

PREPOSTEROUS

by Fredric Brown

Mr. Weatherwax buttered his toast carefully. His voice was firm. "My dear," he said, "I want it definitely un-derstood that there shall be no more such trashy read-ing around this apartment."

"Yes, Jason. I did not know—"

"Of course you didn't. But it is your responsibility to know what our son reads."

"I shall watch more closely, Jason. I did not see the magazine when he brought it in. I did not know it was here."

"Nor would I have known had I not, after I came in last night, accidentally happened to displace one of the pillows on the sofa. The periodical was hidden under it, and of course I glanced through it."

The points of Mr. Weatherwax's mustache quivered with indignation. "Such utterly ridiculous concepts, such impossibly wild ideas. Astounding Stories, indeed!"

He took a sip of his coffee to calm himself.

"Such inane and utterly preposterous tripe," he said. "Travel to other galaxies by means of space warps, whatever they are. Time machines, teleportation and tele-kinesis. Balderdash, sheer balderdash."

"My dear Jason," said his wife, this time with just the faintest touch of asperity, "I assure you I shall watch Gerald's reading closely hereafter. I fully agree with you."

"Thank you, my dear," Mr. Weatherwax said, more kindly. "The minds of the young should not be poisoned by such wild imaginings."

He glanced at his watch and rose hastily, kissed his wife and left.

Outside the apartment door he stepped into the anti-gravity shaft and floated gently down two hundred-odd floors to street level where he was lucky enough to catch anatomcab immediately; "Moonport," he snapped to the robot driver, and then sat back and closed his eyes to catch the telepathecast. He'd hoped to catch a bulletin on the Fourth Martian War but it was only another rou-tine report from Immortality Center, so he quirtled.

