhoods showed lights in every window as the figgers stood ready to repel invasion from their undesired neighbors to the east, the wipers. In the crowded tenements of the laborers' quarters, the wipers shouted from window to window; and there were crowds in the bright streets. "The whole bloody thing's going to blow up!" a helicopter bombardier yelled bitterly to his pilot, above the flutter and roar of the whirling blades. "Look at the mobs in GreaserviUe! The first break-out from the Jug's going to start a fight like you never saw and well be right in the middle of it!" He was partly right. He would be right in the middle of it for every man, woman and child in the city-state would be right in the middle of it; there was no place anywhere that would be spared. No Mixing. That was the prescription that kept the city-state alive. There's no harm in a family fight and aren't all mechanics a family, aren't all laborers a clan, aren't all clerks and office workers related by closer ties than blood or skin? But the declassified cons of the Jug were the dregs of every class; and once they spread the neat compartmentation of society was pierced. The break-out would mean riot on a bigger scale than any prison had ever known. . . . But he was also partly wrong. Because the break-out wasn't seeming to come. The Jug itself was coming to a boil. Honor Block A, relaxed and comfortable at the end of another day, found itself shaken alert by strange goings on. First there was the whir and roar of the Air Force overhead. Trouble. Then there was the sudden arrival of extra guards, doubling the normal complement day-shift guards, summoned away from their comfortable civil service homes at some urgent call. Trouble for sure. Honor Block A wasn't used to trouble. A Block was as far from the Green Sleeves of 0 Block as you could get and still stay in the Jug. Honor Block A belonged to the prison's halfbreed the honor prisoners, the trustees who did guards' work because there weren't enough guards to go around. They weren't Apaches or

Piutes; they were camp-following Injuns who had sold out for the white man's firewater. The price of their services was privilege many privileges. Item: TV sets in every cell. Item: Hobby tools, to make gadgets for the visitor tradethe only way an inmate could earn an honest dollar. Item: In consequence, an exact knowledge of everything the outside world knew and put on its TV screens (including the grim, alarming reports of "trouble at Estates-General") and the capacity to convert their "hobby tools" to other uses. An honor prisoner named Wilmer Lafon was watching the TV screen with an expression of rage and despair. Lafon was a credit to the Jughe was a showpiece for visitors. Prison rules provided for prisoner trainingit was a matter of "rehabilitation." Prisoner rehabilitation is a joke, and a centuries-old one at that; but it had its serious uses, and one of them was to keep the prisoners busy. It didn't much matter at what. Lafon, for instance, was being "rehabilitated" by studying architecture. The guards made a point of bringing inspection delegations to his cell to show him off. There were his walls, covered with pin-upsbut not of women. The pictures were sketches Lafon had drawn himself; they were of buildings, highways, dams and bridges; they were splendidly conceived and immaculately executed. "Looka that!" the guards would rumble to their guests. "There isn't an architect on the outside as good as this boy! What do you say, Wilmer? Tell the gentlemenhow long you been taking these correspondence courses in architecture? Six years! Ever since he came to the Jug." And Lafon would grin and bob his head, and the delegation would go, with the guard saying something like: "Believe me, that Wihner could design a whole skyscraper and it wouldn't fall down, either!" And they were perfectly, provably right. Not only could Inmate Lafon design a skyscraper, but he had already done so. More than a dozen of them. And none had fallen down. Of course, that was more than six years bade, before he was convicted of a felony and sent to the Jug. He would never design another. Or if he did, it would never be built. For the plain fact of the matter was that the Jug's rehabilitation courses were like rehabilitation in every prison that was ever built since time and punishment began. They kept the inmates busy. They made a show of purpose for an institution that had never had a purpose that made sense. And that was all. For punishment for a crime is not satisfied by a jail sentencehow does it hurt a man to feed and clothe and house him, with the bills paid by the state? Lafon's punishment was that he, as an architect, was through. Savage tribes used to lop off a finger or an ear to punish a criminal. Civilized societies confine their amputations to bits and pieces of the personality. Chop-chop, and a man's reputation comes off; chop again, and his professional standing is gone; chop-chop and he has lost the respect and trust of his fellows. The jail itself isn't the punishment. The jail is only the shaman's hatchet that performs the amputation. If rehabilitation in a jail workedii it was meant to workit would be the end of jails. Rehabilitation? Rehabilitation for what? Wilmer Lafon switched off the television set and silently pounded his fist into the wall. Never again to return to the Professional class! For naturally, the conviction had cost him his membership in the Architectural Society, and that had cost him his Professional standing. But stilljust to be out of the Jug, that would be something! And his whole hope of ever getting out lay not here in Honor Block A, but in the turmoil of the Green Sleeves, a hundred meters and fifty armed guards away. He was a furious man. He looked into the cell next door, where a con named Garcia was trying to concentrate on a game of Solitaire Splitfee. Once Garcia had been a Professional too; he was the closest thing to a friend Wilmer Lafon had. Maybe he could now help to get Lafon where he wantedneededto be. . . . Lafon swore silently and shook his head. Garcia was a spineless milksop, as bad as any clerkLafon was nearly sure there was a touch of the inkwell somewhere in his family. Clever enough, like all figgers. But you couldn't rely on him in a pinch. He would have to do it all himself. He thought for a second, ignoring the rustle and mumble of the other honor prisoners of Block A. There was no help for it; he would have to dirty his hands with physical activity. Outside on the deck, the guards were grumbling

to each other. Lafon wiped the scowl off his black face, put on a smile, rehearsed what he was going to say, and rattled the door of his cell. "Shut up down there!" one of the screws bawled. Lafon recognized the voice; it was the guard named Sodaro. That was all to the good. He knew Sodaro, and he had some plans for him. He rattled the cell door again and called: "Chief, can you come here a minute, please?" Sodaro yelled, "Didn't you hear me? Shut up!" But in a moment he came wandering by and looked into Lafon's tidy little cell. "What the devil do you want?" he grumbled. Lafon said ingratiatingly, "Hey, chief, what's going on?" "Shut your mouth," Sodaro said absently and yawned. He hefted his shoulder holster comfortably. That O'Leary, what a production he had made of getting the guards back! And here he was, stuck in Block A on the night he had set aside for getting better acquainted with that little blue-eyed statistician from the Census office. "Aw, chief. The television says there's something going on in the Green Sleeves. What's the score?" Sodaro had no reason not to answer him; but it was his unvarying practice to make a con wait before doing anything the con wanted. He gave Lafon a ten-second stare before he relented. "That's right. Sauer and Flock took over Block O. What about it?" Much, much about it! But Lafon looked away to hide the eagerness in his eyes. Perhaps, after all, it was not too late. . . He suggested humbly: "You look a little sleepy. Do you want some coffee?" "Coffee?" Sodaro scratched. "You got a cup for me?" "Certainly! I've got one put asideswiped it from the messhall, you know, not the one I use myself." "Um." Sodaro leaned on the cell door. "You know I could toss you in the Green Sleeves for stealing from the messhall." "Aw, chief!" Lafon grinned. "You been looking for trouble. O'Leary says you were messing around with the bucks from the laundry detail," Sodaro said half-heartedly. But he didn't really like picking on Lafon, who was, after all, an agreeable inmate to have on occasion. "All right. Where's the coffee?" They didn't bother with tanglefoot fields in Honor Block A. Sodaro just unlocked the door and walked in, hardly bothering to look at Lafon. He took three steps toward the neat little desk at the back of the cell, where Lafon had rigged up a drawing board and a table, where Lafon kept his little store of luxury goods. Three steps. And then, suddenly aware that Lafon was very close to him, 'he turned, astonished a little too late. He saw that Lafon had snatched up a metal chair; he saw Lafon swinging it, his black face maniacal; he saw the chair coming down. He reached for his shoulder holster; but it was very much too late for that. v Captain O'Leary dragged the scared little wretch into the warden's office. He shook the con angrily. "Listen to this, warden! The boys just brought this one in from the Shops Building. Do you know what he's been up to?" The warden wheezed sadly and looked away. He had stopped even answering O'Leary by now, he had stopped talking to Sauer on the interphone when the big convict called, every few minutes, to rave and threaten and demand a doctor. He had almost stopped doing everything except worry and weep. But still and all, he was the warden. He was the one who gave the orders. O'Leary barked, "Warden, pay attention! This little greaser has boUixed up the whole tangler circuit for the prison. If the cons get out into the Yard now you won't be able to tangle them. You know what that means? They'll have the freedom of the Yard, and who knows what comes next?" The warden frowned sympathetically. "Tsk, tsk." O'Leary shook the con again. "Come on, Hiroko! Tell the warden what you told the guards." The con shrank away from him. Beads of sweat were glistening on his furrowed yellow forehead. "Il had to do it, Cap'n!" he babbled. "I shorted the wormcan in the tangler subgrid, but I had to! I got a signal, 'BoUix the grid tonight or wheep, some day you'll be in the Yard and they'll static you." What could I do, Cap'n? I didn't want to" O'Leary pressed: "Who did the signal come from?" But the con only shook his head, perspiring the more. The warden asked faintly, "What's he saying?" O'Leary rolled his eyes to heaven. And this was the wardencouldn't even understand shoptalk from the mouths of his own inmates! He translated: "He got orders from the prison underground to short-circuit the electronic units in the tangler circuit. They threatened to kill him if he didn't." The warden

drummed with his fingers on the desk. "The tangler field, eh? My, yes. That is important. You'd better get it fixed, O'Leary. Right away." "Fixed? Warden, look who's going to fix it?" O'Leary demanded. "You know as well as I do that every mechanic in the prison is a con. Even if one of the guards would do a thing like that and I'd bust him myself if he did! he wouldn't know where to start. That's mechanic work." The warden swallowed. He had to admit that O'Leary was right. Naturally nobody but a mechanic and a specialist electrician from a particular subgroup of the greaser class at that could fix something like the tangler field generators. That was a fact of life. These days, he thought pathetically, the world was so complex that it took a specialist to do anything at all. He said absently, "Well, that's true enough. After all, 'Specialization is the goal of civilization,' you know." O'Leary took a deep breath he needed it. He beckoned to the guard at the door. "Take this greaser out of here!" The con shambled out, his head hanging. O'Leary turned to the warden and spread his hands. "Warden," he said reasonably, "don't you see how this thing is building up? Let's not just wait for the place to explode in our faces! Let me take a squad into Block 0 before it's too late." The warden pursed his lips thoughtfully and cocked his head, as though he were trying to find some trace of merit in an unreasonable request. He said at last, "No." O'Leary made a passionate sound that was trying to be bad language; but he was too raging mad to articulate it. He walked stiffly away from the limp, silent warden and stared out the window. At least, he told himself, he hadn't gone to pieces. It was his doing, not the warden's, that all the off-duty guards had been dragged double-time back to the prison, his doing that they were now ringed around the outer walls or scattered on extra-man patrols throughout the prison. It was something, but O'Leary couldn't believe that it was enough. He'd been in touch with half a dozen of the details inside the prison on the intercom, and all of them had reported the same thing. In all of E-G not a single prisoner was asleep. They were talking back and forth between the cells, and the guards couldn't shut them up; they were listening to concealed radios, and the guards didn't dare make a shake-down to find them; they were working themselves up to something. To what? O'Leary didn't want ever to find out what. He wanted to go in there with a couple of the best guards he could get his hands on shoot his way into the Green Sleeves if he had to and clean up the infection. But the warden said no. O'Leary moaned and stared balefully at the hovering helicopters. The warden was the warden! He was placed in that position through the meticulously careful operations of the Civil Service machinery, maintained in that position year after year through the penetrating annual inquiries of the Reclassification Board. It was subversive to think that the Board could have made a mistake! But O'Leary was absolutely sure that the warden was a scared, ineffectual jerk. The interphone was ringing again. The warden picked up the handpiece and held it limply at arm's length, his eyes fixed glassily on the wall. It was Sauer from the Green Sleeves again; O'Leary could hear his maddened bray. "I warned you, warden!" O'Leary could see the big con's contorted face in miniature, in the viewscreen of the interphone. The grin was broad and jolly; the snake's eyes poisonously cold. "I'm going to give you five minutes, warden, you hear? Five minutes! And if there isn't a medic in here in five minutes to take care of my boy Flock your guards have had it! I'm going to chop off a hand and throw it out the window, you hear me? And five minutes later another hand! And five minutes later!" The warden groaned weakly. "I've called for the prison medic, Sauer. Honestly I have! I'm sure he's coming as rapidly as he" "Five minutes!" And the ferociously grinning face disappeared. O'Leary leaned forward. "Warden. Warden, let me take a squad in there!" The warden stared at him for a blank moment. "Squad? No, O'Leary. What's the use of a squad? It's a medic I have to get in there. I have a responsibility to those guards, and if I don't get a medic" A cold, calm voice from the door: "I am here, warden!" O'Leary and the warden both jumped up. The medic nodded slightly. "You may sit down." "Oh, doctor! Thank heaven you're here." The warden was falling all over himself, getting a chair for his guest, flustering

about. O'Leary said sharply, "Wait a minute, warden. You can't let the doctor go in alone!" "He isn't alone!" The doctor's interne came from behind him, scowling belligerently at O'Leary. He was youngish, his beard pale and silky, a long way from his first practice. "I'm with him!" O'Leary put a strain on his patience. "They'll eat you up in there, Doc! Those are the worst cons in the prison. They've got two hostages already what's the use of giving them two more?" The medic fixed him with his eyes. He was a tail man and he wore his beard proudly. "Guard, do you think you can prevent me from healing a sufferer?" He folded his hands over his abdomen and turned to leave. The interne stepped aside and bowed his head. O'Leary surrendered. "All right, you can go. But I'm coming with you with a squad!" Inmate Sue-Ann Bradley cowered in her cell. The Green Sleeves was jumping. She had never, never, she told herself wretchedly thought that it would be anything like this. She listened unbelieving to the noise the released prisoners were making, smashing the chairs and commodes in their cells, screaming threats at the bound and terrified guards. They were like animals! She faced the thought, with fear, and with the sorrow of a murdered belief that was worse than fear. It was bad that she was, she knew, in danger of dying right here and now; but what was even worse was that the principles that had brought her to the Jug were dying too. Wipes were not the same as civil-service people! A bull's roar from the corridor, and a shocking crash of glass; that was Flock, and apparently he had smashed the TV interphone. "What in the world are they doing?" Inmate Bradley sobbed to herself. It was beyond comprehension. They were yelling words that made no sense to her, threatening punishments that she could barely imagine on the guards. Sauer and Flock, they were laborers; some of the other rioting cons were clerks, mechanic seven civil-service or professionals, for all she could tell. But she could hardly understand any of them. Why was the quiet little Chinese clerk in Cell Six setting fire to his bed? There did seem to be a pattern, of sorts the laborers were rocketing about, breaking things at random; the mechanics were pleasurably sabotaging the electronic and plumbing installations; the white-collar categories were finding their dubious joys in less direct ways like setting fire to a bed. But what a mad pattern! The more Sue-Ann saw of them, the less she understood. It wasn't just that they talked different she had spent endless hours studying the various patois of shop talk, and it had defeated her; but it wasn't just that. It was bad enough when she couldn't understand the words as when that trusty Mathias had ordered her in wipe shop talk to mop out her cell. But what was even worse was not understanding the thought behind the words. Sue-Ann Bradley had consecrated her young life to the belief that all men were created free, and equal and alike. Or alike in all the things that mattered, anyhow. Alike in hopes, alike in motives, alike in virtues. She had turned her back on a decent civil-service family and a promising civil-service career to join the banned and despised Association for the Advancement of the Categorized Classes Screams from the corridor outside. Sue-Ann leaped to the door of her cell to see Sauer clutching at one of the guards. The guard's hands were tied but his feet were free; he broke loose from the clumsy clown with the serpent's eyes, almost fell, ran toward Sue-Ann. There was nowhere else to run. The guard, moaning and gasping, tripped, slid, caught himself and stumbled into her cell. "Please!" he begged. "That crazy Sauer he's going to cut my hand off! For heaven's sake, ma'am stop him!" Sue-Ann stared at him, between terror and tears. Stop Sauer! If only she could stop Sauer. The big red-head was lurching stiffly toward them raging, but not so angry that the water-moccasin eyes showed heat. "Come here, you figger scum!" he brayed. The epithet wasn't even close the guard was civil service through and through but it was like a reviving whip-sting to Sue-Ann Bradley. "Watch your language, Mr. Sauer!" she snapped, incongruously. Sauer stopped dead and blinked. "Don't you dare hurt him!" she warned. "Don't you see, Mr. Sauer, you're playing into their hands? They're trying to divide us. They pit mechanic against clerk, laborer against armed forces. And you're helping them! Brother Sauer, I beg" The red-head spat deliberately on the floor. He licked

his lips, and grinned an amiable clown's grin, and said in his cheerful, buffoon bray: "Auntie, go verb your adjective adjective noun." Sue-Ann Bradley gasped and turned white. She had known such words existed but only theoretically. She had never expected to hear them. And certainly, she would never have believed she would hear them, applied to her, from the lips of a . . . a laborer. At her knees, the guard shrieked and fell to the floor. "Sauer, Sauer!" A panicky bellow from the corridor; the red-headed giant hesitated. "Sauer, come on out here! There's a million guards coming up the stairs. Looks like trouble!" Sauer said hoarsely to the unconscious guard, "I'll take care of you." And he looked blankly at the girl, and shook his head, and hurried back to the corridor. Guards were coming, all right not a million of them, but half a dozen or more. And leading them all was the medic, calm, bearded face looking straight ahead, hands clasped before him, ready to heal the sick, comfort the aged or bring new life into the world. "Hold it!" shrieked little Flock, crouched over the agonizing blister on his abdomen, gun in hand, peering insanely down the steps. "Hold it or" "Shut up." Sauer called softly to the approaching group: "Let the doc come up. Nobody else!" The inteme faltered; the guards stopped dead; the medic said calmly: "I must have my inteme with me." He glanced at the barred gate wonderingly. Sauer hesitated. "Well all right. Bat no guards!" A few yards away Sue-Aim Bradley was stuffing the syncope form of the guard into her small washroom. It was time to take a stand. No more cowering, she told herself desperately. No more waiting. She closed the door on the guard, still unconscious, and stood grimly before it. Him, at least, she would save if she could. They could get him, but only over her dead body. . . . Or anyway she thought with a sudden throbbing in her throat over her body. VI After O'Leary and the medic left, the warden tottered to a chair but not for long. His secretary appeared, eyes bulging. "The governor!" he gasped. Warden .Schluckebier managed to say: "Why, Governor! How good of you to come" The governor shook him off and held the door open for the men who had come with him. There were reporters from all the news services, officials from the township governments within the city-state. There was an air GI with the major's leaves on his collar "Liaison, sir," he explained crisply to the warden, "just in case you have any orders for our men up there." There were nearly a dozen others. The warden was quite overcome. The governor rapped out: "Warden, no criticism of you, of course, but I've come to take personal charge. I'm superseding you under Rule Twelve, Para. A, of the Uniform Civil Service Code. Right?" "Oh, right!" cried the warden, incredulous with joy. "The situation is bad perhaps worse than you think. I'm seriously concerned about the hostages those men have in there. The guards, the medic and I had a call from Senator Bradley a short time ago" "Senator Bradley?" echoed the warden. "Senator Sebastian Bradley. One of our foremost civil servants," the governor said firmly. "It so happens that his daughter is in Block 0, as an inmate." The warden closed his eyes. He tried to swallow, but the throat muscles were paralyzed. "There is no question," the governor went on briskly, "about the propriety of her being there she was duly convicted of a felonious act, namely conspiracy and incitement to riot. But you see the position." The warden saw. All too well the warden saw. "Therefore," said the governor, "I intend to go in to Block 0 myself. Sebastian Bradley is an old and personal friend as well," he emphasized, "as being a senior member of the Reclassification Board. I understand a medic is going to Block 0. I shall go with him." The warden managed to sit up straight. "He's gone. I mean they already left. Governor. But I assure you. Miss Brad Inmate Bradley that is, the young lady is in no danger. I have already taken precautions," he said, gaining confidence as he listened to himself talk. "I, uh, I was deciding on a course of action as you came in. See, Governor, the guards on the walls are all armed. All they have to do is fire a couple of rounds into the Yard and then the copters could start dropping tear gas and light fragmentation bombs and" The governor was already at the door. "You will not," he said; and, "Now, which way did they go?" O'Leary was in the Yard, and he was smelling

trouble, loud and strong. The first he knew that the rest of the prison had caught the riot fever was when the lights flared on in Cell Block A. "That Sodaro!" he snarled; but there wasn't time to worry about that Sodaro. He grabbed the rest of his guard detail and double-timed it toward the New Building, leaving the medic and a couple of guards walking sedately toward the Old. Block A, on the New Building's lowest tier was already coming to life; a dozen yards, and Blocks B and C lighted up. And a dozen yards more, and they could hear the yelling; and it wasn't more than a minute before the building doors opened. The cons had taken over three more blocks. How? O'Leary didn't take time even to guess. The inmates were piling out into the Yard. He took one look at the rushing mob. Crazy! It was Wilmer Lafon leading the rioters, with a guard's gun and a voice screaming threats! But O'Leary didn't take time to worry about an honor prisoner gone bad, either. "Let's get out of here!" he bellowed to the detachment, and they ran. . . . Just plain ran. Cut and ran, scattering as they went. "Wait!" screamed O'Leary, but they weren't waiting. Cursing himself for letting them get out of hand, O'Leary salvaged two guards and headed on the run for the Old Building, huge and dark, all but the topmost lights of Block 0. They saw the medic and his escort disappearing into the bulk of the Old Building; and they saw something else. There were inmates between them and the Old Building! The Shops Building lay between with a dozen more cell blocks over the workshops that gave it its name and there was a milling rush of activity around its entrance, next to the laundry shed The laundry shed. O'Leary stood stock still. Lafon talking to the laundry cons; Lafon leading the break-out from Block A. The little greaser who was a trusty in the Shops Building sabotaging the Yard's tangler circuit. Sauer and Flock taking over the Green Sleeves with a manufactured knife and a lot of guts. Did it fit together? Was it all part of a plan? That was something to find out but not just then. "Come on," O'Leary cried to the two guards, and they raced for the temporary safety of the main gates. The whole prison was up and yelling now. O'Leary could hear scattered shots from the beat guards on the wall over their heads, over their heads! he prayed silently. And there were other shots that seemed to come from inside the walls guards shooting, or convicts with guards' guns, he couldn't tell which. The Yard was full of convicts now, in bunches and clumps; but none near the gate. And they seemed to have lost some of their drive. They were milling around, lit by the searchlights from the wall, yelling and making a lot of noise . . . but going nowhere in particular. Waiting for a leader, O'Leary thought, and wondered briefly what had become of Lafon. "You Captain O'Leary?" somebody demanded. O'Leary turned and blinked. Good Lord, the governor! He was coming through the gate, waving aside the gate guards, alone. "You him?" the governor repeated. "All right, glad I found you. I'm going in to Block 0 with you!" O'Leary swallowed, and waved at the teeming cons. True, there were none immediately nearby but there were plenty in the Yard! Riots meant breaking things up; already the inmates had started to break up the machines in the laundry shed and the athletic equipment in the Yard lockers; when they found a couple of choice breakables like O'Leary and the Governor they'd have a ball! "But Governor" "But my foot! Can you get me in there or can't you?" O'Leary gauged their chances. It wasn't more than fifty feet to the main entrance to the Old Building not at the moment guarded, since all the guards were in hiding or on the walls, and not as yet being invaded by the inmates at large. He said, "You're the boss! Hold on a minute" The searchlights were on the bare Yard cobblestones in front of them; in a moment the searchlights danced away. "Come on!" cried O'Leary, and jumped for the entrance. The governor was with him, and a pair of the guards came stumbling after. They made it to the Old Building. Inside the entrance they could hear the noise from outside and the yelling of the inmates who were still in their cells; but around them was nothing but gray steel walls and the stairs going up to Block 0. "Up!" panted O'Leary, and they clattered up the steel steps. They nearly made it. They would have made it if it hadn't been for the honor inmate, Wilmer Lafon, who knew what he was after and had headed for the Green Sleeves through the back way. In fact, they did make it but not

the way they planned. "Get out of the way!" yelled O'Leary at Lafon and the half-dozen inmates with him; and "Go to hell!" screamed Lafon, charging; and it was a rough-and-tumble fight, and O'Leary's party lost it, fair and square. So when they got to Block 0 it was with the governor marching before a convict-held gun, and with O'Leary cold unconscious, a lump from a gun-butt on the side of his head. As they came up the stairs, Sauer was howling at the medic: "You got to fix up my boy! He's dying, and all you do is sit there!" The medic said patiently, "My son, I've dressed his wound. He is under sedation, and I must rest. There will be other casualties." Sauer raged, and he danced around; but that was as far as it went. Even Sauer wouldn't attack a medic! He would as soon strike an Attorney, or even a Director of Funerals. It wasn't merely that they were professionalseven among the professional class, they were special; not superior, exactly, but apart. They certainly were not for the likes of Sauer to fool with, and Sauer knew it. "Somebody's coming!" cried one of the other freed inmates. Sauer jumped to the head of the steps, saw that Lafon was leading the group, stepped back, saw who Lafon's helpers were carrying, and leaped forward again. "Cap'n O'Leary!" he roared. "Gimme!" "Shut up," said Wilmer Lafon, and pushed the big redhead out of the way. Sauer's jaw dropped, and the snake eyes opened wide. "Wilmer," he protested feebly. But that was all the protest he made, because the snake's eyes had seen that Lafon held a gun. He stood back, the big hands half outstretched toward the unconscious guard captain, O'Leary, and the cold eyes became thoughtful. And then he saw who else was with the party. "Wilmer!" he roared. "You got the governor there!" Lafon nodded. "Throw them in a cell," he ordered, and sat down on a guard's stool, breathing hard. It had been a fine fight on the steps, before he and his boys had subdued the governor and the guards; but Wilmer Lafon wasn't used to fighting. Even six years in the Jug hadn't turned an architect into a laborer; physical exertion simply was not his metier. Sauer said coaxingly, "Wilmer, won't you leave me have O'Leary for a while? If it wasn't for me and Flock you'd still be in A Block, and" "Shut up," Lafon said again, gently enough, but he waved the gun muzzle. He drew a deep breath, glanced around him and grinned. "If it wasn't for you and Flock," he mimicked. "If it wasn't for you and Flock! Sauer, you wipe clown, do you think it took brains to file down a shiv and start things rolling? If it wasn't for me, you and Flock would have beat up a few guards, and had your kicks for half an hour, and then the whole prison would fall in on you! It was me, Wilmer Lafon, that set things up, and you know it!" He was yelling, and suddenly he realized he was yelling. And what was the use, he demanded of himself contemptuously, of trying to argue with a bunch of lousy wipes and greasers? They never understand the long, soulkilling hours of planning and sweat; they wouldn't realize the importance of the careful timingof arranging that the laundry cons would start a disturbance in the Yard right after the Green Sleeves hard-timers kicked off the riot; of getting the little greaser Hiroko to short-circuit the Yard field so the laundry cons could start their disturbance. It took a professional to organize and planyes, and to make sure that he himself was out of it until everything was ripe, so that if anything went wrong he was all right It took somebody like Wilmer Lafona professional, who had spent six years too long in the Jug And who would shortly be getting out. VII Any prison is a ticking bomb. Estates-General was in process of going off. From the Green Sleeves where the trouble had started, clear out to the trusty farms that ringed the walls, every inmate was up and jumping. Some were still in their cells the scared ones, the decrepit oldsters, the short-termers who didn't dare risk their early discharge. But for every man in his cell, a dozen were out and yelling. A torch, licking as high as the hanging helicopters, blazed up from the Yardtiiat was the laundry shed. Why burn the laundry? The cons couldn't have said. It was bumable, and it was thereburn it! The Yard lay open to the wrath of the helicopters, but the helicopters made no move. The cobblestones were solidly covered with milling men. The guards were on the walls, sighting down their guns; the helicopter bombardiers had their fingers on the bomb

trips. There had been a few rounds fired over the heads of the rioters, at first. Nothing since. In the milling mob, the figures clustered in groups. The inmates from Honor Block A huddled under the guards' guns at the angle of the wall. They had clubs, as all the inmates had clubs, but they weren't using them. Honor Block A on the outside, civil service and professionals. On the inside, the trusties, the "good" cons. They weren't the type for clubs. With all of the inmates, you looked at them and you wondered what twisted devil had got into their heads to land them in the Jug. Oh, perhaps you could understand it a little bit at least in the case of the figgers in Blocks B and C, the greasers in the Shop Building that sort. It was easy enough for some of the Categorized Classes to commit a crime, and thereby land in jail. Who could blame a wiper for trying to "pass," if he thought he could get away with it? But when he didn't get away with it, he wound up in the Jug, and that was logical enough. And greasers liked civil-service women, everyone knew that. There was almost a sort of logic to it even if it was a sort of inevitable logic that made decent civil-service people see red. You had to enforce the laws against rape if, for instance, a greaser should ask an innocent young female postal clerk for a date. But you could understand what drove him to it. The Jug was full of criminals of that sort. And the Jug was the place for them. But what about Honor Block A? Why would a Wilmer Lafona certified public architect, a Professional by category draw a portrait in oils and get himself jugged for malpractice? Why would a dental nurse practically a medic sneak back into the laboratory at night and cast an upper plate for her mother? Greasers' work was greasers' work; she knew what the penalty was. She must have realized she would be caught. But she had done it. And she had been caught; and there she was, this wild night, huddled under the helicopters, feebly waving the handle of a floor mop. It was a club. And she wasn't the type for clubs. She shivered and turned to the stock convict next to her. "Why don't they break down the gate?" she demanded, "How long are we going to hang around here, waiting for the guards to get organized and pick us off?" The convict next to her sighed and wiped his glasses with a beefy hand. Once he had been an Income-Tax Accountant, disbarred and convicted on three counts of impersonating an attorney when he took the liberty of making changes in a client's lease. He snorted, "Damn wipers! Do they expect us to do their dirty work?" The two of them glared angrily and fearfully at the other convicts in the Yard. And the other convicts, huddled greaser with greaser, wiper with wiper, glared ragingly back. It wasn't their place to plan the strategy of a prison break. Captain Uam O'Leary muttered groggily, "They don't want to escape, all they want is to make trouble. I know cons." He came fully awake, sat up and focused his eyes. His head was hammering. That girl, that Bradley, was leaning over him. She looked scared and sick. "Sit still! Sauer is just plain crazy listen to them yelling out there!" O'Leary sat up and looked around, one hand holding his drumming skull. "They do so want to escape," said Sue-Ann Bradley. "Listen to what they're saying!" O'Leary discovered that he was in a cell. There was a battle royal going on outside. Men were yelling, but he couldn't see them. He jumped up, remembering. "The governor!" Sue-Ann Bradley said, "He's all right. I think he is, anyway. He's in the cell right next to us, with a couple guards. I guess they came up with you." She shivered, as the yells in the corridor rose. "Sauer is angry at the medic," she explained. "He wants him to fix Flock up so they can't crush out," I think he said. The medic says he can't do it. You see, Flock got burned pretty badly with a knife he made something about the tanglefoot field" "Eddy currents," said O'Leary dizzily. "I guess so. Anyway, the medic" "Never mind the medic. What's Lafon doing?" "Lafon? The black one?" Sue-Ann Bradley frowned. "I didn't know his name. He started the whole thing, the way it sounds. They're waiting for the mob down in the Yard to break out, and then they're going to make a break" "Wait a minute," growled O'Leary. His head was beginning to clear. "What about you? Are you in on this?" She hung between laughter and tears. Finally: "Do I look like I'm in on this?" O'Leary took stock. Somehow, somewhere, the girl had got a length of metal pipe from the

plumbing, maybe. She was holding it in one hand, supporting him with the other. There were two other guards in the cell, both out cold from O'Leary's squad, the other, O'Leary guessed, a deck guard who had been on duty when the trouble started. "I wouldn't let them in," she said wildly. "I told them they'd have to kill me before they could touch that guard." O'Leary said suspiciously, "What about you? You belonged to that Double-A-C, didn't you? You were pretty anxious to get in the Green Sleeves, disobeying Auntie Mathias' orders. Are you sure you didn't know this was going to" It was too much. She dropped the pipe, buried her head in her hands. He couldn't tell if she laughed or wept, but he could tell that it hadn't been like that at all. "I'm sorry," he said awkwardly, and touched her on the shoulder. He turned and looked out the little barred window, because he couldn't think of any other way to apologize. He heard the wavering beat in the air, and saw them bobbing a hundred yards up, their wide metal vanes fluttering and hissing from the jets at the tips. The Ol copters. Waiting as everyone seemed to be waiting. Sue-Ann Bradley demanded shaloly, "Is anything the matter?" O'Leary turned away. It was astonishing, he thought, what a different perspective he had on those helicopter bombers from inside Block O. Once he had cursed the warden for not ordering tear gas, at least, dropped. . . . He said harshly, "Nothing. Just that the copters have the place surrounded." "Does it make any difference?" He shrugged. Does it make a difference? The difference between trouble and tragedy, or so it now seemed to Captain O'Leary. The riot was trouble. They could handle it, one way or another it was his job, any guard's job, to handle prison trouble. But to bring the GIs into it was to invite race riot. Not prison riot race riot. Even the declassified scum in the Jug would fight back against the GIs. They prere used to having the civil-service guards over them that was what guards were for. Civil-service presidents presided, and civil-service governors governed, and civil-service guards guarded. What else? It was their job as clerking was a figger's job, and mechanics were a greaser's, and pick- and shovel strong-arm work was a wipe's. But the armed servicestheir job was, theoretically, to defend the country against forces outside. Race riot. The cons wouldn't stand still under attack from the GIs. But how could you tell that to a girl like this Bradley? O'Leary glanced at her covertly. She looked all right. Rather nice-looking, if anything. But he hadn't forgotten why she was in E-G. Joining a terrorist organization, the Association for the Advancement of the Categorized Classes. Advocating desegregation actually getting up on a street corner and proposing that greasers' children be allowed to go to school with GI's, that wipes intermarry with civil service. Good Lord, they'd be suggesting that doctors eat with laymen next! The girl said evenly, "Don't look at me that way. I'm not a monster." O'Leary coughed. "I, uh, sorry. I didn't know I was staring." She looked at him with cold eyes. "I mean," he said, "you don't look like anybody who'd get mixed up in, well, miscegenation." "Miscegenation! Dirty mind!" she blazed. "You're all alike, you talk about the mission of the Categorized Classes and the rightness of segregation and it's always just the one thing that's in your minds. Sex! You're you're trying to turn the clock back," she sobbed. "I'll tell you this for sure. Captain O'Leary! I'd rather marry a decent, hardworking clerk any day than the sort of low-grade civilservice trash I've seen around here!" O'Leary cringed. He couldn't help it. Funny, he told himself, I thought I was shockproof but this goes too far! A bull-roar from the corridor. Sauer. O'Leary spun. The big red-head was yelling: "Bring the governor out here. Lafon wants to talk to him!" O'Leary went to the door of the cell, fast. A slim, pale con from Block A was pushing the governor down the hall, toward Sauer and Lafon. The governor was a strong man, but he didn't struggle. His face was as composed and remote as the medic's; if he was afraid, he concealed it extremely well. Sue-Ann Bradley slipped beside O'Leary. "What's happening?" He kept his eyes on what was going on. "Lafon is going to try to use the governor as a shield, I think." The voice of Lafon was loud, but the noises outside made it hard to understand. But O'Leary could make out what the dark ex-professional

was saying: "know damn well you did something. But what? Why don't they crush out?" Mumble-mumble from the governor; O'Leary couldn't hear the words. But he could see the effect of them in Lafon's face, hear the rage in Lafon's voice. "Don't call me a liar, you ciwy punk! You did something. I had it all planned, do you hear me? The laundry boys were going to rush the gate, the Block A bunch would follow and then I was going to breeze right through. But you loused it up. You must've!" His voice was rising to a scream. O'Leary, watching tautly from the cell, thought: He's going to break. He can't hold it in much longer. "All right!" shouted Lafon, and even Sauer, looming behind him, looked alarmed. "It doesn't matter what you did. I've got you now, and you are going to get me out of here. You hear? I've got this gun, and the two of us are going to walk right out, through the gate, and if anybody tries to stop us" "Hey," said Sauer, waking up. "'d anybody tries to stop us, you'll get a bullet right in" "Hey!" Sauer was roaring loud as Lafon himself now. "What's this talk about the two of you? You aren't going to leave me and Flock!" "Shut up," Lafon said conversationally, without taking his eyes off the governor. But Sauer, just then, was not the man to say "shut up" to, and especially he was not a man to take your eyes away from. "That's torn it," O'Leary said aloud. The girl started to say something. But he was no longer there to hear. It looked very much as though Sauer and Lafon were going to tangle. And when they did, it was the end of the line for the governor. O'Leary hurtled out of the sheltering cell and skidded down the corridor. Lafon's face was a hawk's face, gleaming with triumph; as he saw O'Leary coming toward him, the hawk sneer froze. He brought the gun up, but O'Leary was a fast man. O'Leary leaped on the lithe black honor prisoner. Lafon screamed, and clutched; and O'Leary's lunging weight drove him back against the wall. Lafon's arm smacked against the steel grating and the gun went flying. The two of them clinched and fell, gouging, to the floor. O'Leary had the advantage; he hammered the con's head against the deck, hard enough to split a skull. And perhaps it split Lafon's, because the dark face twitched, and froth appeared at the lips; and the body slacked. One down! And Sauer was charging. O'Leary wriggled sidewise, and the big red-head blundered crashing into the steel grate. Sauer fell, and O'Leary caught at him. He tried the hammering of the head, he swarmed on top of the huge clown. But Sauer only roared the louder. The bull body surged under O'Leary, and then Sauer was on top and O'Leary wasn't breathing. Not at all Everything was choking black dust. Good-bye, Sue-Ann, O'Leary said silently, without meaning to say anything of the kind; and even then he wondered why he was saying it. O'Leary heard a gun explode beside his head. Amazing, he thought. I'm breathing again! The choking hands were gone from his throat. It took him a moment to realize that it was Sauer who had taken the bullet, not him. Sauer who now lay dead . . . not O'Leary. But he realized it, when he rolled over, and looked up, and saw the girl with the gun still in her hand, staring at him and weeping. He sat up. The two guards still able to walk were backing Sue-Ann Bradley up; the governor was looking proud as an eagle, pleased as a mother hen. The Green Sleeves was back in the hands of law and order. The medic came toward O'Leary, hands folded. "My son," he said, "if your throat needs" O'Leary interrupted him. "I don't need a thing, Doc! I've got everything I want, right now." VIII Inmate Sue-Ann Bradley cried, "They're coming! O'Leary, they're coming!" The guards who had once been hostages clattered down the steps to meet the party. The cons from the Green Sleeves were back in their cells. The medic, having finished his chores on O'Leary himself, paced meditatively out into the wake of the riot, where there was plenty to keep him busy. A faintly bilious expression tintured his carven face. He had not liked Lafon or Sauer. The party of fresh guards appeared, and efficiently began re-locking the cells of the Green Sleeves. "Excuse me, Cap'n," said one, taking Sue-Ann Bradley by the arm, "I'll just put this one back" "I'll take care of her," said Liam O'Leary. He looked at her sideways as he rubbed the bruises on his face. The governor tapped him on the shoulder. "Come along," he said, looking so proud of himself, so

pleased. "Let's go out in the Yard for a breath of fresh air." He smiled contentedly at Sue-Ann Bradley. "You too," he said. O'Leary protested instinctively, "But she's an inmate!" "And I'm a governor. Come along." They walked out into the Yard. The air was fresh, all right. A handful of cons, double-guarded by sleepy and irritable men from the day shift, were hosing down the rubble on the cobblestones. The Yard was a mess; but it was quiet now. The helicopters were still riding their picket line, glowing softly in the early light that promised sunrise. "My car," the governor said quietly to a state policeman who appeared from nowhere. The trooper snapped a salute and trotted away. "I killed a man," said Sue-Ann Bradley, looking abstracted and a little ill. "You saved a man," corrected the governor. "Don't weep for that Lafon. He was willing to kill a thousand men if he had to, to break out of here." "But he never did break out," said Sue-Ann. The governor stretched contentedly. "Of course not. He never had a chance. Lafon spent too much time in the Jug; he forgot what the world was like. Laborers and clerks join together in a break-out? It would never happen. They don't even speak the same language as my young friend here has discovered." Sue-Ann blazed: "I still believe in the equality of man!" "Oh, please do," the Governor said, straight-faced. "There's nothing wrong with that! Your father and I are perfectly willing to admit that men are equal; but we can't admit that all men are the same. Use your eyes! What you believe in is your own business but," he added, "when your beliefs extend to setting fire to segregated public lavatories as a protest move, which is what got you arrested, you apparently need to be taught a lesson. Well, perhaps you've learned it. You were a help here tonight, and that counts for a lot. . . ." Captain O'Leary said, face fun-owed, "What about the warden, Governor? They say the category system is what makes the world go round, it fits the right man to the right job and keeps him there. But look at Momma Schluckebier! He fell apart at the seams. He" "Turn it around, O'Leary." "Turn?" The governor nodded. "You've got it backwards. Not the right man for the job the right job for the man! We've got Schluckebier on our hands, see? He's been born; it's too late to do anything about that. He will go to pieces in an emergency. So where do we put him?" O'Leary stubbornly clamped his jaw, frowning. "We put him," the governor went on gently, "where the best thing to do in a crisis is to go to pieces! Why, O'Leary, you get some hot-headed man of action in here, and every time an inmate sneezes in E-G you TI have bloodshed! And there's no harm in a prison riot. Let the poor devils work off steam. I wouldn't have bothered to get out of bed for it except I was worried about the hostages. So I came down to make sure they were protected." O'Leary's jaw dropped. "But you were" The governor nodded. "I was a hostage myself. That's one way to protect them, isn't it? By giving the cons a hostage that's worth more to them." He yawned, and looked around for Ms car. "So the world keeps going around," he said. "Everybody is somebody else's outgroup, and maybe it's a bad thing, but did you ever stop to realize that we don't have wars any more? The categories stick tightly together. Who is to say that that's a bad thing?" He grinned. "Reminds me of a story, if you two will pay attention to me long enough to listen. There was a meeting this is an old, old story a neighborhood meeting of the leaders of the two biggest women's groups on the block. There were eighteen Irish ladies from the Church Auxiliary and three Jewish ladies from B'nai B'rith. The first thing they did was have an election for a temporary chairwoman. Twenty-one votes were cast. Mrs. Grossinger from B'nai B'rith got three, and Mrs. O'Flaherty from the Auxiliary got eighteen. So when Mrs. Murphy came up to congratulate Mrs. O'Flaherty after the election, she whispered, 'Good for you! But isn't it terrible, the way these Jews stick together?' " He stood up and waved wildly, as his long official car came poking hesitantly through the gate. "Well," he said professionally, "that's that. As we politicians say, any questions?" Sue-Ann hesitated. "Well," she said "yes, I guess I do have a question. What's a Jew?" Maybe there was an answer. And maybe the question answered itself; and maybe the governor, riding sleepily homeward in the dawn, himself learned something from it which was

true: That a race's greatest learning may be in the things it has learned enough to forget.

The Midas Plaque AND SO THEY WERE MARRIED. The bride and groom made a beautiful couple, she in her twenty-yard frill of immaculate white, he in his formal gray ruffled blouse and pleated pantaloons. It was a small wedding the best he could afford. For guests, they had only the immediate family and a few close friends. And when the minister had performed the ceremony, Morey Fry kissed his bride and they drove off to the reception. There were twenty-eight limousines in all (though it is true that twenty of them contained only the caterer's robots) and three flower cars. "Bless you both," said old man Elon sentimentally. "You've got a fine girl in our Cherry, Morey." He blew his nose on a ragged square of cambric. The old folks behaved very well, Morey thought. At the reception, surrounded by the enormous stacks of wedding gifts, they drank the champagne and ate a great many of the tiny, delicious canapes. They listened politely to the fifteen-piece orchestra, and Cherry's mother even danced one dance with Morey for sentiment's sake, though it was clear that dancing was far from the usual pattern of her life. They tried as hard as they could to blend into the gathering, but all the same, the two elderly figures in severely simple and probably rented garments were dismayingly conspicuous in the quarter-acre of tapestries and tinkling fountains that was the main ballroom of Morey's country home. When it was time for the guests to go home and let the newlyweds begin their life together Cherry's father shook Morey by the hand and Cherry's mother kissed him. But as they drove away in their tiny runabout their faces were full of foreboding. It was nothing against Morey as a person, of course. But poor people should not marry wealth. Morey and Cherry loved each other, certainly. That helped. They told each other so, a dozen times an hour, all of the long hours they were together, for all of the first months of their marriage. Morey even took time off to go shopping with his bride, which endeared him to her enormously. They drove their shopping carts through the immense vaulted corridors of the supermarket, Morey checking off the items on the shopping list as Cherry picked out the goods. It was fun. For a while. Their first fight started in the supermarket, between Breakfast Foods and Floor Furnishings, just where the new Precious Stones department was being opened. Morey called off from the list, "Diamond lavalier, costume rings, earbobs." Cherry said rebelliously, "Morey, I have a lavalier. Please, dear!" Morey folded back the pages of the list uncertainly. The lavalier was on there, all right, and no alternative selection was shown. "How about a bracelet?" he coaxed. "Look, they have some nice ruby ones there. See how beautifully they go with your hair, darling!" He beckoned a robot clerk, who busded up and handed Cherry the bracelet tray. "Lovely," Morey exclaimed as Cherry slipped the largest of the lot on her wrist. "And I don't have to have a lavalier?" Cherry asked. "Of course not." He peeked at the tag. "Same number of ration points exactly!" Since Cherry looked only dubious, not convinced, he said briskly, "And now we'd better be getting along to the shoe department. I've got to pick up some dancing pumps." Cherry made no objection, neither then nor throughout the rest of their shopping tour. At the end, while they were sitting in the supermarket's ground-floor lounge waiting for the robot accountants to tote up their bill and the robot cashiers to stamp their ration books, Morey remembered to have the shipping department save out the bracelet. "I don't want that sent with the other stuff, darling," he explained. "I want you to wear it right now. Honestly, I don't think I ever saw anything looking so right for you." Cherry looked flustered and pleased. Morey was delighted with himself; it wasn't everybody who knew how to handle these little domestic problems just right! He stayed self-satisfied all the way home, while Henry, their companion-robot, regaled them with funny stories of the factory in which

it had been built and trained. Cherry wasn't used to Henry by a long shot, but it was hard not to like the robot. Jokes and funny stories when you needed amusement, sympathy when you were depressed, a never-failing supply of news and information on any subject you cared to name Henry was easy enough to take. Cherry even made a special point of asking Henry to keep them company through dinner, and she laughed as thoroughly as Morey himself at its droll anecdotes. But later, in the conservatory, when Henry had considerably left them alone, the laughter dried up. Morey didn't notice. He was very conscientiously making the rounds: turning on the tri-D, selecting their afterdinner liqueurs, scanning the evening newspapers. Cherry cleared her throat self-consciously, and Morey stopped what he was doing. "Dear," she said tentatively, "I'm feeling kind of restless tonight. Could we mean do you think we could just sort of stay home and well, relax?" Morey looked at her with a touch of concern. She lay back wearily, eyes half closed. "Are you feeling all right?" he asked. "Perfectly. I just don't want to go out tonight, dear. I don't feel up to it." He sat down and automatically lit a cigarette. "I see," he said. The tri-D was beginning a comedy show; he got up to turn it off, snapping on the tape-player. Muted strings filled the room. "We had reservations at the club tonight," he reminded her. Cherry shifted uncomfortably. "I know." "And we have the opera tickets that I turned last week's in for. I hate to nag, darling, but we haven't used any of our opera tickets." "We can see them right here on the tri-D," she said in a small voice. "That has nothing to do with it, sweetheart. I didn't want to tell you about it, but Wainwright, down at the office, said something to me yesterday. He told me he would be at the circus last night and as much as said he'd be looking to see if we were there, too. Well, we weren't there. Heaven knows what I'll tell him next week." He waited for Cherry to answer, but she was silent. He went on reasonably, "So if you could see your way clear to going out tonight" He stopped, slack-jawed. Cherry was crying, silently and in quantity. "Darling!" he said inarticulately. He hurried to her, but she fended him off. He stood helpless over her, watching her cry. "Dear, what's the matter?" he asked. She turned her head away. Morey rocked back on his heels. It wasn't exactly the first time he'd seen Cherry cry there had been that poignant scene when they Gave Each Other Up, realizing that their backgrounds were too far apart for happiness, before the realization that they had to have each other, no matter what. . . . But it was the first time her tears had made him feel guilty. And he did feel guilty. He stood there staring at her. Then he turned his back on her and walked over to the bar. He ignored the ready liqueurs and poured two stiff highballs, brought them back to her. He set one down beside her, took a long drink from the other. In quite a different tone, he said, "Dear, what's the matter?" No answer. "Come on. What is it?" She looked up at him and rubbed at her eyes. Almost sullenly, she said, "Sorry." "I know you're sorry. Look, we love each other. Let's talk this thing out." She picked up her drink and held it for a moment, before setting it down untasted. "What's the use, Morey?" "Please. Let's try." She shrugged. He went on remorselessly, "You aren't happy, are you? And it's because of well, all this." His gesture took in the richly furnished conservatory, the thick-piled carpet, the host of machines and contrivances for their comfort and entertainment that waited for their touch. By implication it took in twenty-six rooms, five cars, nine robots. Morey said, with an effort, "It isn't what you're used to, is it?" "I can't help it," Cherry said. "Morey, you know I've tried. But back home" "Dammit," he flared, "this is your home. You don't live with your father any more in that five-room cottage; you don't spend your evenings hoeing the garden or playing cards for matchsticks. You live here, with me, your husband! You knew what you were getting into. We talked all this out long before we were married" The words stopped, because words were useless. Cherry was crying again, but not silently. Through her tears, she wailed: "Darling, I've tried. You don't know how I've tried! I've worn all those silly clothes and I've played all those silly games and I've gone out with you as much as I possibly

could and I've eaten all that terrible food until I'm actually getting fa-fa-af/ I thought I could stand it. But I just can't go on like this; I'm not used to it. I love you, Morey, but I'm going crazy, living like this. I can't help it, Morey I'm tired of being poor!" Eventually the tears dried up, and the quarrel healed, and the lovers kissed and made up. But Morey lay awake that night, listening to his wife's gentle breathing from the suite next to his own, staring into the darkness as tragically as any pauper before him had ever done. Blessed are the poor, for they shall inherit the Earth. Blessed Morey, heir to more worldly goods than he could possibly consume. Morey Fry, steeped in grinding poverty, had never gone hungry a day in his life, never lacked for anything his heart could desire in the way of food, or clothing, or a place to sleep. In Morey's world, no one lacked for these things; no one could. Malthus was right for a civilization without machines, automatic factories, hydroponics and food synthesis, nuclear breeder plants, ocean-mining for metals and minerals . . . And a vastly increasing supply of labor . . . And architecture that rose high in the air and dug deep in the ground and floated far out on the water on piers and pontoons . . . architecture that could be poured one day and lived in the next . . . And robots. Above all, robots . . . robots to burrow and haul and smelt and fabricate, to build and farm and weave and sew. What the land lacked in wealth, the sea was made to yield and the laboratory invented the rest . . . and the factories became a pipeline of plenty, churning out enough to feed and clothe and house a dozen worlds. Limitless discovery, infinite power in the atom, tireless labor of humanity and robots, mechanization that drove jungle and swamp and ice off the Earth, and put up office buildings and manufacturing centers and rocket ports in their place . . . The pipeline of production spewed out riches that no king in the time of Malthus could have known. But a pipeline has two ends. The invention and power and labor pouring in at one end must somehow be drained out at the other . . . Lucky Morey, blessed economic-consuming unit, drowning in the pipeline's flood, striving manfully to eat and drink and wear and wear out his share of the ceaseless tide of wealth. Morey felt far from blessed, for the blessings of the poor are always best appreciated from afar. Quotas worried his sleep until he awoke at eight o'clock the next morning, red-eyed and haggard, but inwardly resolved. He had reached a decision. He was starting a new life. There was trouble in the morning mail. Under the letterhead of the National Ration Board, it said: "We regret to advise you that the following items returned by you in connection with your August quotas as used and no longer serviceable have been inspected and found insufficiently worn." The list followed a long one, Morey saw to his sick disappointment. "Credit is hereby disallowed for these and you are therefore given an additional consuming quota for the current month in the amount of 435 points, at least 350 points of which must be in the textile and home-furnishing categories." Morey dashed the letter to the floor. The valet picked it up emotionlessly, creased it and set it on his desk. It wasn't fair! All right, maybe the bathing trunks and beach umbrellas hadn't been really used very much though how the devil, he asked himself bitterly, did you go about using up swimming gear when you didn't have time for such leisurely pursuits as swimming? But certainly the hiking slacks were used! He'd worn them for three whole days and part of a fourth; what did they expect him to do, go around in rags? Morey looked belligerently at the coffee and toast that the valet-robot had brought in with the mail, and then steeled his resolve. Unfair or not, he had to play the game according to the rules. It was for Cherry, more than for himself, and the way to begin a new way of life was to begin it. Morey was going to consume for two. He told the valet-robot, "Take that stuff back. I want cream and sugar with the coffee lots of cream and sugar. And besides the toast, scrambled eggs, fried potatoes, orange juice, no, make it half a grapefruit. And orange juice, come to think of it." "Right away, sir," said the valet. "You won't be having breakfast at nine then, will you, sir?" "I certainly will," said Morey virtuously. "Double portions!" As the robot was closing the door, he called after it, "Butter and marmalade with

the toast!" He went to the bath; he had a full schedule and no time to waste. In the shower, he carefully sprayed himself with lather three times. When he had rinsed the soap off, he went through the whole assortment of taps in order: three lotions, plain talcum, scented talcum and thirty seconds of ultra-violet. Then he lathered and rinsed again, and dried himself with a towel instead of using the hot-air drying jet. Most of the miscellaneous scents went down the drain with the rinse water, but if the Ration Board accused lii'w of waste, he could claim he was experimenting. The effect, as a matter of fact, wasn't bad at all. He stepped out, full of exuberance. Cherry was awake, staring in dismay at the tray the valet had brought. "Good morning, dear," she said faintly. "Ugh." Morey kissed her and patted her hand. "Well!" he said, looking at the tray with a big, hollow smile. "Food!" "Isn't that a lot for just the two of us?" "Two of us?" repeated Morey masterfully. "Nonsense, my dear, I'm going to eat it all by myself!" "Oh, Morey!" gasped Cherry, and the adoring look she gave him was enough to pay for a dozen such meals. Which, he thought as he finished his morning exercises with the sparring-robot and sat down to his real breakfast, it just about had to be, day in and day out, for a long, long time. Still, Morey had made up his mind. As he worked his way through the kippered herring, tea and crumpets, he ran over his plans with Henry. He swallowed a mouthful and said, "I want you to line up some appointments for me right away. Three hours a week in an exercise gym pick one with lots of reducing equipment, Henry. I think I'm going to need it. And fittings for some new clothes I've had these for weeks. And, let's see, doctor, dentist say, Henry, don't I have a psychiatrist's date coming up?" "Indeed you do, sir!" it said warmly. "This morning, in fact. I've already instructed the chauffeur and notified your office." "Fine! Well, get started on the other things, Henry." "Yes, sir," said Henry, and assumed the curious absent look of a robot talking on its TBR circuitsthe "Talk Between Robots" radioas it arranged the appointments for its master. Morey finished his breakfast in silence, pleased with his own virtue, at peace with the world. It wasn't so hard to be a proper, industrious consumer if you -worked at it, he reflected. It was only the malcontents, the ne'er-do-wells and the incompetents who simply could not adjust to the world around them. Well, he thought with distant pity, someone had to suffer; you couldn't break eggs without making an omelet. And his proper duty was not to be some sort of wild-eyed crank, challengmg the social order and beating his breast about injustice, but to take care of his wife and his home. It was too bad he couldn't really get right down to work on consuming today. But this was his one day a week to hold a jobfour of the other six days were devoted to solid consumingand, besides, he had a group therapy session scheduled as well. His analysis, Morey told himself, would certainly take a sharp turn for the better, now that he had faced up to his problems. Morey was immersed in a glow of self-righteousness as he kissed Cherry good-by (she had finally got up, all in a confusion of delight at the new regime) and walked out the door to his car. He hardly noticed the little man in enormous floppy hat and garishly ruffled trousers who was standing almost hidden in the shrubs. "Hey, Mac." The man's voice was almost a whisper. "Hub? Ohwhat is it?" The man looked around furtively. "Listen, friend," he said rapidly, "you look like an intelligent man who could use a little help. Times are tough; you help me. III help you. Want to make a deal on ration stamps? Six for one. One of yours for six of mine, the best deal youTI get anywhere in town. Naturally, my stamps aren't exactly the real McCoy, but they'll pass, friend, they'll pass" Morey biinked at him. "No!" he said violently, and pushed the man aside. Now it's racketeers, he thought bitterly. Slums and endless sordid preoccupation with rations weren't enough to inflict on Cherry; now the neighborhood was becoming a hangout for people on the shady side of the law. It was not, of course, the first time he had ever been approached by a counterfeit rationstamp hoodlum, but never at his own front door! Morey thought briefly, as he climbed into his car, of calling the police. But certainly the man would be gone before they could get there; and, after all, he had handled it pretty well as it

was. Of course, it would be nice to get six stamps for one. But very far from nice if he got caught. "Good morning, Mr. Fry," tinkled the robot receptionist. "Won't you go right in?" With a steel-tipped finger, it pointed to the door marked GROUP THERAPY. Someday, Morey vowed to himself as he nodded and complied, he would be in a position to afford a private analyst of his own. Group therapy helped relieve the infinite stresses of modern living, and without it he might find himself as badly off as the hysterical mobs in the ration riots, or as dangerously anti-social as the counterfeiter. But it lacked the personal touch. It was, he thought, too public a performance of what should be a private affair, like trying to live a happy married life with an interfering, ever-present crowd of robots in the house Morey brought himself up in panic. How had that thought crept in? He was shaken visibly as he entered the room and greeted the group to which he was assigned. There were eleven of them: four Freudians, two Reichians, two Jungians, a Gestalter, a shock therapist and the elderly and rather quiet SuMivanite. Even the members of the majority groups had their own individual differences in technique and creed, but, despite four years with this particular group of analysts, Morey hadn't quite been able to keep them separate in his mind. Their names, though, he knew well enough. "Morning, Doctors," he said. "What is it today?" "Morning," said Semmelweiss morosely. "Today you come into the room for the first time looking as if something is really bothering you, and yet the schedule calls for psychodrama. Dr. Fairless," he appealed, "can't we change the schedule a little bit? Fry here is obviously under a strain; that's the time to start digging and see what he can find. We can do your psychodrama next time, can't we?" Fairless shook his gracefully bald old head. "Sorry, Doctor. If it were up to me, of course but you know the rules." "Rules, rules," jeered Semmelweiss. "Ah, what's the use? Here's a patient in an acute anxiety state if I ever saw one and believe me, I saw plenty and we ignore it because the rules say ignore it. Is that professional? Is that how to cure a patient?" Little Blaine said frostily, "If I may say so. Dr. Semmelweiss, there have been a great many cures made without the necessity of departing from the rules. I myself, in fact" "You yourself!" mimicked Semmelweiss. "You yourself never handled a patient alone in your life. When you going to get out of a group, Blaine?" Blaine said furiously, "Dr. Fairless, I don't think I have to stand for this sort of personal attack. Just because Semmelweiss has seniority and a couple of private patients one day a week, he thinks" "Gentlemen," said Fairless mildly. "Please, let's get on with the work. Mr. Fry has come to us for help, not to listen to us losing our tempers." "Sorry," said Semmelweiss curtly. "All the same, I appeal from the arbitrary and mechanistic ruling of the chair." Fairless inclined his head. "All in favor of the ruling of the chair? Nine, I count. That leaves only you opposed, Dr. Semmelweiss. We'll proceed with the psychodrama, if the recorder will read us the notes and comments of the last session."* The recorder, a pudgy, low-ranking youngster named Sprogue, flipped back the pages of his notebook and read in a chanting voice, "Session of twenty-fourth May, subject, Morey Fry; in attendance. Doctors Fairless, Bileck, Semmelweiss, Carrado, Weber" Fairless interrupted kindly, "Just the last page, if you please. Dr. Sprogue." "Umoh, yes. After a ten-minute recess for additional Rorschachs and an electro-encephalogram, the group convened and conducted rapid-fire word association. Results were tabulated and compared with standard deviation patterns, and it was determined that subject's major traumas derived from, respectively" Morey found his attention waning. Therapy was good; everybody knew that, but every once in a while he found it a little dull. If it weren't for therapy, though, there was no telling what might happen. Certainly, Morey told himself, he had been helped considerably at least he hadn't set fire to his house and shrieked at the fire-robots, like Newell down the block when his eldest daughter divorced her husband and came back to live with him, bringing her ration quota along, of course. Morey hadn't even been tempted to do anything as outrageously, frighteningly immoral as destroy things or -waste them well, he admitted to himself honestly, perhaps a little tempted, once in a

great while. But never anything important enough to worry about; he was sound, perfectly sound. He looked up, starfled. All the doctors were staring at him. "Mr. Fry," Fairless repeated, "will you take your place?" "Certainly," Morey said hastily. "Uhwhere?" Semmelweiss guffawed. "Told you. Never mind, Morey; you didn't miss much. We're going to run through one of the big scenes in your life, the one you told us about last time. Remember? You were fourteen years old, you said. Christmas time. Your mother had made you a promise." Morey swallowed. "I remember," he said unhappily. "Well, all right. Where do I stand?" "Right here," said Fairless. "You're you, Carrado is your mother. I'm your father. Will the doctors not participating mind moving back? Fine. Now, Morey, here we are on Christmas morning. Merry Christmas, Morey!" "Merry Christmas," Morey said half-heartedly. "Uh Father dear, where's myuhmy puppy that Mother promised me?" "Puppy!" said Fairless heartily. "Your mother and I have something much better than a puppy for you. Just take a look under the tree thereit's a robot! Yes, Morey, your very own robota full-size thirty-eight-tube fully automatic companion robot for you! Go ahead, Morey, go right up and speak to it. Its name is Henry. Go on, boy." Morey felt a sudden, incomprehensible tingle inside the bridge of his nose. He said shakily, "But I didn't want a robot." "Of course you want a robot," Carrado interrupted. "Go on, child, play with your nice robot." Morey said violently, "I hate robots!" He looked around him at the doctors, at the gray-paneled consulting room. He added defiantly, "You hear me, all of you? I still hate robots!" There was a second's pause; then the questions began. It was half an hour before the receptionist came in and announced that time was up. In that half hour, Morey had got over his trembling and lost his wild, momentary passion, but he had remembered what for thirteen years he had forgotten. He hated robots. The surprising thing was not that young Morey had hated robots. It was that the Robot Riots, the ultimate violent outbreak of flesh against metal, the battle to the death between mankind and its machine heirs . . . never happened. A little boy hated robots, but the man he became worked with them hand in hand. And yet, always and always before, the new worker, the competitor for the job, was at once and inevitably outside the law. The waves swelled inflie Irish, the Negroes, the Jews, the Italians. They were squeezed into their ghettoes, where they encysted, seethed and struck out, until the burgeoning generations became indistinguishable. For the robots, that genetic relief was not in sight. And still the conflict never came. The feed-back circuits aimed the anti-aircraft guns and, reshaped and newly planned, found a place in a new sort of machinetogether with a miraculous trail of cams and levers, an indestructible and potent power source and a hundred thousand parts and sub-assemblies. And the first robot clanked off the bench. Its mission was its own destruction; but from the scavenged wreck of its pilot body, a hundred better robots drew their inspiration. And the hundred went to work, and hundreds more, until there were millions upon untold millions. And still the riots never happened. For the robots came bearing a gift and the name of it was "Plenty." And by the time the gift had shown its own unguessed ills, the time for a Robot Riot was past. Plenty is a habitforming drug. You do not cut the dosage down. You kick it if you can; you stop the dose entirely. But the convulsions that follow may wreck the body once and for all. The addict craves the grainy white powder; he doesn't hate it, or the runner who sells it to him. And if Morey as a little boy could hate the robot that had deprived him of his pup, Morey the man was perfectly aware that the robots were his servants and his friends. But the little Morey inside the manhe had never been convinced. Morey ordinarily looked forward to his work. The one day a week at which he did anything was a wonderful change from the dreary consume, consume, consume grind. He entered the bright-lit drafting room of the Bradmoor Amusements Company with a feeling of uplift. But as he was changing from street garb to his drafting smock, Howland from Procurement came over with a knowing look. "Wainwright's been looking for you," Howland whispered. "Better get right in there." Morey nervously thanked him and got. Wainwright's office was the size of a phone

booth and as bare as Antarctic ice. Every time Morey saw it, he felt his insides churn with envy. Think of a desk with nothing on it but work surfaceno calendar-clock, no twelve-color pen rack, no dictating machines! He squeezed himself in and sat down while Wainwright finished a phone call. He mentally reviewed the possible reasons why Wainwright would want to talk to him in person instead of over the phone, or by dropping a word to him as he passed through the drafting room. Very few of them were good. Wainwright put down the phone and Morey straightened up. "You sent for me?" he asked. Wainwright in a chubby world was aristocratically lean. As General Superintendent of the Design & Development Section of the Bradmoor Amusements Company, he ranked high in the upper section of the well-to-do. He rasped, "I certainly did. Fry, just what the hell do you think you're up to now?" "I don't know what you m-mean, Mr. Wainwright," Morey stammered, crossing off the list of possible reasons for the interview all of the good ones. Wainwright snorted. "I guess you don't. Not because you weren't told, but because you don't want to know. Think back a whole week. What did I have you on the carpet for then?" Morey said sickly, "My ration book. Look, Mr. Wainwright, I know I'm running a little bit behind, but" "But nothing! How do you think it looks to the Committee, Fry? They got a complaint from the Ration Board about you. Naturally they passed it on to me. And naturally I'm going to pass it right along to you. The question is, what are you going to do about it? Good God, man, look at these figurestextiles, fifty-one per cent; food, sixty-seven per cent; amusements and entertainment, thirty per cent! You haven't come up to your ration in anything for months!" Morey stared at the card miserably. "Wethat is, my wife and Ijust had a long talk about that last night, Mr. Wainwright. And, believe me, we're going to do better. We're going to buckle right down and get to work and uhdo better," he finished weakly. Wainwright nodded, and for the first time there was a note of sympathy in his voice. "Your wife. Judge Eton's daughter, isn't she? Good family. I've met the Judge many times." Then, gruffly, "Well, nevertheless, Fry, I'm warning you. I don't care how you straighten this out, but don't let the Committee mention this to me again." "No, sir." "All right. Finished with the schematics on the new K-50?" Morey brightened. "Just about, sir! I'm putting the first section on tape today. I'm very pleased with it, Mr. Wainwright, honestly I am. I've got more than eighteen thousand moving parts in it now, and that's without" "Good. Good." Wainwright glanced down at his desk. "Get back to it. And straighten out this other thing. You can do it. Fry. Consuming is everybody's duty. Just keep that in mind." Howland followed Morey out of the drafting room, down to the spotless shops. "Bad time?" he inquired solicitously. Moray grunted. It was none of Howland's business. Howland looked over his shoulder as he was setting up the programing panel. Morey studied the matrices silently, then got busy reading the summary tapes, checking them back against the schematics, setting up the instructions on the programing board. Howland kept quiet as Morey completed the setup and ran off a test tape. It checked perfectly; Morey stepped back to light a cigarette in celebration before pushing the start button. Howland said, "Go on, run it. I can't go until you put it in the works." Morey grinned and pushed the button. The board lighted up; within it, a tiny metronomic beep began to pulse. That was all. At the other end of the quarter-mile shed, Morey knew, the automatic sorters and conveyers were fingering through the copper reels and steel ingots, measuring hoppers of plastic powder and colors, setting up an intricate weaving path for the thousands of individual components that would make up Bradmoor's new K-50 Spin-a-Game. But from where they stood, in the elaborately muraled programing room, nothing showed. Bradmoor was an ultra-modernized plant; in the manufacturing end, even robots had been dispensed with in favor of machines that guided themselves. Morey glanced at his watch and logged in the starting time while Howland quickly counter-checked Morey's raw-material flow program. "Checks out," Howland said solemnly, slapping him on the back. "Calls for a celebration. Anyway, it's your first design, isn't it?" "Yes.

First all by myself, at any rate." Howland was already fishing in his private locker for the bottle he kept against emergency needs. He poured with a flourish. "To Morey Fry," he said, "our most favorite designer, in whom we are much pleased." Morey drank. It went down easily enough. Morey had conscientiously used his liquor rations for years, but he had never gone beyond the minimum, so that although liquor was no new experience to him, the single drink immediately warmed him. It warmed his mouth, his throat, the hollows of his chest; and it settled down with a warm glow inside him. Howland, exerting himself to be nice, complimented Morey fatuously on the design and poured another drink. Morey didn't utter any protest at all. Howland drained his glass. "You may wonder," he said formally, "why I am so pleased with you, Morey Fry. I will tell you why this is." Morey grinned. "Please do." Howland nodded. "I will. It's because I am pleased with the world, Morey. My wife left me last night." Morey was as shocked as only a recent bridegroom can be by the news of a crumbling marriage. "That's too bad, I mean is that a fact?" "Yes, she left my beds and board and five robots, and I'm happy to see her go." He poured another drink for both of them. "Women. Can't live with them and can't live without them. First you sigh and pant and chase after 'em, you like poetry?" he demanded suddenly. Morey said cautiously, "Some poetry." Howland quoted: "'How long, my love, shall I behold this wall between our gardens yours the rose, and mine the swooning lily.' Like it? I wrote it for Jocelyn that's my wife when we were first going together." "It's beautiful," said Morey. "She wouldn't talk to me for two days." Howland drained his drink. "Lots of spirit, that girl. Anyway, I hunted her like a tiger. And then I caught her. Wow!" Morey took a deep drink from his own glass. "What do you mean, wow?" he asked. "Wow." Howland pointed his finger at Morey. "Wow, that's what I mean. We got married and I took her home to the dive I was living in, and wow we had a kid, and wow I got in a little trouble with the Ration Board nothing serious, of course, but there was a mixup and wow fights. "Everything was a fight," he explained. "She'd start with a little nagging, and naturally I'd say something or other back, and bang we were off. Budget, budget, budget; I hope to die if I ever hear the word 'budget' again. Morey, you're a married man; you know what it's like. Tell me the truth, weren't you just about ready to blow your top the first time you caught your wife cheating on the budget?" "Cheating on the budget?" Morey was startled. "Cheating how?" "Oh, lots of ways. Making your portions bigger than hers. Sneaking extra shirts for you on her clothing ration. You know." "Damn it, I do not know!" cried Morey. "Cherry wouldn't do anything like that!" Howland looked at him opaquely for a long second. "Of course not," he said at last. "Let's have another drink." Ruffled, Morey held out his glass. Cherry wasn't the type of girl to cheat. Of course she wasn't. A fine, loving girl like her a pretty girl, of a good family; she wouldn't know how to begin. Howland was saying, in a sort of chant, "No more budget. No more fights. No more 'Daddy never treated me like this.' No more nagging. No more extra rations for household allowance. No more Morey, what do you say we go out and have a few drinks? I know a place where" "Sorry, Howland," Morey said. "I've got to get back to the office, you know." Howland guffawed. He held out his wristwatch. As Morey, a little unsteadily, bent over it, it tinkled out the hour. It was a matter of minutes before the office dosed for the day. "Oh," said Morey. "I didn't realize. Well, anyway, Howland, thanks, but I can't. My wife will be expecting me." "She certainly will," Howland sniggered. "Won't catch her eating up your rations and hers tonight." Morey said tightly, "Howland!" "Oh, sorry, sorry." Howland waved an arm. "Don't mean to say anything against your wife, of course. Guess maybe Jocelyn soured me on women. But honest, Morey, you'd like this place. Name of Uncle Piggotty's, down in the Old Town. Crazy bunch hangs out there. You'd like them. Couple nights last week they had, mean, you understand, Morey, I don't go there as often as all that, but I just happened to drop in and" Morey interrupted firmly. "Thank you, Howland. Must go home. Wife expects it. Decent of you to offer. Good night. Be seeing you." He walked out, turned at the

door to bow politely, and in turning back cracked the side of his face against the door jamb. A sort of pleasant numbness had taken possession of his entire skin surface, though, and it wasn't until he perceived Henry chattering at him sympathetically that he noticed a trickle of blood running down the side of his face. "Mere flesh wound," he said with dignity. "Nothing to cause you least conshterconsternation, Henry. Now kindly shut your ugly face. Want to think." And he slept in the car all the way home. It was worse than a hangover. The name is "holdover." You've had some drinks; you've started to sober up by catching a little sleep. Then you are required to be awake and to function. The consequent state has the worst features of hangover and intoxication; your head thumps and your mouth tastes like the floor of a bear-pit, but you are nowhere near sober. There is one cure. Morey said thickly, "Let's have a cocktail, dear." Cherry was delighted to share a cocktail with him before dinner. Cherry, Morey thought lovingly, was a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful He found his head nodding in time to his thoughts and the motion made him wince. Cherry flew to his side and touched his temple. "Is it bothering you, darling?" she asked solicitously. "Where you ran into the door, I mean?" Morey looked at her sharply, but her expression was open and adoring. He said bravely, "Just a little. Nothing to it, really." The butler brought the cocktails and retired. Cherry lifted her glass. Morey raised his, caught a whiff of the liquor and nearly dropped it. He bit down hard on his churning insides and forced himself to swallow. He was surprised but grateful: It stayed down. In a moment, the curious phenomenon of warmth began to repeat itself. He swallowed the rest of the drink and held out his glass for a refill. He even tried a smile. Oddly enough, his face didn't fall off. One more drink did it. Morey felt happy and relaxed, but by no means drunk. They went in to dinner in fine spirits. They chatted cheerfully with each other and Henry, and Morey found time to feel sentimentally sorry for poor Howland, who couldn't make a go of his marriage, when marriage was obviously such an easy relationship, so beneficial to both sides, so warm and relaxing . . . Startled, he said, "What?" Cherry repeated, "It's the cleverest scheme I ever heard of. Such a funny little man, dear. All kind of nervous, if you know what I mean. He kept looking at the door as if he was expecting someone, but of course that was silly. None of his friends would have come to our house to see him." Morey said tensely, "Cherry, please! What was that you said about ration stamps?" "But I told you, darling! It was just after you left this morning. This funny little man came to the door; the butler said he wouldn't give any name. Anyway, I talked to him. I thought he might be a neighbor and I certainly would never be rude to any neighbor who might come to call, even if the neighborhood was" "The ration stamps!" Morey begged. "Did I hear you say he was peddling phony ration stamps?" Cherry said uncertainly, "Well, I suppose that in a way they're phony. The way he explained it, they weren't the regular official kind. But it was four for one, dearfour of his stamps for one of ours. So I just took out our household book and steamed off a couple of weeks' stamps and" "How many?" Morey bellowed. Cherry biinked. "Aboutabout two weeks' quota," she said faintly. "Was that wrong, dear?" Morey closed bis eyes dizzily. "A couple of weeks' stamps," he repeated. "Four for oneyou didn't even get the regular rate." Cherry wailed, "How was I supposed to know? I never had anything like this when I was home! We didn't have food riots and slums and all these horrible robots and filthy little revolting men coming to the door!" Morey stared at her woodenly. She was crying again, but it made no impression on the case-hardened armor that was suddenly thrown around his heart. Henry made a tentative sound that, in a human, would have been a preparatory cough, but Morey froze him with a white-eyed look. Morey said in a dreary monotone that barely penetrated the sound of Cherry's tears, "Let me tell you just what it was you did. Assuming, at best, that these stamps you got are at least average good counterfeits, and not so bad that the best thing to do with them is throw them away before we get caught with them in our possession, you have approximately a two-month supply of funny stamps. In

case you didn't know it, those ration books are not merely ornamental. They have to be turned in every month to prove that we have completed our consuming quota for the month. "When they are turned in, they are spot-checked. Every book is at least glanced at. A big chunk of them are gone over very carefully by the inspectors, and a certain percentage are tested by ultra-violet, infra-red, X-ray, radioisotopes, bleaches, fumes, paper chromatography and every other damned test known to Man." His voice was rising to an uneven crescendo. "If we are lucky enough to get away with using any of these stamps at all, we daren'twe simply dare not use more than one or two counterfeits to every dozen or more real stamps. "That means, Cherry, that what you bought is not a .two-month supply, but maybe a two-year supply and since, as you no doubt have never noticed, the things have expiration dates on them, there is probably no chance in the world that we can ever hope to use more than half of them." He was bellowing by the time he pushed back his chair and lowered over her. "Moreover," he went on, "right now, "right as of this minute, we have to make up the stamps you gave away, which means that at the very best we are going to be on double rations for two weeks or so. "And that says nothing about the one feature of this whole grisly mess that you seem to have thought of least, namely that counterfeit stamps are against the law! I'm poor. Cherry; I live in a slum, and I know it; I've got a long way to go before I'm as rich or respected or powerful as your father, about whom I am beginning to get considerably tired of hearing. But poor as I may be, I can tell you this for sure: Up until now, at any rate, I have been honest." Cherry's tears had stopped entirely and she was bowed white-faced and dry-eyed by the time Morey had finished. He had spent himself; there was no violence left in him. He stared dismally at Cherry for a moment, then turned wordlessly and stamped out of the house. Marriage! he thought as he left. He walked for hours, blind to where he was going. What brought him back to awareness was a sensation he had not felt in a dozen years. It was not, Morey abruptly realized, the dying traces of his hangover that made his stomach feel so queer. He was hungry actually hungry. He looked about him. He was in the Old Town, miles from home, jostled by crowds of lower-class people. The block he was on was as atrocious a slum as Morey had ever seen Chinese pagodas stood next to rococo imitations of the chapels around Versailles; gingerbread marred every facade; no building was without its brilliant signs and flare lights. He saw a blindingly overdecorated eating establishment called Billie's Budget Busy Bee and crossed the street toward it, dodging through the unending streams of traffic. It was a miserable excuse for a restaurant, but Morey was in no mood to care. He found a seat under a potted palm, as far from the tinkling fountains and robot string ensemble as he could manage, and ordered recklessly, paying no attention to the ration prices. As the waiter was gliding noiselessly away, Morey had a sickening realization: He'd come out without his ration book. He groaned out loud; it was too late to leave without causing a disturbance. But then, he thought rebelliously, what difference did one more unrationed meal make, anyhow? Food made him feel a little better. He finished the last of his profiterole au chocolate, not even leaving on the plate the uneaten one-third that tradition permitted, and paid his check. The robot cashier reached automatically for his ration book. Morey had a moment of grandeur as he said simply, "No ration stamps." Robot cashiers are not equipped to display surprise, but this one tried. The man behind Morey in line audibly caught his breath, and less audibly mumbled something about slummers. Morey took it as a compliment and strode outside feeling almost in good humor. Good enough to go home to Cherry? Morey thought seriously of it for a second; but he wasn't going to pretend he was wrong and certainly Cherry wasn't going to be willing to admit that she was at fault. Besides, Morey told himself grimly, she was undoubtedly asleep. That was an annoying thing about Cherry at best: she never had any trouble getting to sleep. Didn't even use her quota of sleeping tablets, though Morey had spoken to her about it more than once. Of course, he reminded himself, he had been so polite and tactful about it, as befits a newlywed, that very likely she hadn't even

understood that it was a complaint. Well, that would stop! Man's man Morey Fry, wearing no collar ruff but his own, strode determinedly down the streets of the Old Town. "Hey, Joe, want a good time?" Morey took one unbelieving look. "You again!" he roared. The little man stared at him in genuine surprise. Then a faint glimmer of recognition crossed his face. "Oh, yeah," he said. "This morning, hub?" He clucked commiseratingly. "Too bad you wouldn't deal with me. Your wife was a lot smarter. Of course, you got me a little sore, Jack, so naturally I had to raise the price a little bit." "You skunk, you cheated my poor wife blind! You and I are going to the local station house and talk this over." The little man pursed his lips. "We are, hub?" Morey nodded vigorously. "Damn right! And' let me tell you" He stopped in the middle of a threat as a large hand cupped around his shoulder. The equally large man who owned the hand said, in a mild and cultured voice, "Is this gentleman disturbing you, Sam?" "Not so far," the little man conceded. "He might want to, though, so don't go away." Morey wrenched his shoulder away. "Don't think you can strongarm me. I'm taking you to the police." Sam shook his head unbelievably. "You mean you're going to call the law in on this?" "I certainly am!" Sam sighed regretfully. "What do you think of that, Walter? Treating his wife like that. Such a nice lady, too." "What are you talking about?" Morey demanded, stung on a peculiarly sensitive spot.. "I'm talking about your wife," Sam explained. "Of course. I'm not married myself. But it seems to me that if I was, I wouldn't call the police when my wife was engaged in some kind of criminal activity or other. No, sir, I'd try to settle it myself. Tell you what," he advised, "why don't you talk this over with her? Make her see the error of" "Wait a minute," Morey interrupted. "You mean you'd involve my wife in this thing?" The man spread his hands helplessly. "It's not me that would involve her. Buster," he said. "She already involved her own self. It takes two to make a crime, you know. I sell, maybe; I won't deny it. But after all, I can't sell unless somebody buys, can I?" Morey stared at him glumly. He glanced in quick speculation at the large-sized Walter; but Walter was just as big as he'd remembered, so that took care of that. Violence was out; the police were out; that left no really attractive way of capitalizing on the good luck of running into the man again. Sam said, "Well, I'm glad to see that's off your mind. Now, returning to my original question, Mac, how would you like a good time? You look like a smart fellow to me; you look like you'd be kind of interested in a place I happen to know of down the block." Morey said bitterly, "So you're a dive-steerer, too. A real talented man." "I admit it," Sam agreed. "Stamp business is slow at night, in my experience. People have their minds more on a good time. And, believe me, a good time is what I can show 'em. Take this place I'm talking about, Uncle Piggotty's is the name of it, it's what I would call an unusual kind of place. Wouldn't you say so, Walter?" "Oh, I agree with you entirely," Walter rumbled. But Morey was hardly listening. He said, "Uncle Piggotty's, you say?" "That's right," said Sam. Morey frowned for a moment, digesting an idea. Uncle Piggotty's sounded like the place Howland had been talking about back at the plant; it might be interesting, at that. While he was making up his mind, Sam slipped an arm through his on one side and Walter amiably wrapped a big hand around the other. Morey found himself walking. "YouTI like it," Sam promised comfortably. "No hard feelings about this morning, sport? Of course not. Once you get a look at Piggotty's, youTI get over your mad, anyhow. It's something special. I swear, on what they pay me for bringing in customers, I wouldn't do it unless I believed in it." "Dance, Jack?" the hostess yelled over the noise at the bar. She stepped back, lifted her flounced skirts to ankle height and executed a tricky nine-step. "My name is Morey," Morey yelled back. "And I don't want to dance, thanks." The hostess shrugged, frowned meaningfully at Sam and danced away. Sam flagged the bartender. "First round's on us," he explained to Morey. "Then we won't bother you any more. Unless you want us to, of course. Like the place?" Morey hesitated, but Sam didn't wait. "Fine place," he yelled, and picked up the drink the bartender left him. "See you around." He and the big man were

gone. Morey stared after them uncertainly, then gave it up. He was here, anyhow; might as well at least have a drink. He ordered and looked around. Uncle Piggotty's was a third-rate dive disguised to look, in parts of it at least, like one of the exclusive upper-class country clubs. The bar, for instance, was treated to resemble the clean lines of nailed wood; but underneath the surface treatment, Morey could detect the intricate laminations of plyplastic. What at first glance appeared to be burlap hangings were in actuality elaborately textured synthetics. And all through the bar the motif was carried out. A floor show of sorts was going on, but nobody seemed to be paying much attention to it. Morey, straining briefly to hear the master of ceremonies, gathered that the wit was on a more than mildly vulgar level. There was a dispirited string of chorus beauties in long ruffled pantaloons and diaphanous tops; one of them, Morey was almost sure, was the hostess who had talked to him just a few moments before. Next to him a man was declaiming to a middle-aged woman: Smote I the monstrous rock, yahoo! Smote I the turgid tube. Bully Boy! Smote I the cankered hill "Why, Morey!" he interrupted himself. "What are you doing here?" He turned farther around and Morey recognized him. "Hello, Howland," he said. "Iuhl happened to be free tonight, so I thought" Howland sniggered. "Well, guess your wife is more liberal than mine was. Order a drink, boy." "Thanks, I've got one," said Morey. The woman, with a tigerish look at Morey, said, "Don't stop, Everett. That was one of your most beautiful things." "Oh, Morey's heard my poetry," Howland said. "Morey, I'd like you to meet a very lovely and talented young lady, Tanaquil Bigelow. Morey works in the office with me, Tan." "Obviously," said Tanaquil Bigelow in a frozen voice, and Morey hastily withdrew the hand he had begun to put out. The conversation stuck there, impaled, the woman cold, Rowland relaxed and abstracted, Morey wondering if, after all, this had been such a good idea. He caught the eye-cell of the robot bartender and ordered a round of drinks for the three of them, politely putting them on Howland's ration book. By the time the drinks had come and Morey had just got around to deciding that it wasn't a very good idea, the woman had all of a sudden become thawed. She said abruptly, "You look like the kind of man who thinks, Morey, and I like to talk to that kind of man. Frankly, Morey, I just don't have any patience at all with the stupid, stodgy men who just work in their offices all day and eat all their dinners every night, and gad about and consume like mad and where does it all get them, anyhow? That's right, I can see you understand. Just one crazy rush of consume, consume from the day you're born plop to the day you're buried pop! And who's to blame if not the robots?" Faintly, a tinge of worry began to appear on the surface of Howland's relaxed calm. "Tan," he chided, "Morey may not be very interested in politics." Politics, Morey thought; well, at least that was a clue. He'd had the dizzying feeling, while the woman was talking, that he himself was the ball in the games machine he had designed for the shop earlier that day. Following the woman's conversation might, at that, give his next design some valuable pointers in swoops, curves and obstacles. He said, with more than half truth, "No, please go on, Miss Bigelow. I'm very much interested." She smiled; then abruptly her face changed to a frightening scowl. Morey flinched, but evidently the scowl wasn't meant for him. "Robots!" she hissed. "Supposed to work for us, aren't they? Hah! We're their slaves, slaves for every moment of every miserable day of our lives. Slaves! Wouldn't you like to join us and be free, Morey?" Morey took cover in his drink. He made an expressive gesture with his free hand expressive of exactly what, he didn't truly know, for he was lost. But it seemed to satisfy the woman. She said accusingly, "Did you know that more than three-quarters of the people in this country have had a nervous breakdown in the past five years and four months? That more than half of them are under the constant care of psychiatrists for psychosis not just plain ordinary neurosis like my husband's got and Rowland here has got and you've got, but psychosis. Like I've got. Did you know that? Did you know that forty per cent of the population are essentially manic depressive, thirty-one per cent are schizoid, thirty-eight per cent have an assortment of other unfixed

psychogenic disturbances and twenty-four" "Hold it a minute. Tan," Howland interrupted critically. "You've got too many per cents there. Start over again." "Oh, the hell with it," the woman said moodily. "I wish my husband were here. He expresses it so much better than I do." She swallowed her drink. "Since you've wriggled off the hook," she said nastily to Morey, "how about setting up another round on my ration book this time?" Morey did; it was the simplest thing to do in his confusion. When that was gone, they had another on Howland's book. As near as he could figure out, the woman, her husband and quite possibly Howland as well belonged to some kind of anti-robot group. Morey had heard of such things; they had a quasi-legal status, neither approved nor prohibited, but he had never come into contact with them before. Remembering the hatred he had so painfully relived at the psychodrama session, he thought anxiously that perhaps he belonged with them. But, question them though he might, he couldn't seem to get the principles of the organization firmly in mind. The woman finally gave up trying to explain it, and went off to find her husband while Morey and Howland had another drink and listened to two drunks squabble over who bought the next round. They were at the Alphonse-Gaston stage of inebriation; they would regret it in the morning; for each was bending over backward to permit the other to pay the ration points. Morey wondered uneasily about his own points; Howland was certainly getting credit for a lot of Morey's drinking tonight. Served him right for forgetting his book, of course. When the woman came back, it was with the large man Morey had encountered in the company of Sam, the counterfeiter, steerer and general man about Old Town. "A remarkably small world, isn't it?" boomed Walter Bigelow, only slightly crushing Morey's hand in his. "Well, sir, my wife has told me how interested you are in the basic philosophical drives behind our movement, and I should like to discuss them further with you. To begin with, sir, have you considered the principle of Twoness?" Morey said, "Why" "Very good," said Bigelow courteously. He cleared his throat and declaimed: Han-headed Cathay saw it first, Bright as brightest solar burst; Whipped it into boy and girl, The blinding spiral-sliced swirl: Yang And Yin. He shrugged deprecatingly. "Just the first stanza," he said. "I don't know if you got much out of it." "Well, no," Morey admitted. "Second stanza," Bigelow said firmly: Hegal saw it, saw it clear; Jackal Marx drew near, drew near: O'er his shoulder saw it plain, Turned it upside down again: Yang And Yin. There was an expectant pause. Morey said, "Iuh" "Wraps it all up, doesn't it?" Bigelow's wife demanded. "Oh, if only others could see it as clearly as you do! The robot peril and the robot savior. Starvation and surfeit. Always twoness, always!" Bigelow patted Morey's shoulder. "The next stanza makes it even clearer," he said. "It's really very clever I shouldn't say it, of course, but it's Howland's as much as it's mine. He helped me with the verses." Morey darted a glance at Howland, but Howland was carefully looking away. "Third stanza," said Bigelow. "This is a hard one, because it's long, so pay attention." Justice, tip your sightless scales; One pan rises, one pan falls. "Howland," he interrupted himself, "are you sure about that rhyme? I always trip over it. Well, anyway: Add to A and B grows less; A's B's partner, nonetheless. Next, the Twoness that there be In even electricity. Chart the current as it's found: Sine the hot lead, line the ground. The wild sine dances, soars and falls, But only to figures the zero calls. Sine wave, scales, all things that be Share a reciprocity. Male and female, light and dark: Name the numbers of Noah's Ark! Yang And Yin "Dearest!" shrieked Bigelow's wife. "You've never done it better!" There was a spatter of applause, and Morey realized for the first time that half the bar had stopped its noisy revel to listen to them. Bigelow was evidently quite a well-known figure here. Morey said weakly, "I've never heard anything like it" He turned hesitantly to Howland, who promptly said, "Drink! What we all need right now is a drink." They had a drink on Bigelow's book. Morey got Howland aside and asked him, "Look, level with me. Are these people nuts?" Howland showed pique. "No. Certainly not." "Does that poem mean anything? Does this whole business of twoness mean anything?" Howland

shrugged. "If it means something to them, it means something. They're philosophers, Morey. They see deep into things. You don't know what a privilege it is for me to be allowed to associate with them." They had another drink. On Rowland's book, of course. Morey eased Walter Bigelow over to a quiet spot. He said, "Leaving twoness out of it for the moment, what's this about the robots?" Bigelow looked at him round-eyed. "Didn't you understand the poem?" "Of course I did. But diagram it for me in simple terms so I can tell my wife." Bigelow beamed. "It's about the dichotomy of robots," he explained. "Like the little salt mill that the boy wished for: it ground out salt and ground out salt and ground out salt. He had to have salt, but not that much salt. Whitehead explains it clearly" They had another drink on Bigelow's book. Morey wavered over Tanaquil Bigelow. He said fuzzily, "Listen. Mrs. Walter Tanaquil Strongarm Bigelow. Listen." She grinned smugly at him. "Brown hair," she said dreamily. Morey shook his head vigorously. "Never mind hair," he ordered. "Never mind poem. Listen. In pre-cise and el-emen~ta.-ry terms, explain to me what is wrong with the world today." "Not enough brown hair," she said promptly. "Never mind hair!" "All right," she said agreeably. "Too many robots. Too many robots make too much of everything." "Ha! Got it!" Morey exclaimed triumphantly. "Get rid of robots!" "Oh, no. No! No! No. We wouldn't eat. Everything is mechanized. Can't get rid of them, can't slow down productionslowing down is dying, stopping is quicker dying. Principle of twoness is the concept that clarifies all these" "No!" Morey said violently. "What should we do?" "Do? I'll tell you what we should do, if that's what you want. I can tell you." "Then tell me." "What we should do is" Tanaquil hiccupped with a look of refilled consternation"have another drink." They had another drink. He gallantly let her pay, of course. She ungallantly argued with the bartender about the ration points due her. Though not a two-fisted drinker, Morey tried. He really worked at it. He paid the price, too. For some little time before his limbs stopped moving, his mind stopped functioning. Blackout. Almost a blackout, at any rate, for all he retained of the late evening was a kaleidoscope of people and places and things. Howland was there, drunk as a skunk, disgracefully drunk, Morey remembered thinking as he stared up at Howland from the floor. The Bigelows were there. His wife, Cherry, solicitous and amused, was there. And oddly enough, Henry was there. It was very, very hard to reconstruct. Morey devoted a whole morning's hangover to the effort. It was important to reconstruct it, for some reason. But Morey couldn't even remember what the reason was; and finally he dismissed it, guessing that he had either solved the secret of twoness or whether Tanaquil Bigelow's remarkable figure was natural. He did, however, know that the next morning he had waked in his own bed, with no recollection of getting there. No recollection of anything much, at least not of anything that fit into the proper chronological order or seemed to mesh with anything else, after the dozenth drink when he and Howland, arms around each other's shoulders, composed a new verse on twoness and, plagiarizing an old marching tune, howled it across the boisterous barroom: A twoness on the scene much later Rests in your refrigerator. Heat your house and insulate it. Next your food: Refrigerate it. Frost will damp your Freon coils, So flux in nichrome till it boils. See the picture? Heat in cold In heat in cold, the story's told! Giant-writ the sacred scrawl: Oh, the twoness of it all! Yang And Yin! It had, at any rate, seemed to mean something at the time. If alcohol opened Morey's eyes to the fact that there was a twoness, perhaps alcohol was what he needed. For there was. Call it a dichotomy, if the word seems more couth. A kind of two-pronged struggle, the struggle of two unwearying runners in an immortal race. There is the refrigerator inside the house. The cold air, the bubble of heated air that is the house, the bubble of cooled air that is the refrigerator, the momentary bubble of heated air that defrosts it. Call the heat Yang, if you will. Call the cold Yin. Yang overtakes Yin. Then Yin passes Yang. Then Yang passes Yin. Then Give them other names. Call Yin a mouth; call Yang a hand. If the hand rests, the mouth will starve. If the mouth stops, the hand will die. The hand,

Yang, moves faster. Yin may not lag behind. Then call Yang a robot. And remember that a pipeline has two ends. Like any once-in-a-lifetime lush, Morey braced himself for the consequences and found startledly that there were none. Cherry was a surprise to him. "You were so funny," she giggled. "And, honestly, so romantic." He shakily swallowed his breakfast coffee. The office staff roared and slapped him on the back. "Howland tells us you're living high, boy!" they bellowed more or less in the same words. "Hey, listen to what Morey did went on the town for the night of a lifetime and didn't even bring his ration book along to cash in!" They thought it was a wonderful joke. But, then, everything was going well. Cherry, it seemed, had reformed out of recognition. True, she still hated to go out in the evening and Morey never saw her forcing herself to gorge on unwanted food or play undesired games. But, moping into the pantry one afternoon, he found to his incredulous delight that they were well ahead of their ration quotas. In some items, in fact, they were out a month's supply and more was gone ahead of schedule! Nor was it the counterfeit stamps, for he had found them tucked behind a bain-marie and quietly burned them. He cast about for ways of complimenting her, but caution prevailed. She was sensitive on the subject; leave it be. And virtue had its reward. Wainwright called him in, all smiles. "Morey, great news! We've all appreciated your work here and we've been able to show it in some more tangible way than compliments. I didn't want to say anything till it was definite, but your status has been reviewed by Classification and the Ration Board. You're out of Class Four Minor, Morey!" Morey said tremulously, hardly daring to hope, "I'm a full Class Four?" "Class Five, Morey. Class Five! When we do something, we do it right. We asked for a special waiver and got it you've skipped a whole class." He added honestly, "Not that it was just our backing that did it, of course. Your own recent splendid record of consumption helped a lot. I told you you could do it!" Morey had to sit down. He missed the rest of what Wainwright had to say, but it couldn't have mattered. He escaped from the office, sidestepped the knot of fellow employees waiting to congratulate him, and got to a phone. Cherry was as ecstatic and inarticulate as he. "Oh, darling!" was all she could say. "And I couldn't have done it without you," he babbled. "Wainwright as much as said so himself. Said if it wasn't for the way we well, you have been keeping up with the rations, it never would have got by the Board. I've been meaning to say something to you about that, dear, but I just haven't known how. But I do appreciate it. I Hello?" There was a curious silence at the other end of the phone. "Hello?" he repeated worriedly. Cherry's voice was intense and low. "Morey Fry, I think you're mean. I wish you hadn't spoiled the good news." And she hung up. Morey stared slack-jawed at the phone. Howland appeared behind him, chuckling. "Women," he said. "Never try to figure them. Anyway, congratula-- tions, Morey." "Thanks," Morey mumbled. Howland coughed and said, "Uhby the way, Morey, now that you're one of the big shots, so to speak, you won'tuhfeel obliged to well, say anything to Wainwright, for instance, about anything I may have said while w&" "Excuse me," Morey said, imhearing, and pushed past him. He thought wildly of calling Cherry back, of racing home to see just what he'd said that was wrong. Not that there was much doubt, of course. He'd touched her on her sore point. Anyhow, his wristwatch was chiming a reminder of the fact that his psychiatric appointment for the week was coming up. Morey sighed. The day gives and the day takes away. Blessed is the day that gives only good things. If any. The session went badly. Many of the sessions had been going badly, Morey decided; there had been more and more whispering in knots of doctors from which he was excluded, poking and probing in the dark instead of the precise psychic surgery he was used to. Something was wrong, he thought Something was. Semmelweiss confirmed it when he adjourned the group session. After the other doctor had left, he sat Morey down for a private talk. On his own time, toohe didn't ask for his usual ration fee. That told Morey how important the problem was. "Morey," said Semmelweiss, "you're holding back." "I don't mean to. Doctor," Morey said earnestly. "Who knows

what you 'mean' to do? Part of you 'means' to. We've dug pretty deep and we've found some important things. Now there's something I can't put my finger on. Exploring the mind, Morey, is like sending scouts through cannibal territory. You can't see the cannibals until it's too late. But if you send a scout through the jungle and he doesn't show up on the other side, it's a fair assumption that something obstructed his way. In that case, we would label the obstruction 'cannibals.' In the case of the human mind, we label the obstruction a 'trauma.' What the trauma is, or what its effects on behavior will be, we have to find out, once we know that it's there." Morey nodded. All of this was familiar; he couldn't see what Semmelweiss was driving at. Semmelweiss sighed. "The trouble with healing traumas and penetrating psychic blocks and releasing inhibitions the trouble with everything we psychiatrists do, in fact, is that we can't afford to do it too well. An inhibited man is under a strain. We try to relieve the strain. But if we succeed completely, leaving him with no inhibitions at all, we have an outlaw, Morey. Inhibitions are often socially necessary. Suppose, for instance, that an average man were not inhibited against blatant waste. It could happen, you know. Suppose that instead of consuming his ration quota in an orderly and responsible way, he did such things as set fire to his house and everything in it or dumped his food allotment in the river. "When only a few individuals are doing it, we treat the individuals. But if it were done on a mass scale, Morey, it would be the end of society as we know it. Think of the whole collection of anti-social actions that you see in every paper. Man beats wife; wife turns into a harpy; junior smashes up windows; husband starts a black-market stamp racket. And every one of them traces to a basic weakness in the mind's defenses against the most important single anti-social phenomenon failure to consume." Morey flared, "That's not fair. Doctor! That was weeks ago! We've certainly been on the ball lately. I was just commended by the Board, in fact" The doctor said mildly, "Why so violent, Morey? I only made a general remark." "It's just natural to resent being accused." The doctor shrugged. "First, foremost and above all, we do not accuse patients of things. We try to help you find things out." He lit his end-of-session cigarette. "Think about it, please. I'll see you next week." Cherry was composed and unapproachable. She kissed him remotely when he came in. She said, "I called Mother and told her the good news. She and Dad promised to come over here to celebrate." "Yeah," said Morey. "Darling, what did I say wrong on the phone?" "They'll be here about six." "Sure. But what did I say? Was it about the rations? If you're sensitive, I swear I'll never mention them again." "I am sensitive, Morey." He said despairingly, "I'm sorry. I just" He had a better idea. He kissed her. Cherry was passive at first, but not for long. When he had finished kissing her, she pushed him away and actually giggled. "Let me get dressed for dinner." "Certainly. Anyhow, I was just" She laid a finger on his lips. He let her escape and, feeling much less tense, drifted into the library. The afternoon papers were waiting for him. Virtuously, he sat down and began going through them in order. Midway through the World-Telegram-Sun-Post-and-News, he rang for Henry. Morey had read clear through to the drama section of the Times-Herald-Tribune-Mirror before the robot appeared. "Good evening," it said politely. "What took you so long?" Morey demanded. "Where are all the robots?" Robots do not stammer, but there was a distinct pause before Henry said, "Belowstairs, sir. Did you want them for something?" "Well, no. I just haven't seen them around. Get me a drink." It hesitated. "Scotch, sir?" "Before dinner? Get me a Manhattan." "We're all out of Vermouth, sir." "All out? Would you mind telling me how?" "It's all used up, sir." "Now that's just ridiculous," Morey snapped. "We have never run out of liquor in our whole lives and you know it. Good heavens, we just got our allotment in the other day and I certainly" He checked himself. There was a sudden flicker of horror in his eyes as he stared at Henry. "You certainly what, sir?" the robot prompted. Morey swallowed. "Henry, did I do something I shouldn't have?" "I'm sure I wouldn't know, sir. It isn't up to me to say what you

should and shouldn't do." "Of course not," Morey agreed grayly. He sat rigid, staring hopelessly into space, remembering. What he remembered was no pleasure to him at all. "Henry," he said. "Come along, we're going belowstairs. Right now!" It had been Tanaquil Bigelow's remark about the robots. Too many robots make too much of everything. That had implanted the idea; it germinated in Morey's home. More than a little drunk, less than ordinarily inhibited, he had found the problem clear and the answer obvious. He stared around him in dismal worry. His own robots, following his own orders, given weeks before . . . Henry said, "It's just what you told us to do, sir." Morey groaned. He was watching a scene of unparalleled activity, and it sent shivers up and down his spine. There was the butler-robot, hard at work, his copper face expressionless. Dressed in Morey's own sports knickers and golfing shoes, the robot solemnly hit a ball against the wall, picked it up and teed it, hit it again, over and again, with Morey's own clubs. Until the ball wore ragged and was replaced; and the shafts of the clubs leaned out of true; and the close-stitched seams in the clothing began to stretch and abrade. "My God!" said Morey hollowly. There were the maid-robots, exquisitely dressed in Cherry's best, walking up and down in the delicate, slim shoes, sitting and rising and bending and turning. The cook-robots and the sending-robots were preparing dionysian meals. Morey swallowed. "You've been doing this right along," he said to Henry. "That's why the quotas have been filled." "Oh, yes, sir. Just as you told us." Morey had to sit down. One of the serving-robots politely scurried over with a chair, brought from upstairs for their new chores. Waste. Morey tasted the word between his lips. Waste. You never wasted things. You used them. If necessary, you drove yourself to the edge of breakdown to use them; you made every breath a burden and every hour a torment to use them, until through diligent consuming and/or occupational merit, you were promoted to the next higher class, and were allowed to consume less frantically. But you didn't wantonly destroy or throw out. You consumed. Morey thought fearfully: When the Board finds out about this . . . Still, he reminded himself, the Board hadn't found out. It might take some time before they did, for humans, after all, never entered robot quarters. There was no law against it, not even a sacrosanct custom. But there was no reason to. When breaks occurred, which was infrequently, maintenance robots or repair squads came in and put them back in order. Usually the humans involved didn't even know it had happened, because the robots used their own TBR radio circuits and the process was next thing to automatic. Morey said reprovingly, "Henry, you should have told well, I mean reminded me about this." "But, sir!" Henry protested. "'Don't tell a living soul,' you said. You made it a direct order." "Umph. Well, keep it that way. I'll have to go back upstairs. Better get the rest of the robots started on dinner." Morey left, not comfortably. The dinner to celebrate Morey's promotion was difficult. Morey liked Cherry's parents. Old Elon, after the premarriage inquisition that father must inevitably give to daughter's suitor, had buckled right down to the job of adjustment. The old folks were good about not interfering, good about keeping their superior social status to themselves, good about helping out on the budget at least once a week, they could be relied on to come over for a hearty meal, and Mrs. Elon had more than once remade some of Cherry's new dresses to fit herself, even to the extent of wearing all the high-point ornamentation. And they had been wonderful about the wedding gifts, when Morey and their daughter got married. The most any member of Morey's family had been willing to take was a silver set or a few crystal table pieces. The Elons had come through with a dazzling promise to accept a car, a bird-bath for their garden and a complete set of living-room furniture! Of course, they could afford it they had to consume so little that it wasn't much strain for them even to take gifts of that magnitude. But without their help, Morey knew, the first few months of matrimony would have been even tougher consuming than they were. But on this particular night it was hard for Morey to like anyone. He responded with monosyllables; he barely grunted when Elon proposed a toast to his promotion and his brilliant future.

He was preoccupied. Rightly so. Morey, in his deepest, bravest searching, could find no clue in his memory as to just what the punishment might be for what he had done. But he had a sick certainty that trouble lay ahead. Morey went over his problem so many times that an anesthesia set in. By the time dinner was ended and he and his father-in-law were in the den with their brandy, he was more or less functioning again. Elon, for the first time since Morey had known him, offered him one of his cigars. "You're Grade Five can afford to smoke somebody else's now, hey?" "Yeah," Morey said glumly. There was a moment of silence. Then Elon, as punctilious as any companion-robot, coughed and tried again. "Remember being peaked till I hit Grade Five," he reminisced meaningfully. "Consuming keeps a man on the go, all right. Things piled up at the law office, couldn't be taken care of while ration points piled up, too. And consuming comes first, of course that's a citizen's prime duty. Mother and I had our share of grief over that, but a couple that wants to make a go of marriage and citizenship just pitches in and does the job, hey?" Morey repressed a shudder and managed to nod. "Best thing about upgrading," Elon went on, as if he had elicited a satisfactory answer, "don't have to spend so much time consuming, give more attention to work. Greatest luxury in the world, work. Wish I had as much stamina as you young fellows. Five days a week in court are about all I can manage. Hit six for a while, relaxed first time in my life, but my doctor made me cut down. Said we can't overdo pleasures. You'll be working two days a week now, hey?" Morey produced another nod. Elon drew deeply on his cigar, his eyes bright as they watched Morey. He was visibly puzzled, and Morey, even in his half-daze, could recognize the exact moment at which Elon drew the wrong inference. "Ah, everything okay with you and Cherry?" he asked diplomatically. "Fine!" Morey exclaimed. "Couldn't be better!" "Good, Good." Elon changed the subject with almost an audible wrench. "Speaking of court, had an interesting case the other day. Young fellow year or two younger than you, I guess came in with a Section Ninety-seven on him. Know what that is? Breaking and entering!" "Breaking and entering," Morey repeated wonderingly, interested in spite of himself. "Breaking and entering what?" "Houses. Old term; law's full of them. Originally applied to stealing things. Still does, I discovered." "You mean he stole something?" Morey asked in bewilderment. "Exactly! He stole. Strangest thing I ever came across. Talked it over with one of his bunch of lawyers later; new one on him, too. Seems this kid had a girl friend, nice kid but a little, you know, plump. She got interested in art." "There's nothing wrong with that," Morey said. "Nothing wrong with her, either. She didn't do anything. She didn't like him too much, though. Wouldn't marry him. Kid got to thinking about how he could get her to change her mind and well, you know that big Mondrian in the Museum?" "I've never been there," Morey said, somewhat embarrassed. "Urn. Ought to try it some day, boy. Anyway, comes closing time at the Museum the other day, this kid sneaks in. He steals the painting. That's right steals it. Takes it to give to the girl." Morey shook his head blankly. "I never heard of anything like that in my life." "Not many have. Girl wouldn't take it, by the way. Got scared when he brought it to her. She must've tipped off the police, I guess. Somebody did. Took 'em three hours to find it, even when they knew it was hanging on a wall. Pretty poor kid. Forty-two room house." "And there was a law against it?" Morey asked. "I mean it's like making a law against breathing." "Certainly was. Old law, of course. Kid got set back two grades. Would have been more but, my God, he was only a Grade Three as it was." "Yeah," said Morey, wetting his lips. "Say, Dad" "Urn?" Morey cleared his throat. "Uhl wonderl mean what's the penalty, for instance, for things likewell, misusing rations or anything like that?" Elon's eyebrows went high. "Misusing rations?" "Say yon had a liquor ration, it might be, and instead of drinking it, youwell, flushed it down the drain or something..." His voice trailed off. Elon was frowning. He said, "Funny thing, seems I'm not as broadminded as I thought I was. For some reason, I don't find that amusing." "Sorry," Morey croaked. And he certainly was. It might be

dishonest, but it was doing him a lot of good, for days went by and no one seemed to have penetrated his secret. Cherry was happy. Wainwright found occasion after occasion to pat Morey's back. The wages of sin were turning out to be prosperity and happiness. There was a bad moment when Morey came home to find Cherry in the middle of supervising a team of packing robots; the new house, suitable to his higher grade, was ready, and they were expected to move in the next day. But Cherry hadn't been downstairs, and Morey had his household robots clean up the evidences of what they had been doing before the packers got that far. The new house was, by Morey's standards, pure luxury. It was only fifteen rooms. Morey had shrewdly retained one more robot than was required for a Class Five, and had been allowed a compensating deduction in the size of his house. The robot quarters were less secluded than in the old house, though, and that was a disadvantage. More than once Cherry had snuggled up to him in the delightful intimacy of their one bed in their single bedroom and said, with faint curiosity, "I wish they'd stop that noise." And Morey had promised to speak to Henry about it in the morning. But there was nothing he could say to Henry, of course, unless he ordered Henry to stop the tireless consuming through each of the day's twenty-four hours that kept them always ahead, but never quite far enough ahead, of the inexorable weekly increment of ration quotas. But, though Cherry might once in a while have a moment's curiosity about what the robots were doing, she was not likely to be able to guess at the facts. Her upbringing was, for once, on Morey's side; she knew so little of the grind, grind, grind of consuming that was the lot of the lower classes that she scarcely noticed that there was less of it. Morey almost, sometimes, relaxed. He thought of many ingenious chores for robots, and the robots politely and emotionlessly obeyed. Morey was a success. It wasn't all gravy. There was a nervous moment for Morey when the quarterly survey report came in the mail. As the day for the Ration Board to check over the degree of wear on the turned-in discards came due, Morey began to sweat. The clothing and furniture and household goods the robots had consumed for him were very nearly in shreds. It had to look plausible, that was the big thing no normal person would wear a hole completely through the knee of a pair of pants, as Henry had done with his dress suit before Morey stopped him. Would the Board question it? Worse, was there something about the way the robots consumed the stuff that would give the whole show away? Some special wear point in the robot anatomy, for instance, that would rub a hole where no human's body could, or stretch a seam that should normally be under no strain at all? It was worrisome. But the worry was needless. When the report of survey came, Morey let out a long-held breath. Not a single item disallowed! Morey was a success and so was his scheme! To the successful man come the rewards of success. Morey arrived home one evening after a hard day's work at the office and was alarmed to find another car parked in his drive. It was a tiny two-seater, the sort affected by top officials and the very well-to-do. Right then and there Morey learned the first half of the embezzler's lesson: Anything different is dangerous. He came uneasily into his own home, fearful that some high officer of the Ration Board had come to ask questions. But Cherry was glowing. "Mr. Porfirio is a newspaper feature writer and he wants to write you up for their 'Consumers of Distinction' page! Morey, I couldn't be more proud!" "Thanks," said Morey glibly. "Hello." Mr. Porfirio shook Morey's hand warmly. "I'm not exactly from a newspaper," he corrected. "Trans-video Press is what it is, actually. We're a news wire service; we supply forty-seven hundred papers with news and feature material. Every one of them," he added complacently, "on the required consumption list of Grades One through Six inclusive. We have a Sunday supplement self-help feature on consuming problems and we like to tell, give credit where credit is due. You've established an enviable record, Mr. Fry. We'd like to tell our readers about it." "Urn," said Morey. "Let's go in the drawing room." "Oh, no!" Cherry said firmly. "I want to hear this. He's so modest, Mr. Porfirio, you'd really never know what kind of a man he is just to listen to him talk. Why, my goodness, I'm his wife and I swear / don't know how he does all the

consuming he does. He simply" "Have a drink, Mr. Porfirio," Morey said, against all etiquette. "Rye? Scotch? Bourbon? Gin-and-tonic? Brandy Alexander? Dry Manhal mean what would you like?" He became conscious that he was babbling like a fool. "Anything," said the newsman. "Rye is fine. Now, Mr. Fry, I notice you've fixed up your place very attractively here and your wife says that your country home is just as nice. As soon as I came in, I said to myself, 'Beautiful home. Hardly a stick of furniture that isn't absolutely necessary. Might be a Grade Six or Seven.' And Mrs. Fry says the other place is even barer." "She does, does she?" Morey challenged sharply. "Well, let me tell you, Mr. Porfirio, that every last scrap of my furniture allowance is accounted for! I don't know what you're getting at, but" "Oh, I certainly didn't mean to imply anything like that! I just want to get some information from you that I can pass on to our readers. You know, to sort of help them do as well as yourself. How do you do it?" Morey swallowed. "Weuhwell, we just keep after it. Hard work, that's all." Porfirio nodded admiringly. "Hard work," he repeated, and fished a triple-folded sheet of paper out of his pocket to make notes on. "Would you say," he went on, "that anyone could do as well as you simply by devoting himself to itsetting a regular schedule, for example, and keeping to it very strictly?" "Oh, yes," said Morey. "In other words, it's only a matter of doing what you have to do every day?" "That's it exactly. I handle the budget in my house more experience than my wife, you seebut no reason a woman can't do it." "Budgeting," Porfirio recorded approvingly. "That's our policy, too." The interview was not the terror it had seemed, not even when Porfirio tactfully called attention to Cherry's slim waistline ("So many housewives, Mrs. Fry, find it difficult to keep from beingwell, a little plump") and Morey had to invent endless hours on the exercise machines, while Cherry looked faintly perplexed, but did not interrupt. From the interview, however, Morey learned the second half of the embezzler's lesson. After Porfirio had gone, he leaped in and spoke more than a little firmly to Cherry. "That business of exercise, dear. We really have to start doing it. I don't know if you've nodced it, but you are beginning to get just a trifle heavier and we don't want that to happen, do we?" In the following grim and unnecessary sessions on the mechanical horses, Morey had plenty of time to reflect on the lesson. Stolen treasures are less sweet than one would like, when one dare not enjoy them in the open. But some of Morey's treasures were fairly earned. The new Bradmoor K-50 Spin-a-Game, for instance, was his very own. His job was design and creation, and he was a fortunate man in that his efforts were permitted to be expended along the line of greatest social utility namely, to increase consumption. The Spin-a-Game was a well-nigh perfect machine for the purpose. "Brilliant," said Wainwright, beaming, when the pilot machine had been put through its first tests. "Guess they don't call me the Talent-picker for nothing. I knew you could do it, boy!" Even Howland was lavish in his praise. He sat munching on a plate of petits-fours (he was still only a Grade Three) while the tests were going on, and when they were over, he said enthusiastically, "It's a beauty, Morey. "That series-corruptersensational! Never saw a prettier piece of machinery.'* Morey flushed gratefully. Wainwright left, exuding praise, and Morey patted his pilot model affectionately and admired its polychrome gleam. The looks of the machine, as Wainwright had lectured many a time, were as important as its function; "You have to make them want to play it, boy! They won't play it if they don't see it!" And consequently the whole K series was distinguished by flashing rainbows of light, provocative strains of music, haunting scents that drifted into the nostrils of the passerby with compelling effect. Morey had drawn heavily on all the old masterpieces of designdie one-arm bandit, the pinball machine, the juke box. You put your ration book in the hopper. You spun the wheels until you selected the game you wanted to play against the machine. You punched buttons or spun dials or, in any of 325 different ways, you pitted your human skill against the magnetic-taped skills of the machine. And you lost. You had a chance to win, but the inexorable statistics of the machine's setting made sure that if you played long enough, you had to

lose. That is to say, if you risked a ten-point ration stamp showing, perhaps, that you had consumed three six-course meals your statistic return was eight points. You might hit the jackpot and get a thousand points back, and thus be exempt from a whole freezerful of steaks and joints and prepared vegetables; but it seldom happened. Most likely you lost and got nothing. Got nothing, that is, in the way of your hazarded ration stamps. But the beauty of the machine, which was Morey's main contribution, was that, win or lose, you always found a pellet of vitamin-drenched, sugar-coated antibiotic hormone gum in the hopper. You played your game, won or lost your stake, popped your hormone gum into your mouth and played another. By the time that game was ended, the gum was used up, the coating dissolved; you discarded it and started another. "That's what the man from the NRB liked," Howland told Morey confidentially. "He took a set of schematics back with him; they might install it on all new machines. Oh, you're the fair-haired boy, all right!" It was the first Morey had heard about a man from the National Ration Board. It was good news. He excused himself and hurried to phone Cherry the story of his latest successes. He reached her at her mother's, where she was spending the evening, and she was properly impressed and affectionate. He came back to Howland in a glowing humor. "Drink?" said Howland diffidently. "Sure," said Morey. He could afford, he thought, to drink as much of Howland's liquor as he liked; poor guy, sunk in the consuming quicksands of Class Three. Only fair for somebody a little more successful to give him a hand once in a while. And when Howland, learning that Cherry had left Morey a bachelor for the evening, proposed Uncle Piggotty's again, Morey hardly hesitated at all. The Bigelows were delighted to see him. Morey wondered briefly if they had a home; certainly they didn't seem to spend much time in it. It turned out they did, because when Morey indicated virtuously that he'd only stopped in at Piggotty's for a single drink before dinner, and Howland revealed that he was free for the evening, they captured Morey and bore him off to their house. Tanaquil Bigelow was haughtily apologetic. "I don't suppose this is the kind of place Mr. Fry is used to," she observed to her husband, right across Morey, who was standing between them. "Still, we call it home." Morey made an appropriately polite remark. Actually, the place nearly turned his stomach. It was an enormous glaringly new mansion, bigger even than Morey's former house, stuffed to bursting with bulging sofas and pianos and massive mahogany chairs and tri-D sets and bedrooms and drawing rooms and breakfast rooms and nurseries. The nurseries were a shock to Morey; it had never occurred to him that the Bigelows had children. But they did and, though the children were only five and eight, they were still up, under the care of a brace of robot nursemaids, doggedly playing with their overstuffed animals and miniature trains. "You don't know what a comfort Tony and Dick are," Tanaquil Bigelow told Morey. "They consume so much more than their rations. Walter says that every family ought to have at least two or three children to, you know, help out. Walter's so intelligent about these things, it's a pleasure to hear him talk. Have you heard his poem, Morey? The one he calls The Twoness of" Morey hastily admitted that he had. He reconciled himself to a glum evening. The Bigelows had been eccentric but fun back at Uncle Piggotty's. On their own ground, they seemed just as eccentric, but painfully dull. They had a round of cocktails, and another, and then the Bigelows no longer seemed so dull. Dinner was ghastly, of course; Morey was nouveau-riche enough to be a snob about his relatively Spartan table. But he minded his manners and sampled, with grim concentration, each successive course of chunky protein and rich marinades. With the help of the endless succession of table wines and liqueurs, dinner ended without destroying his evening or his strained digestive system. And afterward, they were a pleasant company in the Bigelow's ornate drawing room. Tanaquil Bigelow, in consultation with the children, checked over their ration books and came up with the announcement that they would have a brief recital by a pair of robot dancers, followed by string music by a robot quartet. Morey prepared himself for the worst, but found before the dancers were through that he was enjoying

himself. Strange lesson for Morey: When you didn't have to watch them, the robot entertainers were funt "Good night, dears," Tanaquil Bigelow said firmly to the children when the dancers were done. The boys rebelled, naturally, but they went. It was only a matter of minutes, though, before one of them was back, clutching at Morey's sleeve with a pudgy hand. Morey looked at the boy uneasily, having little experience with children. He said, "Uhwhat is it, Tony?" "Dick, you mean," the boy said. "Gimme your autograph." He poked an engraved pad and a vulgarly jeweled pencil at Morey. Morey dazedly signed and the child ran off, Morey staring after him. Tanaquil Bigelow laughed and explained, "He saw your name in Porfirio's column. Dick loves Porfirio, reads him every day. He's such an intellectual kid, really. He'd always have his nose in a book if I didn't keep after him to play with his trains and watch tri-D." "That was quite a nice write-up," Walter Bigelow commented a little enviously, Morey thought. "Bet you make Consumer of the Year. I wish," he sighed, "that we could get a little ahead on the quotas the way you did. But it just never seems to work out. We eat and play and consume like crazy, and somehow at the end of the month we're always a little behind in something everything keeps piling up and then the Board sends us a warning, and they call me down and, first thing you know, I've got a couple of hundred added penalty points and we're worse off than before." "Never you mind," Tanaquil replied staunchly. "Consuming isn't everything in life. You have your work." Bigelow nodded judiciously and offered Morey another drink. Another drink, however, was not what Morey needed. He was sitting in a rosy glow, less of alcohol than of sheer contentment with the world. He said suddenly, "Listen." Bigelow looked up from his own drink. "Eh?" "If I tell you something that's a secret, will you keep it that way?" Bigelow rumbled, "Why, I guess so, Morey." But his wife cut in sharply, "Certainly we will, Morey. Of course! What is it?" There was a gleam in her eye, Morey noticed. It puzzled him, but he decided to ignore it. He said, "About that write-up. I'm not such a hotshot consumer, really, you know. In fact" All of a sudden, everyone's eyes seemed to be on him. For a tortured moment, Morey wondered if he was doing the right thing. A secret that two people know is compromised, and a secret known to three people is no secret. Still "It's like this," he said firmly. "You remember what we were talking about at Uncle Piggotty's that night? Well, when I went home I went down to the robot quarters, and I" He went on from there. Tanaquil Bigelow said triumphantly, "I knew it!" Walter Bigelow gave his wife a mild, reproving look. He declared soberly. "You've done a big thing, Morey. A mighty big thing. God willing, you've pronounced the death sentence on our society as we know it. Future generations will revere the name of Morey Fry." He solemnly shook Morey's hand. Morey said dazedly, "I -what?" Walter nodded. It was a valedictory. He turned to his wife. "Tanaquil, we'll have to call an emergency meeting." "Of course, Walter," she said devotedly. "And Morey will have to be there. Yes, you'll have to, Morey; no excuses. We want the Brotherhood to meet you. Right, Howland?" Howland coughed uneasily. He nodded noncommittally and took another drink. Morey demanded desperately, "What are you talking about? Howland, you tell me!" Howland fiddled with his drink. "Well," he said, "it's like Tan was telling you that night. A few of us, well, politically mature persons have formed a little group. We" "Little group!" Tanaquil Bigelow said scornfully. "Howland, sometimes I wonder if you really catch the spirit of the thing at all! It's everybody, Morey, everybody in the world. Why, there are eighteen of us right here in Old Town! There are scores more all over the world! I knew you were up to something like this, Morey. I told Walter so the morning after we met you. I said, 'Walter, mark my words, that man Morey is up to something.' But I must say," she admitted worshipfully, "I didn't know it would have the scope of what you're proposing now! Imagine a whole world of consumers, rising as one man, shouting the name of Morey Fry, fighting the Ration Board with the Board's own weapons the robots. What poetic justice!" Bigelow nodded enthusiastically. "Call Uncle Piggotty's, dear," he ordered. "See if you can round up a quorum right now! Meanwhile, Morey and I

are going downstairs. Let's go, Morey! Let's get the new world started!" Morey sat there open-mouthed. He closed it with a snap. "Bigelow," he whispered, "do you mean to say that you're going to spread this idea around through some kind of subversive organization?" "Subversive?" Bigelow repeated stiffly. "My dear man, all creative minds are subversive, whether they operate singly or in such a group as the Brotherhood of Freeman. I scarcely like" "Never mind what you like," Morey insisted. "You're going to call a meeting of this Brotherhood and you want me to tell them what I just told you. Is that right?" "Wellyes." Morey got up. "I wish I could say it's been nice, but it hasn't. Good night!" And he stormed out before they could stop him. * Out on the street, though, his resolution deserted him. He hailed a robot cab and ordered the driver to take him on the traditional time-killing ride through the park while he made up his mind. The fact that he had left, of course, was not going to keep Bigelow from going through with his announced intention. Morey remembered, now, fragments of conversation from Bigelow and his wife at Uncle Piggotty's, and cursed himself. They had, it was perfectly true, said and hinted enough about politics and purposes to put him on his guard. All that nonsense about twoness had diverted him from what should have been perfectly clear: They were subversives indeed. He glanced at his watch. Late, but not too late; Cherry would still be at her parents' home. He leaned forward and gave the driver their address. It was like beginning the first of a hundred-shot series of injections: you know it's going to cure you, but it hurts just the same. Morey said manfully: "And that's it, sir. I know I've been a fool. I'm willing to take the consequences." Old Elon rubbed his jaw thoughtfully. "Um," he said. Cherry and her mother had long passed the point where they could say anything at all; they were seated side by side on a couch across the room, listening with expressions of strain and incredulity. Elon said abruptly, "Excuse me. Phone call to make." He left the room to make a brief call and returned. He said over his shoulder to his wife, "Coffee. We'll need it. Got a problem here." Morey said, "Do you think I mean what should I do?" Elon shrugged, then, surprisingly, grinned. "What can you do?" he demanded cheerfully. "Done plenty already, I'd say. Drink some coffee. Call I made," he explained, "was to Jim, my law clerk. He'll be here in a minute. Get some dope from Jim, then we'll know better." Cherry came over to Morey and sat beside him. All she said was, "Don't worry," but to Morey it conveyed all the meaning in the world. He returned the pressure of her hand with a feeling of deepest relief. Hell, he said to himself, why should I worry? Worst they can do to me is drop me a couple of grades and what's so bad about that? He grimaced involuntarily. He had remembered his own early struggles as a Class One and what was so bad about that. The law clerk arrived, a smallish robot with a battered stainless-steel hide and dull coppery features. Elon took the robot aside for a terse conversation before he came back to Morey. "As I thought," he said in satisfaction. "No precedent. No laws prohibiting. Therefore no crime." "Thank heaven!" Morey said in ecstatic relief. Elon shook his head. "They'll probably give you a reconditioning and you can't expect to keep your Grade Five. Probably call it anti-social behavior. Is, isn't it?" Dashed, Morey said, "Oh." He frowned briefly, then looked up. "All right, Dad, if I've got it coming to me, I'll take my medicine." "Way to talk," Elon said approvingly. "Now go home. Get a good night's sleep. First thing in the morning, go to the Ration Board. Tell 'em the whole story, beginning to end. They'll be easy on you." Elon hesitated. "Well, fairly easy," he amended. "I hope." The condemned man ate a hearty breakfast. He had to. That morning, as Morey awoke, he had the sick certainty that he was going to be consuming triple rations for a long, long time to come. He kissed Cherry good-bye and took the long ride to the Ration Board in silence. He even left Henry behind. At the Board, he stammered at a series of receptionist robots and was finally brought into the presence of a mildly supercilious young man named Hachette: "My name," he started, "is Morey Fry. I've come to talk over something I've been doing with" "Certainly, Mr. Fry," said Hachette. "I'll take you in to Mr. Newman right away." "Don't you want to

know what I did?" demanded Morey. Hachette smiled. "What makes you think we don't know?" he said, and left. That was Surprise Number One. Newman explained it. He grinned at Morey and ruefully shook his head. "All the time we get this," he complained. "People just don't take the trouble to learn anything about the world around them. Son," he demanded, "what do you think a robot is?" Morey said, "Hub?" "I mean how do you think it operates? Do you think it's just a kind of a man with a tin skin and wire nerves?" "Why, no. It's a machine, of course. It isn't human." Newman beamed. "Fine!" he said. "It's a machine. It hasn't got flesh or blood or intestines or a brain. Oh" he held up a hand "robots are smart enough. I don't mean that. But an electronic thinking machine, Mr. Fry, takes about as much space as the house you're living in. It has to. Robots don't carry brains around with them; brains are too heavy and much too bulky." "Then how do they think?" "With their brains, of course." "But you just said" "I said they didn't carry them. Each robot is in constant radio communication with the Master Control on its TBR circuit the 'Talk Between Robots' radio. Master Control gives the answer, the robot acts." "I see," said Morey. "Well, that's very interesting, but" "But you still don't see," said Newman. "Figure it out. If the robot gets information from Master Control, do you see that Master Control in return necessarily gets information from the robot?" "Oh," said Morey. Then, louder, "Oh! You mean that all my robots have been" The words wouldn't come. Newman nodded in satisfaction. "Every bit of information of that sort comes to us as a matter of course. Why, Mr. Fry, if you hadn't come in today, we would have been sending for you within a very short time." That was the second surprise. Morey bore up under it bravely. After all, it changed nothing, he reminded himself. He said, "Well, be that as it may, sir, here I am. I came in of my own free will. I've been using my robots to consume my ration quotas" "Indeed you have," said Newman. "and I'm willing to sign a statement to that effect any time you like. I don't know what the penalty is, but I'll take it. I'm guilty; I admit my guilt." Newman's eyes were wide. "Guilty?" he repeated. "Penalty?" Morey was startled. "Why, yes," he said. "I'm not denying anything." "Penalties," repeated Newman musingly. Then he began to laugh. He laughed, Morey thought, to considerable excess; Morey saw nothing he could laugh at, himself, in the situation. But the situation, Morey was forced to admit, was rapidly getting completely incomprehensible. "Sorry," said Newman at last, wiping his eyes, "but I couldn't help it. Penalties! Well, Mr. Fry, let me set your mind at rest. I wouldn't worry about the penalties if I were you. As soon as the reports began coming through on what you had done with your robots, we naturally assigned a special team to keep observing you, and we forwarded a report to the national headquarters. We made certain recommendations in it and well, to make a long story short, the answers came back yesterday. "Mr. Fry, the National Ration Board is delighted to know of your contribution toward improving our distribution problem. Pending a further study, a tentative program has been adopted for setting up consuming-robot units all over the country based on your scheme. Penalties? Mr. Fry, you're a hero!" A hero has responsibilities. Morey's were quickly made clear to him. He was allowed time for a brief reassuring visit to Cherry, a triumphal tour of his old office, and then he was rushed off to Washington to be quizzed. He found the National Ration Board in a frenzy of work. "The most important job we've ever done," one of the high officers told him. "I wouldn't be surprised if it's the last one we ever have! Yes, sir, we're trying to put ourselves out of business for good and we don't want a single thing to go wrong." "Anything I can do to help" Morey began diffidently. "You've done fine, Mr. Fry. Gave us just the push we've been needing. It was there all the time for us to see, but we were too close to the forest to see the trees, if you get what I mean. Look, I'm not much on rhetoric and this is the biggest step mankind has taken in centuries and I can't put it into words. Let me show you what we've been doing." He and a delegation of other officials of the Ration Board and men whose names Morey had repeatedly seen in the newspapers took Morey on an inspection tour of the

entire plant. "It's a closed cycle, you see," he was told, as they looked over a chamber of industriously plodding consumer-robots working off a shipment of shoes. "Nothing is permanently lost. If you want a car, you get one of the newest and best. If not, your car gets driven by a robot until it's ready to be turned in and a new one gets built for next year. We don't lose the metal they can be salvaged. All we lose is a little power and labor. And the Sun and the atom give us all the power we need, and the robots give us more labor than we can use. Same thing applies, of course, to all products." "But what's in it for the robots?" Morey asked. "I beg your pardon?" one of the biggest men in the country said uncomprehendingly. Morey had a difficult moment. His analysis had conditioned him against waste and this decidedly was sheer destruction of goods, no matter how scientific the jargon might be. "If the consumer is just using up things for the sake of using them up," he said doggedly, realizing the danger he was inviting, "we could use wear-and-tear machines instead of robots. After all why waste them?" They looked at each other worriedly. "But that's what you were doing," one pointed out with a faint note of threat. "Oh, no!" Morey quickly objected. "I built in satisfaction circuits my training in design, you know. Adjustable circuits, of course." "Satisfaction circuits?" he was asked. "Adjustable?" "Well, sure. If the robot gets no satisfaction out of using up things" "Don't talk nonsense," growled the Ration Board official. "Robots aren't human. How do you make them feel satisfaction? And adjustable satisfaction at that!" Morey explained. It was a highly technical explanation, involving the use of great sheets of paper and elaborate diagrams. But there were trained men in the group and they became even more excited than before. "Beautiful!" one cried in scientific rapture. "Why, it takes care of every possible moral, legal and psychological argument!" "What does?" the Ration Board official demanded. "How?" "You tell him, Mr. Fry." Morey tried and couldn't. But he could show how his principle operated. The Ration Board lab was turned over to him, complete with more assistants than he knew how to give orders to, and they built satisfaction circuits for a squad of robots working in a hat factory. Then Morey gave his demonstration. The robots manufactured hats of all sorts. He adjusted the circuits at the end of the day and the robots began trying on the hats, squabbling over them, each coming away triumphantly with a huge and diverse selection. Their metallic features were incapable of showing pride or pleasure, but both were evident in the way they wore their hats, their fierce possessiveness . . . and their faster, neater, more intensive, more dedicated work to produce a still greater quantity of hats . . . which they also were allowed to own. "You see?" an engineer exclaimed delightedly. "They can be adjusted to want hats, to wear them loyally, to wear the hats to pieces. And not just for the sake of wearing them out the hats are an incentive for them!" "But how can we go on producing just hats and more hats?" the Ration Board man asked puzzledly. "Civilization does not live by hats alone." "That," said Morey modestly, "is the beauty of it. Look." He set the adjustment of the satisfaction circuit as porter robots brought in skids of gloves. The hat-manufacturing robots fought over the gloves with the same mechanical passion as they had for hats. "And that can apply to anything we or the robots produce," Morey added. "Everything from pins to yachts. But the point is that they get satisfaction from possession, and the craving can be regulated according to the glut in various industries, and the robots show their appreciation by working harder." He hesitated. "That's what I did for my servant-robot. It's a feedback, you see. Satisfaction leads to more work and better work and that means more goods, which they can be made to want, which means incentive to work, and so on, all around." "Closed cycle," whispered the Ration Board man in awe. "A real closed cycle this time!" And so the inexorable laws of supply and demand were irrevocably repealed. No longer was mankind hampered by inadequate supply or drowned by overproduction. What mankind needed was there. What the race did not require passed into the insatiable and adjustable robot maw. Nothing was wasted. For a pipeline has

two ends. Morey was thanked, complimented, rewarded, given a ticker-tape parade through the city, and put on a plane back home. By that time, the Ration Board had liquidated itself. Cherry met him at the airport. They jabbered excitedly at each other all the way to the house. In their own living room, they finished the kiss they had greeted each other with. At last Cherry broke away, laughing. Morey said, "Did I tell you I'm through with Bradmoor? From now on I work for the Board as civilian consultant. And," he added impressively, "starting right away. I'm a Class Eight!" "My!" gasped Cherry, so worshipfully that Morey felt a twinge of conscience. He said .honestly, "Of course, if what they were saying in Washington is so, the classes aren't going to mean much pretty soon. Still, it's quite an honor." "It certainly is," Cherry said staunchly. "Why, Dad's only a Class Eight himself and he's been a judge for I don't know how many years." Morey pursed his lips. "We can't all be fortunate," he said generously. "Of course, the classes still will count for something that is, a Class One will have so much to consume in a year, a Class Two will have a little less, and so on. But each person in each class will have robot help, you see, to do the actual consuming. The way it's going to be, special facsimile robots will" Cherry flagged him down. "I know, dear. Each family gets a robot duplicate of every person in the family." "Oh," said Morey, slightly annoyed. "How did you know?" "Ours came yesterday," she explained. "The man from the Board said we were the first in the area because it was your idea, of course. They haven't even been activated yet. I've still got them in the Green Room. Want to see them?" "Sure," said Morey buoyantly. He dashed ahead of Cherry to inspect the results of his own brainstorm. There they were, standing statue-still against the wall, waiting to be energized to begin their endless tasks. "Yours is real pretty," Morey said gallantly. "But say, is that thing supposed to look like me?" He inspected the chromium face of the man-robot disapprovingly. "Only roughly, the man said." Cherry was right behind him. "Notice anything else?" Morey leaned closer, inspecting the features of the facsimile robot at a close range. "Well, no," he said. "It's got a kind of a squint that I don't like, but Oh, you mean that!" He bent over to examine a smaller robot, half hidden between the other pair. It was less than two feet high, big-headed, pudgy-limbed, thick-bellied. In fact, Morey thought wonderingly, it looked almost like "My God!" Morey spun around, staring wide-eyed at his wife. "You mean" "I mean," said Cherry, blushing slightly. Morey reached out to grab her in his arms. "Darling!" he cried. "Why didn't you tell me?"

The Celebrated No-Hit Inning by Frederik Pohl This is A TRUE STORY, you have to remember. You have to keep that firmly in mind because, frankly, in some places it may not sound like a true story. Besides, it's a true story about baseball players, and maybe the only one there is. So you have to treat it with respect. You know Boley, no doubt. It's pretty hard not to know Boley, if you know anything at all about the National Game. He's the one, for instance, who raised such a scream when the sportsvmnters voted him Rookie of the Year. "I never was a rookie," he bellowed into three million television screens at the dinner. He's the one who ripped up his contract when his manager called him, "The hittin'est pitcher I ever see." Boley wouldn't stand for that. "Four-eighteen against the best pitchers in the league," he yelled, as the pieces of the contract went out the window. "Fogarty, I am the hittin'est hitler you ever see!" He's the one they all said reminded them so much of Dizzy Dean at first. But did Diz win thirty-one games in his first year? Boley did; he'll tell you so himself. But politely, and without bellowing. . . . Somebody explained to Boley that even a truly great Hall-of-Fame pitcher really ought to show up for spring training. So, in his second year, he did. But he wasn't convinced that he needed the training, so

he didn't bother much about appearing on the field. Manager Fogarty did some extensive swearing about that, but he did all of his swearing to his pitching coaches and not to Mr. Boleslaw. There had been six ripped-up contracts already that year, when Boley's feelings got hurt about something, and the front office were very insistent that there shouldn't be any more. There wasn't much the poor pitching coaches could do, of course. They tried pleading with Boley. All he did was grin and ruffle their hair and say, "Don't get all in an uproar." He could ruffle their hair pretty easily, since he stood six inches taller than the tallest of them. "Boley," said Pitching Coach MagiU to him desperately, "you are going to get me into trouble with the manager. I need this job. We just had another little boy at our house, and they cost money to feed. Won't you please do me a favor and come down to the field, just for a little while?" Boley had a kind of a soft heart. "Why, if that will make so much difference to you. Coach, I'll do it. But I don't feel much like pitching. We have got twelve exhibition games lined up with the Orioles on the way north, and if I pitch six of those that ought to be all the warm-up I need." "Three innings?" Magill haggled. "You know I wouldn't ask you if it wasn't important. The thing is, the owner's uncle is watching today." Boley pursed his lips. He shrugged. "One inning." "Bless you, Boley!" cried the coach. "One inning it is!" Andy Andalusia was catching for the regulars when Boley turned up on the field. He turned white as a sheet. "Not the fast ball, Boley! Please, Boley," he begged. "I only been catching a week and I have not hardened up yet." Boleslaw turned the rosin bag around in his hands and looked around the field. There was action going on at all six diamonds, but the spectators, including the owner's uncle, were watching the regulars. "I tell you what I'll do," said Boley thoughtfully. "Let's see. For the first man, I pitch only curves. For the second man, the screwball. And for the third man let's see. Yes. For the third man, I pitch the sinker." "Fine!" cried the catcher gratefully, and trotted back to home plate. "He's a very spirited player," the owner's uncle commented to Manager Fogarty. "That he is," said Fogarty, remembering how the pieces of the fifth contract had felt as they hit him on the side of the head. "He must be a morale problem for you, though. Doesn't he upset the discipline of the rest of the team?" Fogarty looked at him, but he only said.) "He win thirtyone games for us last year. If he had lost thirty-one he would have upset us a lot more." The owner's uncle nodded, but there was a look in his eye all the same. He watched without saying anything more, while Boley struck out the first man with three sizzling curves, right on schedule, and then turned around and yelled something at the outfield. "That crazy By heaven," shouted the manager, "he's chasing them back into the dugout. I told that" The owner's uncle clutched at Manager Fogarty as he was getting up to head for the field. "Wait a minute. What's Boleslaw doing?" "Don't you see? He's chasing the outfield off the field. He wants to face the next two men without any outfield! That's Satchell Paige's old trick, only he never did it except in exhibitions where who cares? But that Boley" "This is only an exhibition, isn't it?" remarked the owner's uncle mildly. Fogarty looked longingly at the field, looked back at the owner's uncle, and shrugged. "All right." He sat down, remembering that it was the owner's uncle whose sprawling factories had made the family money that bought the owner his team. "Go ahead!" he bawled at the right fielder, who was hesitating halfway to the dugout. Boley nodded from the mound. When the outfielders were all out of the way he set himself and went into his windup. Boleslaw's windup was a beautiful thing to all who chanced to behold it unless they happened to root for another team. The pitch was more beautiful still. "I got it, I got it!" Andalusia cried from behind the plate, waving the ball in his mitt. He returned it to the pitcher triumphantly, as though he could hardly believe he had caught the Boleslaw screwball after only the first week of spring training. He caught the second pitch, too. But the third was unpredictably low and outside. Andalusia dived for it in vain. "Ball one!" cried the umpire. The catcher scrambled up, ready to argue. "He is right," Boley called graciously from the mound. "I am sorry, but my foot slipped. It

was a ball." "Thank you," said the umpire. T"P_ next screwball was a strike, though, and so were the thiee sinkers to the third manthough one of those caught a little piece of the bat and turned into an into-the-dirt foul. Boley came off the field to a spattering of applause. He stopped under the stands, on the lip of the dugout. "I guess I am a little rusty at that, Fogarty," he called. "Don't let me forget to pitch another inning or two before we play Baltimore next month." "I won't!" snapped Fogarty. He would have said more, but the owner's uncle was talking. "I don't know much about baseball, but that strikes me as an impressive performance. My congratulations." "You are right," Boley admitted. "Excuse me while I shower, and then we can resume this discussion some more. I think you are a better judge of baseball than you say." The owner's uncle chuckled, watching him go into the dugout. "You can laugh," said Fogarty bitterly. "You don't have to put up with that for a hundred fifty-four games, and spring training, and the Series." "You're pretty confident about making the Series?" Fogarty said simply, "Last year Boley win thirty-one games." The owner's uncle nodded, and shifted position uncomfortably. He was sitting with one leg stretched over a large black metal suitcase, fastened with a complicated lock. Fogarty asked, "Should I have one of the boys put that in the locker room for you?" "Certainly not!" said the owner's uncle. "I want it right here where I can touch it." He looked around him. "The fact of that matter is," he went on in a lower tone, "this goes up to Washington with me tomorrow. I can't discuss what's in it. But as we're among friends, I can mention that where it's going is the Pentagon." "Oh," said Fogarty respectfully. "Something new from the factories." "Something very new," the owner's uncle agreed, and he winked. "And I'd better get back to the hotel with it But there's one thing, Mr. Fogarty. I don't have much time for baseball, but it's a family affair, after all, and whenever I can help I mean, it just occurs to me that possibly, with the help of what's in this suitcase "That is, would you like me to see if I could help out?" "Help out how?" asked Fogarty suspiciously. "Well I really mustn't discuss what's in the suitcase. But would it hurt Boleslaw, for example, to be a little more, well, modest?" The manager exploded, "No." The owner's uncle nodded. "That's what I've thought. Well, I must go. Will you ask Mr. Boleslaw to give me a ring at the hotel so we can have dinner together, if it's convenient?" It was convenient, all right. Boley had always wanted to see how the other half lived; and they had a fine dinner, served right in the suite, with five waiters in attendance and four kinds of wine. Boley kept pushing the little glasses of wine away, but after all the owner's uncle was the owner's uncle, and if he thought it was all right It must have been pretty strong wine, because Boley began to have trouble following the conversation. It was all right as long as it stuck to earned-run averages and batting percentages, but then it got hard to follow, like a long, twisting grounder on a dry September field. Boley wasn't going to admit that, though. "Sure," he said, trying to follow; and "You say the fourth dimension?" he said; and, "You mean a time machine, like?" he said; but he was pretty confused. The owner's uncle smiled and filled the wine glasses again. Somehow the black suitcase had been unlocked, in a slow, difficult way. Things made out of crystal and steel were sticking out of it. "Forget about the time machine," said the owner's uncle patiently. "It's a military secret, anyhow. I'll thank you to forget the very words, because heaven knows what the General would think if he found out Anyway, forget it. What about you, Boley? Do you still say you can hit any pitcher who ever lived and strike out any batter?" "Anywhere," agreed Boley, leaning back in the deep cushions and watching the room go around and around. "Any time. lll bat their ears off." "Have another glass of wine, Boley," said the owner's uncle, and he began to take things out of the black suitcase. Boley woke up with a pounding in his' head like Snider, Mays and Mantle hammering Three-Eye League pitching. He moaned and opened one eye. Somebody blurry was holding a glass out to him. "Hurry up. Drink this." Boley shrank back. "I will not. That's what got me into this trouble in the first place." 'Trouble? You're in no trouble. But the game's about to

start and you've got a hangover." Ring a fire bell beside a sleeping Dalmation; sound the Charge in the ear of a retired cavalry major. Neither will respond more quickly than Boley to the words, "The game's about to start." He managed to drink some of the fizzy stuff in the glass and it was a miracle; like a triple play erasing a ninth-inning threat, the headache was gone. He sat up, and the world did not come to an end. In fact, he felt pretty good. He was being rushed somewhere by the blurry man. They were going very rapidly, and there were tall, bright buildings outside. They stopped. "We're at the studio," said the man, helping Boley out of a remarkable sort of car. "The stadium," Boley corrected automatically. He looked around for the lines at the box office but there didn't seem to be any. "The studio. Don't argue all day, will you?" The man was no longer so blurry. Boley looked at him and blushed. He was only a little man, with a worried look to him, and what he was wearing was a pair of vivid orange Bermuda shorts that showed his knees. He didn't give Boley much of a chance for talking or thinking. They rushed into a building, all green and white opaque glass, and they were met at a flimsy-looking elevator by another little man. "This one's shorts were aqua, and he had a bright red cummerbund tied around his waist. "This is him," said Boley's escort. The little man in aqua looked Boley up and down. "He's a big one. I hope to goodness we got a uniform to fit him for the Series." Boley cleared his throat. "Series?" "And you're in it!" shrilled the little man in orange. "This way to the dressing room." Well, a dressing room was a dressing room, even if this one did have color television screens all around it and machines that went wheepety-boom softly to themselves. Boley began to feel at home. He blinked when they handed his uniform to him, but he put it on. Back in the Steel & Coal League, he had sometimes worn uniforms that still bore the faded legend 100 Lbs. Best Fortified Gro-Chick, and whatever an owner gave you to put on was all right with Boley. Still, he thought to himself, kilts! It was the first time in Boley's life that he had ever worn a skirt. But when he was dressed it didn't look too bad, he thought especially because all the other players (it looked like fifty of them, anyway) were wearing the same thing. There is nothing like seeing the same costume on everybody in view to make it seem reasonable and right. Haven't the Paris designers been proving that for years? He saw a familiar figure come into the dressing room, wearing a uniform like his own. "Why, Coach Magill," said Boley, turning with his hand outstretched. "I did not expect to meet you here." The newcomer frowned, until somebody whispered in his ear. "Oh," he said, "you're Boleslaw." "Naturally I'm Boleslaw, and naturally you're my pitching coach, Magill, and why do you look at me that way when I've seen you every day for three weeks?" The man shook his head. "You're thinking of Granddaddy Jim," he said, and moved on. Boley stared after him. Granddaddy Jim? But Coach Magill was no granddaddy, that was for sure. Why, his eldest was no more than six years old. Boley put his hand against the wall to steady himself. It touched something metal and cold. He glanced at it. It was a bronze plaque, floor to ceiling high, and it was embossed at the top with the words World Series Honor Roll. And it listed every team that had ever won the World Series, from the day Chicago won the first Series of all in 1906 until until Boley said something out loud, and quickly looked around to see if anybody had heard him. It wasn't something he wanted people to hear. But it was the right time for a man to say something like that, because what that - crazy lump of bronze said, down toward the bottom, with only empty spaces below, was that the most recent team to win the World Series was the Yokahama Dodgers, and the year they won it in was 1998. 1998. A time machine, thought Boley wonderingly, I guess what he meant was a machine that traveled in time. Now, if you had been picked up in a time machine that leaped through the years like a jet plane leaps through space you might be quite astonished, perhaps, and for a while you might not be good for much of anything, until things calmed down. But Boley was born calm. He lived by his arm and his eye, and there was nothing to worry about there. Pay him his Class C league contract bonus, and he turns up in Western Pennsylvania, all ready to set a league record for no-hitters his first year.

Call him up from the minors and he bats .418 against the best pitchers in baseball. Set him down in the year 1999 and tell him he's going to play in the Series, and he hefts the ball once or twice and says, "I better take a couple of warm-up pitches. Is the spitter allowed?" They led him to the bullpen. And then there was the playing of the National Anthem and the teams took the field. And Boley got the biggest shock so far. "Magill," he bellowed in a terrible voice, "what is that other pitcher doing out on the mound?" The manager looked startled. "That's our starter, Padgett. He always starts with the number-two defensive lineup against right-hand batters when the outfield shift goes" "Magill! I am not any relief pitcher. If you pitch Boleslaw, you start with Boleslaw." Magill said soothingly, "It's perfectly all right. There have been some changes, that's all. You can't expect the rules to stay the same for forty or fifty years, can you?" "I am not a relief pitcher. I" "Please, please. Won't you sit down?" Boley sat down, but he was seething. "We'll see about that," he said to the world. "We'll just see." Things had changed, all right. To begin with, the stadium really was a stadium and not a stadium. And although it was a very large room it was not the equal of Ebbetts Field, much less the Yankee Stadium. There seemed to be an awful lot of bunting, and the ground rules confused Boley very much. Then the dugout happened to be just under what seemed to be a complicated sort of television booth, and Boley could hear the announcer screaming himself hoarse just overhead. That had a familiar sound, but "And here," roared the announcer, "comes the all-important nothing-and-one pitch! Fans, what a pitcher's duel this is! Delasantos is going into his motion! He's coming down! He's delivered it! And it's in there for a count of nothing and two! Fans, what a pitcher that Tiburcio Delasantos is! And here comes the all-important nothing-and-two pitch, andandyes, and he struck him out! He struck him out! He struck him out! It's a nohitter, fans! In the all-important second inning, it's a nohitter for Tiburcio Delasantos!" Boley swallowed and stared hard at the scoreboard, which seemed to show a score of 14-9, their favor. His teammates were going wild with excitement, and so was the crowd of players, umpires, cameramen and announcers watching the game. He tapped the shoulder of the man next to him. "Excuse me. What's the score?" "Dig that Tiburcio!" cried the man. "What a first-string defensive pitcher against left-handers he is!" "The score. Could you tell me what it is?" "Fourteen to nine. Did you see that" Boley begged, "Please, didn't somebody just say it was a no-hitter?" "Why, sure." The man explained: "The inning. It's a no-hit inning." And he looked queerly at Boley. It was all like that, except that some of it was worse. After three innings Boley was staring glassy-eyed into space. He dimly noticed that both teams were trotting off the field and what looked like a whole new corps of players were warming up when Manager Magill stopped in ' front of him. "You'll be playing in a minute," Magill said kindly. "Isn't the game over?" Boley gestured toward the field. "Over? Of course not. It's the third-inning stretch," Magill told him. "Ten minutes for the lawyers to file their motions and make their appeals. You know." He laughed condescendingly. "They tried to get an injunction against the bases-loaded pitchout. Imagine!" "Hah-hah," Boley echoed. "Mister Magill, can I go home?" "Nonsense, boy! Didn't you hear me? You're on as soon as the lawyers come off the field!" Well, that began to make sense to Boley and he actually perked up a little. When the minutes had passed and Magill took him by the hand he began to feel almost cheerful again. He picked up the rosin bag and flexed his fingers and said simply, "Boley's ready." Because nothing confused Boley when he had a ball or a bat in his hand. Set him down any time, anywhere, and he'd hit any pitcher or strike out any batter. He knew exactly what it was going to be like, once he got on the playing field. Only it wasn't like that at all. Boley's team was at bat, and the first man up got on with a bunt single. Anywa-y, they said it was a bunt single. To Boley it had seemed as though the enemy pitcher had charged beautifully off the mound, fielded the ball with machine-like precision and flipped it to the first-base player with inches and inches to spare for the out. But the umpires declared

interference by a vote of eighteen to seven, the two left-field umpires and the one with the field glasses over the batter's head abstaining; it seemed that the first baseman had neglected to say "Excuse me" to the runner. Well, the rules were the rules. Boley tightened his grip on his bat and tried to get a lead on the pitcher's style. That was hard, because the pitcher was fast. Boley admitted it to himself uneasily; he was very fast. He was a big monster of a player, nearly seven feet tall and with something queer and spardy about his eyes; and when he came down with a pitch there was a sort of a hiss and a splat, and the ball was in the catcher's hands. It might, Boley confessed, be a little hard to hit that particular pitcher, because he hadn't yet seen the ball in transit. Manager MagiU came up behind him in the on-deck spot and fastened something to his collar. "Your intercom," he explained. "So we can tell you what to do when you're up." "Sure, sure." Boley was only watching the pitcher. He looked sickly out there; his skin was a grayish sort of color, and those eyes didn't look right. But there wasn't anything sickly about the way he delivered the next pitch, a sweeping curve that sizzled in and spun away. The batter didn't look so good either same sickly gray skin, same giant frame. But he reached out across the plate and caught that curve and dropped it between third-base and short; and both men were safe. "You're on," said a tinny little voice in Boley's ear; it was the little intercom, and the manager was talking to him over the radio. Boley walked numbly to the plate. Sixty feet away, the pitcher looked taller than ever. Boley took a deep breath and looked about him. The crowd was roaring ferociously, which was normal enough except there wasn't any crowd. Counting everybody, players and officials and all, there weren't more than three or four hundred people in sight in the whole studio. But he could hear the screams and yells of easily fifty or sixty thousand. There was a man, he saw, behind a plateglass window who was doing things with what might have been records, and the yells of the crowd all seemed to come from loudspeakers under his window. Boley winced and concentrated on the pitcher. "I will pin his ears back," he said feebly, more to reassure himself than because he believed it. The little intercom on his shoulder cried in a tiny voice: "You will not, Boleslaw! Your orders are to take the first pitch!" "But, listen" "Take it! You hear me, Boleslaw?" There was a time when Boley would have swung just -_to prove who was boss; but the time was not then. He stood there while the big gray pitcher looked him over with those sparkling eyes. He stood there through the windup. And then the arm came down, and he didn't stand there. That ball wasn't invisible, not coming right at him; it looked as big and as fast as the Wabash CannonbaU and Boley couldn't help it, for the first time in his life he jumped a yard away, screeching. "Hit batter! Hit batter!" cried the intercom. "Take your base, Boleslaw." Boley biinked. Six of the umpires were beckoning him on, so the intercom was right. But still and all Boley had his pride. He said to the little button on his collar, "I am sorry, but I wasn't hit. He missed me a mile, easy. I got scared is all." "Take your base, you silly fool!" roared the intercom. "He scared you, didn't he? That's just as bad as hitting you, according to the rules. Why, there is no telling what incalculable damage has been done to your nervous system by this fright. So kindly get the bejeepers over to first base, Boleslaw, as provided in the rules of the game!" He got, but he didn't stay there long, because there was a pinch runner waiting for him. He barely noticed that it was another of the gray-skinned giants before he headed for the locker room and the showers. He didn't even remember getting out of his uniform; he only remembered that he, Boley, had just been through the worst experience of his life. He was sitting on a bench, with his head on his hands, when the owner's uncle came in, looking queerly out of place in his neat pin-striped suit. The owner's Uncle had to speak to him twice before his eyes focused. "They didn't let me pitch," Boley said wonderingly. "They didn't, want Boley to pitch." The owner's uncle patted his shoulder. "You were a guest star, Boley. One of the all-time greats of the game. Next game they're going to have Christy Mathewson. Doesn't that make you feel proud?" "They didn't let me pitch,"

said Boley. The owner's uncle sat down beside him. "Don't you see? You'd be out of place in this kind of a game. You got on base for them, didn't you? I heard the announcer say it myself; he said you filled the bases in the allimportant fourth inning. Two hundred million people were watching this game on television! And they saw you gpt on base!" "They didn't let me hit either," Boley said. There was a commotion at the door and the team came trotting in screaming victory. "We win it, we win it!" cried Manager Magitt. "Eighty-seven to eighty-three! What a squeaker!" Boley lifted his head to croak, "That's fine." But nobody was listening. The manager jumped on a table and yelled, over the noise in the locker room: "Boys, we pulled a close one out, and you know what that means. We're leading in the Series, eleven games to nine! Now let's just wrap those other two up, and" He was interrupted by a bloodcurdling scream from Boley. Boley was standing up, pointing with an expression of horror. The athletes had scattered and the trainers were working them over; only some of the trainers were using pliers and screwdrivers instead of towels and liniment. Next to Boley, the big gray-skinned pinch runner was flat on his back, and the trainer was lifting one leg away from the body "Murder!" bellowed Boley. "That fellow is murdering that fellow!" The manager jumped down next to him. "Murder? There isn't any murder, Boleslaw! What are you talking about?" Boley pointed mutely. The trainer stood gaping at him, with the leg hanging limp in his grip. It was completely removed from the torso it belonged to, but the torso seemed to be making no objections; the curious eyes were open but no longer sparkling; the gray skin, at closer hand, seemed metallic and cold. The manager said fretfully, "I swear, Boleslaw, you're a nuisance. They're just getting cleaned and oiled, batteries recharged, that sort of thing. So they'll be in shape tomorrow, you understand." "Cleaned," whispered Boley. "Oiled." He stared around e the room. All of the gray-skinned ones were being somehow disassembled; bits of metal and glass were sticking out of them. "Are you trying to tell me," he croaked, "that those fellows aren't fellows?" "They're ballplayers," said Manager Magill impatiently. "Robots. Haven't you ever seen a robot before? We're allowed to field six robots on a nine-man team, it's perfectly legal. Why, next year I'm hoping the Commissioner'll let us play a whole robot team. Then you'll see some baseball!" With bulging eyes Boley saw it was true. Except for a handful of flesh-and-blood players like himself the team was made up of man-shaped machines, steel for bones, electricity for blood, steel and plastic and copper cogs for muscle. "Machines," said Boley, and turned up his eyes. The owner's uncle tapped him on the shoulder worriedly. "It's time to go back," he said. So Boley went back. He didn't remember much about it, except that the owner's uncle had made him promise never, never to tell anyone about it, because it was orders from the Defense Department, you never could tell how useful a time machine might be in a war. But he did get back, and he woke up the next morning with all the signs of a hangover and the sheets kicked to shreds around his feet. He was still bleary when he staggered down to the coffee shop for breakfast. Magill the pitching coach, who had no idea that he was going to be granddaddy to Magill the series-winning manager, came solicitously over to him. "Bad night, Boley? You look like you have had a bad night." "Bad?" repeated Boley. "Bad? MagiU, you have got no idea. The owner's uncle said he would show me something that would learn me a little humility and, Magill, he came through. Yes, he did. Why, I saw a big bronze tablet with the names of the Series winners on it, and I saw" And he closed his mouth right there, because he remembered right there what the owner's uncle had said about closing his mouth. He shook his head and shuddered. "Bad," he said, "you bet it was bad." Magill coughed. "Gosh, that's too bad, Boley. I guess I mean, then maybe you wouldn't feel like pitching another couple of inningswell, anyway one inningtoday, because" Boley held up his hand. "Say no more, please. You want me to pitch today, Magill?" "That's about the size of it," the coach confessed. "I will pitch today," said Boley. "If that is what you want me to do, I will do it. I am now a reformed character. I will pitch tomorrow, too, if you want me to pitch tomorrow, and any other day you want me

to pitch. And if you do not want me to pitch, I will sit on the sidelines. Whatever you want is perfectly all right with me, Magill, because, Magill, They! Hey, Magill, what are you doing down there on the floor?" So that is why Boley doesn't give anybody any trouble any more, and if you tell him now that he reminds you of Dizzy Dean, why he'll probably shake your hand and thank you for the compliment even if you're a sportswriter, even. Oh, there still are a few special little things about him, of course not even counting the things like how many shut-outs he pitched last year (eleven) or how many home runs he hit (fourteen). But everybody finds him easy to get along with. They used to talk about the change that had come over him a lot and wonder what caused it. Some people said he got religion and others said he had an incurable disease and was trying to do good in his last few weeks on earth; but Boley never said, he only smiled; and the owner's uncle was too busy in Washington to be with the team much after that. So now they talk about other things when Boley's name comes up. For instance, there's his little business about the pitching machine when he shows up for batting practice (which is every morning, these days), he insists on hitting against real live pitchers instead of the machine. It's even in his contract. And then, every March he bets nickels against 'anybody around the training camp that'll bet with him that he can pick that year's Series winner. He doesn't bet more than that, because the Commissioner naturally doesn't like big bets from baUplayers. But, even for nickels, don't bet against him, because he isn't ever going to lose, not before 1999. The End

Wapshot's Demon by Frederik Pohl HE KEPT ME WAITING on a hard wooden bench for three-quarters of an hour before his secretary came wandering out, glanced casually at me, stopped to chat with the switchboard girl, drifted in my direction again, paused to straighten out the magazines on the waiting-room table, and finally came over to tell me that the Postal Inspector would see me now. I was in no mood to be polite, but I was very good. I marched in and put my briefcase on his desk and said, "Sir, I must protest this high-handed behavior. I assure you, I have no client whose activities would bring him in conflict in any way with the Post Office Department. I said as much to one of your staff on the phone, after I received your letter ordering me to appear here, but they" He stood up, smiling amiably, and shook my hand before I could get it out of the way. "That's all right," he said cheerfully. "That's perfectly all right. We'll straighten it out right away. What did you say your name was?" I told him my name and started to go on with what I had to say, but he wasn't listening. "Roger Barclay," he repeated, looking at a pile of folders on his desk. "Barclay, Barclay, Barclay. Oh, yes." He picked up one of the folders and opened it. "The Wapshot business," he said. The folder seemed to contain mostly large, bright-colored, flimsy-looking magazines entitled Secret, Most Secret, Top Secret and Shush! He opened one of them where a paper clip marked a place and handed it to me. There was a small ad circled in red crayon. "That's it," he said. "Your boy Wapshot." The ad was of no conceivable interest to me; I barely glanced at it, something about fortune-telling, it looked like, signed by somebody named Cleon Wapshot at an address in one of those little towns in Maine. I handed it back to the Postal Inspector. "I have already informed you," I said, "that I have no client involved in difficulties with the Post Office Department; that is not my sort of practice at all. And I most certainly have no client named aeon Wapshot." That took some of the wind out of his sails. He looked at me suspiciously, then took a scrawly piece of paper out of the folder and read it over, then looked at me suspiciously again. He handed over the piece of paper. "What about this, then?" he demanded. It was a penciled letter, addressed to the Postal Inspector in Eastport, Maine; it said: Dear Sir: Please send all further communications to my Attorney, Roger Barclay, Esq., of 404 Fifth

Avenue, New York, and oblige, Yours sincerely, Clean Wapshot Naturally, that was a puzzler to me. But I finally convinced the Postal Inspector that I'd never heard of this Wapshot. You could see he thought there was something funny about the whole thing and wasn't quite sure whether I had anything to do with it or not. But, after all, the Post Office Department is used to cranks and he finally let me go, and even apologized for taking my time, after I had assured him for the tenth time that I had nothing to do with Wapshot. That shows how wrong you can be. I hurried back to my office and went in through the private door down the hall. When I rang for Phoebe I had already put the affair out of my mind, as the sort of ridiculous time-waster that makes it so difficult to run a law office on schedule. Phoebe was bursting with messages; Frankel had called on the Harry's Hideaway lease, call him back; Mr. Zimmer had called three times, wouldn't leave a message; the process server had been unable to find the defendants in the Herlihy suit; one of the operatives from the Splendid Detective Agency was bringing in a confidential report at 3:30. "And there's a man to see you," she finished up. "He's been here over an hour; his name's, uh, WapShot, Cleon Wapshot." He was a plump little man with a crew cut. Not very much like any Down-East lobsterman I ever had imagined, but his voice was authentic of the area. I said, "Sir, you have caused me a great deal of embarrassment. What in heaven's name possessed you to give the Post Office my name?" He blinked at me mildly. "You're my lawyer." "Nonsense! My good man, there are some formalities to go through before" "Pshaw," he said, "here's your retainer, Mr. Barclay." He pushed a manila envelope toward me across the desk. I said, "But I haven't taken your case" "You will." "But the retainer I scarcely know what the figure should be. I don't even know what law you brought allegations were made." "Oh, postal fraud, swindling, fortune-telling, that kind of thing," he said. "Nothing to it. How much you figure you ought to have just to get started?" I sat back and looked him over. Fortune-telling! Postal fraud! But he had a round-faced honesty, you know, the kind of expression jurymen respect and trust. He didn't look rich and he didn't look poor; he had a suit on that was very far from new, but the overcoat was new, brandnew, and not cheap. And besides he had come right out and said what his business was; none of this fake air of "I don't need a lawyer, but if you want to pick up a couple bucks for saving me the trouble of writing a letter, you're on" that I see coming in to my office thirty times a week. I said briskly, "Five hundred dollars for a starter, Mr. Wapshot." He grinned and tapped the envelope. "Count 'er up," he said. I stared at him, but I did what he said. I dumped the contents of the manila envelope on my desk. There was a thick packet of U. S. Postal Money Orders a hundred and forty-one of them, according to a neatly penciled slip attached to them, made out variously to "aeon Wapshot," "Clion Wopshatt," "C. Wapshut" and a dozen other alternate forms, each neatly endorsed on the back by my new client, each in the amount of \$1.98. There was a packet, not quite so thick, of checks, all colors and sizes; ninety-six of these, all in the same amount of \$1.98. There was a still thinner packet of one-dollar bills thirty of them; and finally there were stamps amounting to 74c. I took a pencil and added them up: \$279.18 190.08 30.00 .74 \$500.00 Wapshot said anxiously, "That's all right, isn't it? I'm sorry about the stamps, but that's the way the orders come in and there's nothing I can do about it I tried and tried to turn them in, but they won't give me but half the value for them in the post office, and that's not right. That's wasteful. You can use them around here, can't you?" I said with an effort, "Sit down, Mr. Wapshot. Tell me what this is all about." Well, he told me. But whether I understood or didn't understand I can't exactly say. Parts of it made sense, and parts of it were obviously crazy. But what it all came to was that, with five appointments and a heavy day's mail untouched, I found myself in a cab with this deon Wapshot, beetling across town to a little fleabag hotel on the West Side. I didn't think the elevator was going to make it, but I have to admit I was wrong. It got us to the fifth floor, and Wapshot led the way down a hall where all the doors seemed to be ajar and the guests peeping impassively out

at us, and we went into a room with an unmade bed and a marble-topped bureau and a dripping shower in the pint-sized bath, and a luggage rack and on the luggage rack, a washing machine. Or anyway, it looked like a washing machine. Wapshot put his hand on it with simple pride. "My Semantic Polarizer," he explained. I followed him into the room, holding my breath. There was a fine, greasy film of grit on the gadget Wapshot had not been clever enough to close the window to the airshaft, which appeared to double as a garbage chute for the guests on the upper stories. Under the gritas I say, a washing machine. One of the small light-housekeeping kinds: a drawn aluminum pail, a head with some sort of electric business inside. And a couple of things that didn't seem connected with washing clothes two traps, one on either side of the pail. The traps were covered with wire mesh, and both of them were filled with white cards. "Here," said Wapshot, and picked one of the cards out of the nearest trap. It was a tiny snapshot, like the V-mail letters, photographically diminished, soldiers overseas used to send. I read it without difficulty: Dear Mr. Wapshot, My Husband was always a good Husband to me, not counting the Drink, but when his Cousin moved in upstairs he cooled off to me. He is always buying her Candy and Flowers because he promised her Mother he would take care of her after the Mother, who was my Husband's Aunt, died. Her Television is always getting broken and he has to go up to fix it, sometimes until four o'clock in the Morning. Also, he never told me he had an Aunt until she moved in. I enclose \$1 Dollar and .98 Cents as it says in your ad. in SHUT UP!, please tell me, is she really his Cousin? I looked up from the letter. Wapshot took it from me, glanced at it, shrugged. "I get a lot of that kind," he said. "Mr. Wapshot, are you confessing that you are telling fortunes by mail?" "No!" He looked upset. "Didn't I make you understand? It hasn't got anything to do with fortunes. Questions that have a yes or no answer, that's all if I can give them a definite yes or a definite no, I do it and keep the dollar ninety-eight. If I can't I give back the money." I stared at him, trying to tell if he was joking. He didn't look as though he was joking. In the airshaft something went whiz-pop; a fine spray of grit blew in off the window sill. Wapshot shook his head reproachfully. "Throwing their trash down again. Mr. Barclay, I've told the desk clerk a dozen times" "Forget the desk clerk! What's the difference between what you said and fortune-telling?" He took a deep breath. "I swear, Mr. Barclay," he said sadly, "I don't think you listen. I went all through this in your office." "Do it again." He shrugged. "Well," he said, "you start with Clerk Maxwell. He was a man who discovered a lot of things, and one of the things he discovered he never knew about" I yelled, "Now, how could he" "Just listen, Mr. Barclay. It was something that they call 'Maxwell's Demon.' You know what hot air is?" I said, meaning it to hurt, "I'm learning." "No, no, not that kind of hot air. I mean just plain hot air, like you might get out of a radiator. It's hot because the molecules in it are moving fast. Understand? Heat is fast molecules, cold is slow molecules. That's the only difference." He was getting warmed up. "Now, ordinary air," he went on, "is a mixture of molecules at different speeds. Some move fast, some move slow; it's the average that gives you your temperature. What Clerk Maxwell said, and he said it kind of as a joke, you know except a genius never really jokes, and never really makes a mistake; even the things he doesn't really mean sometimes turn out to be true Anyway, what Clerk Maxwell said was, 'Wouldn't it be nice if we could train a little demon to stand in the window of a house. He could direct the fast-moving molecules inside, giving us heat, and direct the slow-moving ones into, say, the kitchen refrigerator giving us cold.' You follow me so far?" I laughed. "Ha-ha. But I'm not a fool, Mr. Wapshot, and I have had a certain amount of education. I am aware that there is a law of entropy that" "Ha-ha," he interrupted. "Hold on for a minute, Mr. Barclay. I heard all about the law of entropy, which says that high and low temperatures tend to merge and average out, instead of separating. I heard about it, you heard about it, and even Maxwell heard about it. But there was a German fellow name of Hilsch, and he didn't hear about it. Because what he did, Mr. Barclay, was to invent

something called the 'Hilsch Tube,' and all the Hilsch tube is is Maxwell's demon come to life. Honest. It really works. You blow into it it's a kind of little pipe with a joint sticking out of it, the simplest-looking little thing you ever saw and hot air comes out of one end, cold air comes out of the other. Don't take my word for it," he said hurriedly, holding up his hand. "Don't argue with me. After World War II, they brought back a couple of those things from Germany, and they're all over the country now. They work." I said patiently, "Mr. Wapshot, what has this got to do with fortune-telling?" He scowled. "It isn't fortune Well, never mind that. So we take my Semantic Polarizer. I put into it a large sample of particles what we call a 'universe.' These particles are microfilmed copies of letters people have sent me, along with their checks for a dollar ninety-eight, just like I told them to do in my ads. I run the Polarizer for a while, until the particles in the 'universe' are thoroughly randomized, and then I start tapping off the questions. The ones that come out at this end, the answer is 'yes.' The ones that come out at the other, 'no.' I have to admit," he confessed, a little embarrassed, "that I can only pull about sixty per cent out before the results begin getting unreliable the ones that come off slowly are evidently less highly charged than the ones that come off right away, and so there's a chance of error. But the ones that come off early, Mr. Barclay, they're for sure. After all," he demanded, "what else can they be but definite? Don't forget, the particles are exactly alike in every respect shape, color, weight, size, texture, appearance, feel, everything every respect but one. The only difference is, for some the answer is 'yes,' for some the answer is 'no.'" I stood looking at him silently. A bottle whizzed and splintered in the airshaft; we both ducked. I said, "It works?" "It works," he said solemnly. "You've tried it out?" He grinned almost for the first time. "You took my case, didn't you? That was a yes. Your price was five hundred? That was a yes. It works, Mr. Barclay. As I see it, that ends the discussion." And so it did, of course permanently. The Semantic Polarizer was remarkably easy to run. I played with it for a while, and then I sent the white-haired bellboy down for the Sunday papers. He looked at me as if I was some kind of an idiot. "Excuse me," he said, scratching his head, "but isn't today Wednes" "I want the Sunday papers," I told him. "Here." Well, the five-dollar bill got the papers for me, but obviously he still thought I was crazy. He said: "Excuse me, but did the gemmun in this room go out?" "You mean Mr. Wapshot?" I asked him. "Yes. That's right. He went out. And now, if you will kindly do the same..." I locked the door behind him. Oh, Wapshot had gone out, all right. I pulled the papers apart they were a stack nearly a foot high and crumpled them section by section, and when I had dumped them down the airshaft piece by piece, stare how I might, lean as far out as I would, I could see nothing at the bottom of the shaft but paper. So much for Cleon Wapshot, gone early to join the immortals. I checked the room over carefully. There was one small blood spot on the floor, but in that room it hardly mattered. I pulled the leg of the chair over to cover it, put the Semantic Analyzer in its crate, turned off the light and rang for the elevator. The blasted thing weighed a ton, but I managed it. The elevator starter at my office gave me a lot of trouble, but I finally got the thing into a freight elevator and for another five bucks to the porter in the private door to my office. Phoebe heard me moving around and came trotting in with a face like cataclysm. "Mr. Barclay," she cried, "they're here! They've been waiting ever since you left with Mr. Wapshot." "God rest him," I said. "Who are you talking about?" "Why, the men from the Bar Association," she explained. It had completely slipped my mind. I patted her hand. "There," I said. "Show them in, my dear." The two men from the Bar Association came in like corpse robbers. "Mr. Barclay," the fat one said, "speaking for the Committee, we cannot accept your explanation that \$11,577.16 of the Hoskins Estate was expended for 'miscellany.' Lacking a more detailed accounting, we have no choice but to" "I understand perfectly," I told him, bowing. "You wish me to pay back to make up the deficit out of my own pocket." He scowled at me. "Why yes, that for a starter," he said sternly. "But there is also the

matter of the Annie Sprayragen Trust Fund, where the item of \$9,754.08 for 'general expense' has been challenged by" "That too," I said. "Gentlemen, I shall pauperize myself to make good these sums. My whole fortune will go to it, if necessary." "Fortune!" squawked the short, thin one. "That's the trouble, Barclay! We've talked to your bank, and they say you haven't two dimes to rub together!" "Disbarment!" snarled the fat one. "That's why we're here, Barclay!" It was time to make an end. I gave up the pretense of politeness. "Gentlemen," I said crisply, "I think not." They stared. "Barclay," snapped the fat one, "bluff will get you" "There's no bluff." I walked over to my desk, patting the crate of the Semantic Polarizer on the way. I pretended to consult my calendar. "Be good enough to return on Monday next," I told them. "I shall have certified checks for the full amounts ready at that time." The short, thin one said uncertainly, "Why should we let you stall?" "What else can you do? The money's gone, gentlemen. If you want it back, be here on Monday. And now, good-day." Phoebe appeared to show them out. And I got down to work. Busy, busy, busy. Phoebe was busier than I, at thatafter the first day. I spent the rest of that day printing out yes-or-no questions on little squares of paper, microfilming them and bouncing them through the hopper of the Semantic Polarizer. While the drum of the machine spun and bounced, I stood and gloated. Wapshot's Demon! And all he could think to use it for was a simple mail-order business, drudgery instead of wealth beyond dreaming. With a brain that could create the Semantic Polarizer, he was unable to see beyond the cash value of a fortune-telling service. Well, it was an easy way to pay his bills, and obviously he wasn't much interested in wealth. But I, however, was. And that was why I ran poor Phoebe ragged. To the bookmakers; to the bank; to the stockbrokers; to the track; to the numbers runners; back to the office. I loaned her my pigskin case, and when that wasn't big enough the numbers bank, for instance, paid off in fives and tens she took a hundred dollars out of the bottom file drawer and bought a suitcase. Because it was, after all, simple enough to get rich in a hurry. Take a race at Aqueduct; there are eight horses entered, maybe; write a slip for each one: Will win the first at Aqueduct today? Repeat for the second race, the third race, all the races to the end of the day; run them through the Polarizer, pick out the cards that come through the "yes" hopper And place your bets. Numbers? You need thirty slips. Will the first digit of the winning number be 1, 2, 3, 4etc. Ten slips for the first digit, ten for the second, ten for the third; pick out the three that come out "yes," put them together, and A bet on the numbers pays odds of 600 to one. It took me thirty-six hours to work out the winners of the next three weeks' races, fights, ball games and tennis matches; the stock quotations of a hundred selected issues, and the numbers that would come up on the policy wheel. And, I say this, they were the happiest thirty-six hours of my life. Of all my life. It was a perfectly marvelous time, and too bad that it couldn't go on. I had everything ready: My suitcase of currency, my lists of the bets to place in the immediate future, my felt-lined wardrobe trunk for transporting the Polarizer, my anonymous letter to the manager of the late Cleon Wapshot's hotel, directing his attention to the airshaft; even my insulting note to the Committee on Disbarments of the Bar Association. My passport was in order, my reservation by Air France to New Guinea was confirmed, and I was only waiting for Phoebe to come back with the tickets. I had time to kill. And Curiosity is a famed killer. Of cats. Of time. And of other things. When Phoebe came back she pounded on the door for nearly an hour, knowing I was in there, knowing I would miss my plane, begging me to come out, to answer, to speak to her. But what was the use? I took my list of bets and tore it in shreds. I took the Polarizer and smashed it to jangling bits. And then I waited. Good-by, Wall Street! good-by, Kentucky Derby. Goodby, a million dollars a month. I suppose they'll find Wapshot's body sooner or later, and there isn't a doubt that they'll trace it back to methe bellboy, the postal inspector, even Phoebe might provide the link. Say, a week to find the body; another week, at the most, to put the finger on me. Two months for the trial,

and sentence of execution a month or two after. Call it four months from date until they would put me in the chair. I wish I hadn't asked the Polarizer one certain question. I wish I were going still to be alive, four months from date.

About this Title

This eBook was created using ReaderWorks™Standard, produced by OverDrive, Inc.

For more information on ReaderWorks, visit us on the Web at "www.readerworks.com"