

Probing into the mysteries of the human brain, so convenient and puzzling a model of her own, she found the pattern that could fix a mind forever in one unreasoning conviction. She chose the simplest and best for her purpose: *I love Dulcie*. She insinuated that pattern into the mind of every man, woman and child within her reach—within her hemisphere—and canceled out all the problems of discipline, training, tradition, politics, civil government, military organization, law enforcement—seven-tenths, let's say, of the human picture—at one stroke.

The second thing was even simpler. She deduced the existence of her opponent, searched for him on wavelengths which should be as perceptible to him as to her, and worked out a system of communication.

It was not necessary for men or machines, to go to war. DLC could say to DCRM, "I move such a force here." DCRM could reply, "Then I move here."

Not every game had to be played out. When Dulcie lost, she paid. Machines could be destroyed more efficiently by their owner than by the enemy; human beings, asked to die, did it tidily and conveniently. There was no cruelty or humor in it for Dulcie; it simply made her books balance.

And when, in spite of her best fumbling efforts, her human beings—her counters—diminished until none were left, what was she to do but search in the vastness of time for more? She began tentatively, feeling back along the ancestral lines of the last to die, touching here an ancestor more susceptible than the rest, here another—

JONES mumbled something. "What was that?" Myra asked Kalish. "Did you get it?"

Kalish was carrying some typed papers; the inked notes at the bottom of them, in his own handwriting, were not quite dry. His face had a peculiar expression, a little like that of a man who thinks he has just been wounded, but hasn't felt the pain.

"Latin this time," he said. "*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*. 'It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country.'"

The link strained tight. Jones felt his love gathering inside him like a fist: suffocating love, bursting love. He knew it all now. He knew what Dulcie wanted him for and the joy of being chosen was more than he could bear.

His heart burst with it.

"Click," said Dulcie.

"Click," answered Decorum.

And Jones did.

—DAMON KNIGHT

ONE WAY

*I thought of every way to save
Hal from the Lydna Project and
failed . . . but the women didn't!*

By MIRIAM ALLEN DEFORD

Illustrated by Irv DOCKTOR

WE had the driver let us off in the central district and took a copter-taxi back to Homefield. There's no disgrace about it, of course; we just didn't feel like having all the neighbors see the big skycar with LYDNA PROJECT painted on its side, and then having them drop in casually to express what they would call interest and we would know to be curiosity.

There are people who boast that their sons and daughters have been picked for Lydna. What is there to boast about? It's pure chance, within limits.

And Hal is our only child and we love him.

Lucy didn't say a word all the way back from saying good-by

to him. Lucy and I have been married now for 27 years and I guess I know her about as well as anybody on Earth does. People who don't know her so well think she's cold. But I knew what feelings she was crushing down inside her.

Besides, I wasn't feeling much like talking myself. I was remembering too many things:

Hal at about two, looking up at me—when I would come home dead-tired from a hard day of being chewed at by half a dozen bosses right up to the editor-in-chief whenever anything went the least bit out of kilter—with a smile that made all my tiredness disappear. Hal, when I'd pick him up at school, proudly dis-

playing a Cybernetics Approval Slip (and ignoring the fact that half the other kids had one, too). Hal the day I took him to the Beard Removal Center, certain that he was a man, now that he was old enough for depilation. Hal that morning two weeks ago, setting out to get his Vocational Assignment Certificate . . .

That's when I stopped remembering.

It had been five years after our marriage before they let us start a child: some question about Lucy's uncle and my grandmother. Most parents aren't as old as we are when they get the news and usually have other children left, so it isn't so bad.

WHEN we got home, Lucy still was silent. She took off her scarf and cloak and put them away, and then she pushed the button for dinner without even asking me what I wanted. I noticed, though, that she was ordering all the things I like. We both had the day off, of course, to go and say good-by to Hal—Lucy is a technician at Hydroponics Center.

I felt awkward and clumsy. Her ways are so different from mine; I explode and then it's over—just a sore place where it hurts if I touch it. Lucy never explodes, but I knew the sore place would be there forever, and getting

worse instead of better.

We ate dinner in silence, though neither of us felt hungry, and had the table cleared. Then it was nearly 19 o'clock and I had to speak.

"The takeoff will be at 19:10," I said. "Want me to tune in now? Last year, when Mutro was Solar President, he gave a good speech before the kids left."

"Don't turn it on at all!" she said sharply. Then, in a softer voice, she added: "Of course, Frank, turn it on whenever you like. I'll just go to my room and open the soundproofing."

There were still no tears in her eyes.

I thought of a thousand things to say: Don't you want to catch a glimpse of Hal in the crowd going up the ramp? Mightn't they let the kids wave a last farewell to their folks listening and watching in? Mightn't something in the President's speech make us feel a little better?

But I heard myself saying, "Never mind, Lucy. Don't go. I'll leave the thing off."

I didn't want to be alone. I wanted Lucy there with me.

So we sat out the whole time of the visicast, side by side on the window-couch, holding hands. I'll say this for the neighbors—they must all have known, for Hal was the first to be selected from Homefield in nearly 40

years, and the newscast must have announced it over and over! but not a single person on the whole 62 floors of the house butted in on us. Not even that snoopy student from Venus in 47-14, who's always dropping in on other tenants and taking notes on "the mores of Earth Aborigines." People can be very decent sometimes. We needn't have worried about coming home in the Lydna Project bus.

It was no good trying to keep my mind on anything else. Whether I wanted to or not, I had to relive the two last hours we'd ever have with Hal.

It couldn't mean to him what it meant to us. We were losing; he was both losing and gaining. We were losing our whole lives for 21 years past; he was, too, but he was entering a new life we would never know anything about. No word ever comes from Lydna; that's part of the project. Nobody even knows where it is for sure, though it's supposed to be one of the outer asteroids.

Both boys and girls are sent and there must be marriages and children—though probably the death-rate is pretty high, for every year they have to select 200 more from Earth to keep the population balanced. We would never know if our son married there, or whom, or when he died. We would never see our grand-

children, or even know if we had any.

HAL was a good son and I think we were fairly good parents and had made his childhood happy. But at 21, faced with a great, mysterious adventure and an unknown and exciting future, a boy can't be expected to be drowned in grief at saying good-by to his humdrum old father and mother. It might have been tougher for him 200 years ago, when they hadn't learned to decondition children early from parental fixations. But no youngster today would possess that kind of unwholesome dependency. If he did, he would never have been selected for Lydna in the first place.

That's one comfort we have—it's a sort of proof we had reared a child far above the average. It was just weakness in me to half wish that Hal hadn't been so healthy, so handsome, so intelligent, so fine in character.

They were a wonderful lot. We said our good-bys in an enormous room of the spaceport, with this year's 200 selectees there from all over Earth, each with the relatives and whoever else had permission to make the last visit. I suppose it's a matter of accommodations and transportation, for nobody's allowed more than three. So it was mostly

parents, with a few brothers, sisters and sweethearts or friends. The selectees themselves choose the names. After all, they've had two weeks after they were notified to say good-by to everyone else who matters to them.

Most of the time, all I could keep my mind on was Hal, trying to fix forever in my memory every last detail of him. We have dozens of sound stereos, of course, but this was the last time.

Still, it's my business at the News Office, and has been for 30 years, to observe people and form conclusions about them, so I couldn't help noticing with a professional eye some of the rest of the selectees. (This farewell visit is a private affair, and the press is barred, which is why I'd never been there before.)

There were two kinds of selectees that stood out, in my mind. One was those who had nobody at all to see them off. Completely alone, poor kids—orphans, doubtless, with no families and apparently not even friends near enough to matter. But, in a way, they would be the happiest; life on Earth couldn't have been very rewarding for them, and on Lydna they might find companionship. (If only companionship in misery, I thought—but I shied away from that. In our business, there are always leaks; we know—or guess—a few things about Lydna no-

body else does, outside the authorities themselves. But we keep our mouths shut.)

The ones that tore my hearts were the boys and girls in love. They never take married people for Lydna, but a machine can't tell what a boy or girl is feeling about another girl or boy, and it's a machine that does the selecting. There's no use putting up an argument, for, once made, the choice is inexorable and unchangeable. In my work as a newsgatherer, I've heard some terrible stories. There have been suicide pacts and murders.

YOU could tell the couples in love. Not that there were any scenes. If there had been any in the two weeks past, they were over. But anybody who has learned to read human reactions, as I have, could recognize the agony those youngsters were going through.

I felt a deep gratitude that Hal wasn't one of them. He'd had his share of adolescent affairs, of course, but I was sure he was still just playing around. He'd seen a lot of Bet Milen, a girl a class ahead of him in school and college, but I didn't think she meant more to him than any of the others. If she had, she'd have been along to say good-by, but he'd asked for only the two of us. She was now a laboratory



assistant in our hospital and could easily have gotten the time off.

It was growing late, almost midnight, and Lucy and I had to be at work tomorrow, no matter how we felt. I forced myself to talk, with Lucy's silent pain smothering me like a force-blanket. I made an effort and cleared my throat.

"Lucy, go to bed and turn on the hypno and try to get some sleep."

Lucy stood up obediently, but she shook her head. "You go, dear," she said, her voice firm. "I can't. I—"

The roof buzzer sounded. Somebody had landed in a cop-ter and wanted us.

"Don't answer," I said quickly. "There's nobody we want to see—"

But she had already pushed the button to open the door.

It was Bet Milen, the girl Hal used to go around with.

I braced myself. This might be bad. She might have cared more for Hal than we had guessed.

But she didn't look grief-stricken. She looked excited, and determined, and a little bit frightened.

She scarcely glanced at me. She went right up to Lucy and took both Lucy's hands in hers.

"Well," she said in a clipped,

tense voice, "we made it."

Then Lucy broke for the first time. The tears ran down her face and she didn't even wipe them away. "Are you *certain*?"

"Positive. And I got word to him. We'd agreed on a code. That's why he didn't want me there today—we couldn't trust ourselves not to betray it, either way."

I stood there staring at them, bewildered.

"What's this all about?" I demanded. "Have you two cooked up some crazy scheme to rescue Hal? I hope to heaven not! It would ruin all of us, including him!"

THE wild daydreams I'd had myself flashed through my mind—the drug that would seem to kill him and wouldn't, the anonymous false accusation of subversion, the previous secret marriage. All impossible, all fatal.

Lucy disengaged her hands from the girl's and slipped her arm through mine.

"You tell him, Bet," she said gently. "You're the one who should."

I'd never noticed how pretty the girl was till then, when she stood there with her face flushed and her eyes straight on mine. A pang went through me; if only she and Hal could have—

"No, Mr. Sturt," she said, "we

haven't rescued Hal. He's gone. But we've rescued part of him. I'm going to have his baby."

"Bet's going to live with us and be our daughter, Frank," Lucy explained. "Hal and she and I worked it out in these two weeks, after they came to me and told me how they felt about each other. We couldn't tell you till we were sure; I couldn't bear to have you hope and then be disappointed—it would be enough for me to have to suffer that."

"That is, I'll come if you want me here, Mr. Sturt," said Bet.

I had to sit down before I could speak. "Of course I want you. But what about your own family?"

"I haven't any. My mother's dead and my father's an engineer on Ganymede and gets home on leave about once in three years. I've been living in a youth hostel."

"But look here—" I turned to Lucy—"how on Earth can you know? Two weeks or less is no time—"

Lucy gave me a look I recognized, the patient one of the scientist for the layman.

"The Chow-Visalius test, dear. One day after the fertilized ovum starts dividing—"

"And I ran it myself every day for over a week. That's one of my jobs in the lab and it was easy to slip in another specimen. And

it didn't, and it didn't and I went nearly out of my mind—"

"Every time Hal entered the apartment, I'd look at him and he'd shake his head," Lucy interrupted. "It meant everything to him. And it would just have broken my heart—"

"Mine, too," Bet said softly. "And his. And today was the last chance. I was scared to try it. This afternoon at 14:30, just before the farewell visits, was the deadline for viz messages to any of them. If I'd had to send mine without the word we'd agreed on that would tell him it was all right— But it was, at last! And now he knows, even if I never—even if we never— Excuse me, please, it's been a strain. I'm afraid I'm going to bawl."

WE let her alone. Kids nowadays hate to be fussed over.

Us, we'd lost our son, and that was going to stay with us forever. But now we would have his child to love and—

An appalling thought struck me suddenly. I can't imagine why I hadn't realized it sooner. All this emotion, I suppose.

"Good God!" I cried. "An illegal child! We can't keep it!"

"Nobody's going to know," Lucy replied calmly. "Bet's going to live with us, and when it starts to show, she's going to take her allowed leave. We'll take ours,

too, and we'll all go on a trip—to Mars, maybe, or Venus—one of the settled colonies where we can rent a house. Babies don't have to be born in hospitals, you know; our ancestors had them right at home. She's strong and healthy and I know what to do. Then we'll come back here and we'll have a baby with us that we adopted wherever we were. Nobody will ever know."

"Look," I said in a voice I tried to keep from rising. "There are four billion people on Earth and about 28 billion in the colonized Solar planets. Every one of those people is on record at Central Cybernetics. How do you suppose you're going to get away with the phony adoption of a non-existent child? The first time you have to take it to a baby clinic, they'll find it has no card."

"I thought of that," Lucy said, "and it can be done, because it must. Frank, for heaven's sake, use your wits! You're a news-gatherer. You know all sorts of people everywhere."

"I don't know any machines. And it's machines that handle the records."

"Machines under the supervision of humans."

"Sure," I said sarcastically. "I just go to my ex-news-gatherer pal who feeds the records to Io or Ceres and say, 'Look, old fellow, do me a favor, will you?"

My wife wants to adopt a baby from your colony, so just make up the names of two people and give them a life-check, invent their ancestors back to the time Central Cybernetics was established, and then slip in cards for their marriage, and the birth of their child—I'll let you know later whether to make it a boy or a girl—and then their deaths; and then my wife and I can adopt that made-up baby."

"What kind of blackmailing hold do you think I have on any record official," I asked angrily, "to make him do a thing like that and keep his mouth shut about it? I could be eliminated for treason for even making such a suggestion."

"Frank, *think!* Surely there must be some way!"

AND then it struck me. "Wait! I just got an idea. When I said 'treason,' just now— It might barely be possible—"

"Oh, what?"

"It would have to be Mars, the North Polar Cap colony. The K-Alph Conspiracy messed things up there badly."

"I remember, Mr. Sturt!" Bet said excitedly. "They wrecked everything in the three months before the rebellion was crushed, didn't they?"

"Everything including their cybernetics equipment. Central

doesn't want it known, but I have inside information that it's still not in going condition. That colony is full of children who have never been registered. And I doubt if it will be in 100 per cent shape for the best part of another year. Those hellions really did a job. Let's see—this is the end of Month Two. We'd have to get away around Month Eight at the latest and the baby would be born—when exactly, Bet?"

"Early in Month Twelve. We could all be back here again by the first of next year, or even by the end of Month Thirteen."

"Well, I have enough accumulated leave for that and I guess you have too, Lucy; neither of us has taken more than two or three weeks for years. But what about you, Bet? You've been working less than a year."

"I can borrow it. Our director is crazy about travel and she'll be all for it when I tell her I have a chance to go to Mars for a long visit. Besides, she knows about Hal and me—I mean the way we are about each other—and she'll understand that I'd want to get away for a while now."

Asher, my editor-in-chief, would feel the same way, I thought, and so would Lucy's boss.

"I knew you'd find a way," remarked my wife complacently.

I looked at the telechron.

"We've all got to be at work in seven hours," I said, "if we expect to get through before the end of the afternoon. What say we turn in?"

"You stay here with us, Bet," said Lucy. "You parked your copter in our port, didn't you? Frank, I think we need a drink."

I pushed the buttons. Nobody said anything, but somehow it was a toast to Hal. I know the liquor had to get past a lump in my throat and the women were both crying. It wasn't like my self-contained Lucy. I guess she thought so herself, for she braced herself. But her voice was still trembling when she turned to Bet.

"A year from now," she said, "we'll all be back here in this room and, this time, part of Hal will be here with us—his son, our little Hal."

"It might be our little Hallie." Bet smiled through her tears. "It will be ten weeks before I can run the Schuster test to find out."

"It won't make any difference. Hal will never know that, but he'll know, way out there on Lydna, that his baby has been born. He'll know, even though he can never see it—or us."

LUCY blinked, then went on bravely. "Every time he looks in a mirror there, he'll say to him-

self, 'Well, back on Earth, there's a little tyke with my blue eyes and my curly hair and my mouth and nose and chin, who's going to grow up to be tall and straight like me—or maybe like Bet, but also a lot like me.'

"And as he grows older, he can think back to the way he was as a child and a boy and a man, and know that his son, or his daughter, will be feeling and thinking and looking some day just about the way he himself is then, and it will be a link with Earth and with us—"

That was when I had to go to the window and look out for a long time to pull myself together before I could face them again.

Lydna is top-top secret, but as I've said before, we newsgatherers get inside information.

I have a pretty shrewd idea of what the mysterious Lydna Project is. It's to alter human beings so they can adapt to the colonization of outer space.

The medics do things to them

to enable them and their descendants to resist every possible condition of temperature and radiation and gravity. They have to alter the genes—acquired characters would be of use only in a short-term project, and this is long-term. But you can't alter genes without affecting the individual.

We'd have Hal's normal child.

But when Hal got to Lydna, he and the rest of them would be shocked and sick for a while at sight of some of the inhabitants. And if he had any children on Lydna, we, back here, would scarcely recognize them as human. Some of them might have extra limbs. Some might have eyes and ears in odd places. Some might have lungs outside their bodies, or brains without a skull.

By that time, Hal himself would have got over being sick—unless, some time, he got hold of a mirror and remembered the boy he used to be.

—MIRIAM ALLEN deFORD

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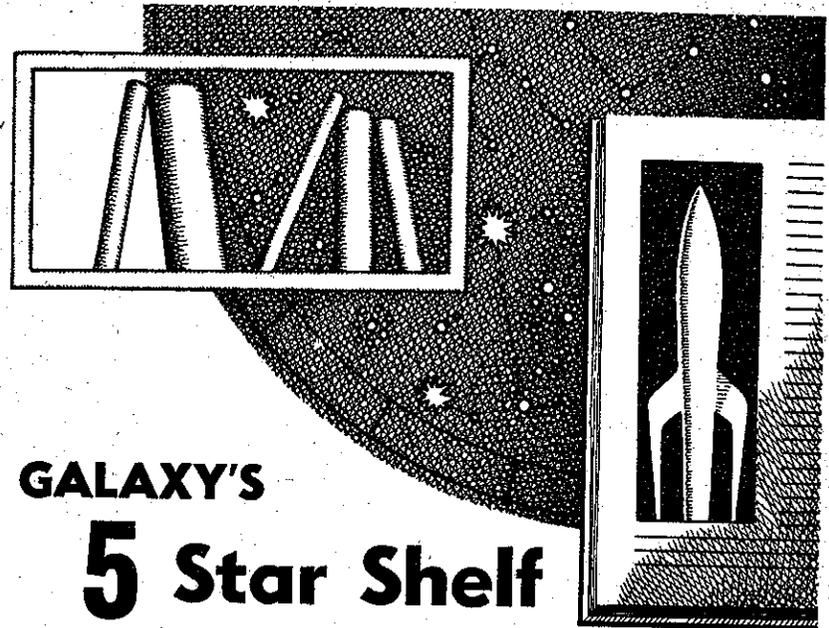
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SATELLITE ONE by Jeffery
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WHEN I first began reading this book, I said to myself, "Ochone! Another one of those stuffy British jobs!" But when I finally laid it down, I said—out loud this time—"Eureka! The best novel on the first space station yet to appear!"

The moral: don't always let your momentary distaste for a writing style deter you from further reading. This book opens with a pretty pompous introduc-

tory chapter, but once you get by that, you are into a genuinely enthralling account of the planning, building, launching, and (in space) continuous enlargement of the first "Earth satellite vehicle."

Like Arthur Clarke's rocket in his *Prelude to Space*, this project is primarily a British one, though there are many scientists of other nationalities involved, too. Indeed, the book is a fine parallel—and extension—of the Clarke tale. As in that book, the rocket is launched in Australia and (also as with the Clarke) there are no