

Galaxy

SCIENCE FICTION

ALL ORIGINAL STORIES • NO REPRINTS!

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Cover by MEL HUNTER, Showing RESCUE ABOVE THE MOON

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A Gleeb for Earth

By CHARLES SHAFHAUSER

*Not to be or not to not be . . .
that was the not-question for
the invader of the not-world.*

Illustrated by EMSH

DEAR Editor:
My 14 year old boy, Ronnie, is typing this letter for me because he can do it neater and use better grammar. I had to get in touch with somebody about this because if there is something to it, then somebody, everybody, is going to point finger at me, Ivan Smernda, and say, "Why didn't you warn us?"

I could not go to the police be-



cause they are not too friendly to me because of some of my guests who frankly are stew bums. Also they might think I was on booze, too, or maybe the hops, and get my license revoked. I run a strictly legit hotel even though some of my guests might be down on their luck now and then.

What really got me mixed up in this was the mysterious disappearance of two of my guests. They both took a powder last Wednesday morning.

Now get this. In one room, that of Joe Binkle, which maybe is an alias, I find nothing but a suit of clothes, some butts and the letters I include here in same package. Binkle had only one suit. That I know. And this was it laying right in the middle of the room. Inside the coat was the vest, inside the vest the shirt, inside the shirt the underwear. The pants were up in the coat and inside of them was also the underwear. All this was buttoned up like Binkle had melted out of it and dripped through a crack in the floor. In a bureau drawer were the letters I told you about.

Now. In the room right under Binkle's lived another stew bum that checked in Thursday . . . name Ed Smith, alias maybe, too. This guy was a real case. He brought with him a big mirror with a heavy bronze frame. Air-

loom, he says. He pays a week in advance, staggers up the stairs to his room with the mirror and that's the last I see of him.

In Smith's room on Wednesday I find only a suit of clothes, the same suit he wore when he came in. In the coat the vest, in the vest the shirt, in the shirt the underwear. Also in the pants. Also all in the middle of the floor. Against the far wall stands the frame of the mirror. Only the frame!

WHAT a spot to be in! Now it might have been a gag. Sometimes these guys get funny ideas when they are on the stuff. But then I read the letters. This knocks me for a loop. They are all in different handwritings. All from different places. Stamps all legit, my kid says. India, China, England, everywhere.

My kid, he reads. He says it's no joke. He wants to call the cops or maybe some doctor. But I say no. He reads your magazine so he says write to you, send you the letters. You know what to do. Now you have them. Maybe you print. Whatever you do, Mr. Editor, remember my place, the Plaza Ritz Arms, is straight establishment. I don't drink. I never touch junk, not even aspirin.

Yours very truly,
Ivan Smernda

Bombay, India
June 8

Mr. Joe Binkle
Plaza Ritz Arms
New York City
Dear Joe:

Greetings, greetings, greetings. Hold firm in your wretched projection, for tomorrow you will not be alone in the not-world. In two days I, Glmpauszn, will be born.

Today I hang in our newly developed not-pod just within the mirror gateway, torn with the agony that we calculated must go with such tremendous wavelength fluctuations. I have attuned myself to a fetus within the body of a not-woman in the not-world. Already I am static and for hours have looked into this weird extension of the Universe with fear and trepidation.

As soon as my stasis was achieved, I tried to contact you, but got no response. What could have diminished your powers of articulate wave interaction to make you incapable of receiving my messages and returning them? My wave went out to yours and found it, barely pulsing and surrounded with an impregnable chimera.

Quickly, from the not-world vibrations about you, I learned the not-knowledge of your location. So I must communicate with you by what the not-world calls "mail" till we meet. For this pur-

pose I must utilize the feeble vibrations of various not-people through whose inadequate articulation I will attempt to make my moves known to you. Each time I will pick a city other than the one I am in at the time.

I, Glmpauszn, come equipped with powers evolved from your fragmentary reports before you ceased to vibrate to us and with a vast treasury of facts from indirect sources. Soon our tortured people will be free of the fearsome not-folk and I will be their liberator. You failed in your task, but I will try to get you off with light punishment when we return again.

The hand that writes this letter is that of a boy in the not-city of Bombay in the not-country of India. He does not know he writes it. Tomorrow it will be someone else. You must never know of my exact location, for the not-people might have access to the information.

I must leave off now because the not-child is about to be born. When it is alone in the room, it will be spirited away and I will spring from the pod on the gateway into its crib and will be its exact vibrational likeness.

I have tremendous powers. But the not-people must never know I am among them. This is the only way I could arrive in the room where the gateway lies

without arousing suspicion. I will grow up as the not-child in order that I might destroy the not-people completely.

All is well, only they shot this information file into my matrix too fast. I'm having a hard time sorting facts and make the right decision. Gezsltrysk, what a task!

Farewell till later.

Glmpauszn

Wichita, Kansas
June 13

Dear Joe:

Mnghjkl, fbfgjfhjklop phelno-prausynks. No. When I communicate with you, I see I must avoid those complexities of procedure for which there are no terms in this language. There is no way of describing to you in not-language what I had to go through during the first moments of my birth.

Now I know what difficulties you must have had with your limited equipment. These not-people are unpredictable and strange. Their doctor came in and weighed me again the day after my birth. Consternation reigned when it was discovered I was ten pounds heavier. What difference could it possibly make? Many doctors then came in to see me. As they arrived hourly, they found me heavier and heavier. Naturally, since I am growing. This is part of my instructions.

My not-mother (Gezsltrysk!) then burst into tears. The doctors conferred, threw up their hands and left.

I learned the following day that the opposite component of my not-mother, my not-father, had been away riding on some conveyance during my birth. He was out on . . . what did they call it? Oh, yes, a bender. He did not arrive till three days after I was born.

When I heard them say that he was straightening up to come see me, I made a special effort and grew marvelously in one afternoon. I was 36 not-world inches tall by evening. My not-father entered while I was standing by the crib examining a syringe the doctor had left behind. He stopped in his tracks on entering the room and seemed incapable of speech.

Dredging into the treasury of knowledge I had come equipped with, I produced the proper phrase for occasions of this kind in the not-world.

"Poppa," I said.

This was the first use I had made of the so-called vocal cords that are now part of my extended matrix. The sound I emitted sounded low-pitched, guttural and penetrating even to myself. It must have jarred on my not-father's ears, for he turned and ran shouting from the room.

They apprehended him on the stairs and I heard him babble something about my being a monster and no child of his. My not-mother appeared at the doorway and instead of being pleased at the progress of my growth, she fell down heavily. She made a distinct *thump* on the floor.

This brought the rest of them on the run, so I climbed out the window and retreated across a nearby field. A prolonged search was launched, but I eluded them. What unpredictable beings!

I reported my tremendous progress back to our world, including the cleverness by which I managed to escape my pursuers. I received a reply from Blgftury which, on careful analysis, seems to be small praise indeed. In fact, some of his phrases apparently contain veiled threats. But you know old Blgftury. He wanted to go on this expedition himself and it's his nature never to flatter anyone.

From now on I will refer to not-people simply as people, dropping the qualifying preface except where comparisons must be made between this alleged world and our own. It is merely an offshoot of our primitive mythology when this was considered a spirit world, just as these people refer to our world as never-never land and other anomalies. But we learned other-

wise, while they never have.

New sensations crowd into my consciousness and I am having a hard time classifying them. Anyway, I shall carry on swiftly now to the inevitable climax in which I singlehanded will obliterate the terror of the not-world and return to our world a hero. I cannot understand your not replying to my letters. I have given you a box number. What could have happened to your vibrations?

Gimpauszn

Albuquerque, New Mexico
June 15

Dear Joe:

I had tremendous difficulty getting a letter off to you this time. My process—original with myself, by the way—is to send out feeler vibrations for what these people call the psychic individual. Then I establish contact with him while he sleeps and compel him without his knowledge to translate my ideas into written language. He writes my letter and mails it to you. Of course, he has no awareness of what he has done.

My first five tries were unfortunate. Each time I took control of an individual who could not read or write! Finally I found my man, but I fear his words are limited. Ah, well. I had great things to tell you about my prog-

ress, but I cannot convey even a hint of how I have accomplished these miracles through the thick skull of this incompetent.

In simple terms then: I crept into a cave and slipped into a kind of sleep, directing my squuhjkl ulytz & uhrytzg . . . no, it won't come out. Anyway, I grew overnight to the size of an average person here.

As I said before, floods of impressions are driving into my xzbyl . . . my brain . . . from various nerve and sense areas and I am having a hard time classifying them. My one idea was to get to a chemist and acquire the stuff needed for the destruction of these people.

Sunrise came as I expected. According to my catalog of information, the impressions aroused by it are of beauty. It took little conditioning for me finally to react in this manner. This is truly an efficient mechanism I inhabit.

I gazed about me at the mixture of lights, forms and impressions. It was strange and . . . now I know . . . beautiful. However, I hurried immediately toward the nearest chemist. At the same time I looked up and all about me at the beauty.

Soon an individual approached. I knew what to do from my information. I simply acted natural. You know, one of your

earliest instructions was to realize that these people see nothing unusual in you if you do not let yourself believe they do.

This individual I classified as a female of a singular variety here. Her hair was short, her upper torso clad in a woolen garment. She wore . . . what are they? . . . oh, yes, sneakers. My attention was diverted by a scream as I passed her. I stopped.

The woman gesticulated and continued to scream. People hurried from nearby houses. I linked my hands behind me and watched the scene with an attitude of mild interest. They weren't interested in me, I told myself. But they were.

I became alarmed, dived into a bush and used a mechanism that you unfortunately do not have—invisibility. I lay there and listened.

"He was stark naked," the girl with the sneakers said.

A figure I recognized as a police officer spoke to her.

"Lizzy, you'll just have to keep these crackpot friends of yours out of this area."

"But—"

"No more buck-bathing, Lizzy," the officer ordered. "No more speeches in the Square. Not when it results in riots at five in the morning. Now where is your naked friend? I'm going to make an example of him."

That was it—I had forgotten clothes. There is only one answer to this oversight on my part. My mind is confused by the barrage of impressions that assault it. I must retire now and get them all classified. Beauty, pain, fear, hate, love, laughter. I don't know one from the other. I must feel each, become accustomed to it.

The more I think about it, the more I realize that the information I have been given is very unrealistic. You have been inefficient, Joe. What will Blgftury and the others say of this? My great mission is impaired. Farewell, till I find a more intelligent mind so I can write you with more enlightenment.

Glimpauszn

Moscow, Idaho
June 17

Dear Joe:

I received your first communication today. It baffles me. Do you greet me in the proper fringe-zone manner? No. Do you express joy, hope, pride, helpfulness at my arrival? No. You ask me for a loan of five bucks!

It took me some time, culling my information catalog to come up with the correct variant of the slang term "buck." Is it possible that you are powerless even to provide yourself with the wherewithal to live in this inferior world?

A reminder, please. You and I—I in particular—are now engaged in a struggle to free our world from the terrible, maiming intrusions of this not-world. Through many long gleeks, our people have lived a semi-terrorized existence while errant vibrations from this world ripped across the closely joined vibration flux, whose individual fluctuations make up our sentient population.

Even our eminent, all-high Frequency himself has often been jeopardized by these people. The not-world and our world are like two baskets as you and I see them in our present forms. Baskets woven with the greatest intricacy, design and color; but baskets whose convex sides are joined by a thin fringe of filaments. Our world, on the vibrational plane, extends just a bit into this, the not-world. But being a world of higher vibration, it is ultimately tenuous to these gross peoples. While we vibrate only within a restricted plane because of our purer, more stable existence, these people radiate widely into our world.

They even send what they call psychic reproductions of their own selves into ours. And most infamous of all, they sometimes are able to force some of our individuals over the fringe into their world temporarily, causing them

much agony and fright.

The latter atrocity is perpetrated through what these people call mediums, spiritualists and other fatuous names. I intend to visit one of them at the first opportunity to see for myself.

Meanwhile, as to you, I would offer a few words of advice. I picked them up while examining the "slang" portion of my information catalog which you unfortunately caused me to use. So, for the ultimate cause—in this, the penultimate adventure, and for the glory and peace of our world — shake a leg, bub. Straighten up and fly right. In short, get hep.

As far as the five bucks is concerned, no dice.

Glmpauszn

Des Moines, Iowa
June 19

Dear Joe:

Your letter was imponderable till I had thrashed through long passages in my information catalog that I had never imagined I would need. Biological functions and bodily processes which are labeled here "revolting" are used freely in your missive. You can be sure they are all being forwarded to Blgftury. If I were not involved in the most important part of my journey—completion of the weapon against the not-worlders—I would come to New

York immediately. You would rue that day, I assure you.

Glmpauszn

Boise, Idaho
July 15

Dear Joe:

A great deal has happened to me since I wrote to you last. Systematically, I have tested each emotion and sensation listed in our catalog. I have been, as has been said in this world, like a reed bending before the winds of passion. In fact, I'm rather badly bent indeed. Ah! You'll pardon me, but I just took time for what is known quaintly in this tongue as a "hooker of red-eye" Ha! I've mastered even the vagaries of slang in the not-language . . . Ahhh! Pardon me again. I feel much better now.

You see, Joe, as I attuned myself to the various impressions that constantly assaulted my mind through this body, I conditioned myself to react exactly as our information catalog instructed me to.

Now it is all automatic, pure reflex. A sensation comes to me when I am burned; then I experience a burning pain. If the sensation is a tickle, I experience a tickle.

. This morning I have what is known medically as a syndrome . . . a group of symptoms popularly referred to as a hangover

... Ahhh! Pardon me again. Strangely . . . now what was I saying? Oh, yes. Ha, ha. Strangely enough, the reactions that come easiest to the people in this world came most difficult to me. Money-love, for example. It is a great thing here, both among those who haven't got it and those who have.

I went out and got plenty of money. I walked invisible into a bank and carried away piles of it. Then I sat and looked at it. I took the money to a remote room of the twenty room suite I have rented in the best hotel here in—no, sorry—and stared at it for hours.

Nothing happened. I didn't love the stuff or feel one way or the other about it. Yet all around me people are actually killing one another for the love of it.

Anyway . . . Ahhh. Pardon me. I got myself enough money to fill ten or fifteen rooms. By the end of the week I should have all eighteen spare rooms filled with money. If I don't love it then, I'll feel I have failed. This alcohol is taking effect now.

Blgftury has been goading me for reports. To hell with his reports! I've got a lot more emotions to try, such as romantic love. I've been studying this phenomenon, along with other racial characteristics of these people, in the movies. This is the best place

to see these people as they really are. They all go into the movie houses and there do homage to their own images. Very quaint type of idolatry.

Love. Ha! What an adventure this is becoming.

By the way, Joe, I'm forwarding that five dollars. You see, it won't cost me anything. It'll come out of the pocket of the idiot who's writing this letter. Pretty shrewd of me, eh?

I'm going out and look at that money again. I think I'm at last learning to love it, though not as much as I admire liquor. Well, one simply must persevere, I always say.

Glimpauszn

Penobscot, Maine
July 20

Dear Joe:

Now you tell me not to drink alcohol. Why not? You never mentioned it in any of your vibrations to us, gleebs ago, when you first came across to this world. It will stint my powers? Nonsense! Already I have had a quart of the liquid today. I feel wonderful. Get that? I actually feel wonderful, in spite of this miserable imitation of a body.

There are long hours during which I am so well-integrated into this body and this world that I almost consider myself a member of it. Now I can function

efficiently. I sent Blgfty some long reports today outlining my experiments in the realm of chemistry where we must finally defeat these people. Of course, I haven't made the experiments yet, but I will. This is not deceit, merely realistic anticipation of the inevitable. Anyway, what the old xbyzrt doesn't know won't muss his vibrations.

I went to what they call a nightclub here and picked out a blonde-haired woman, the kind that the books say men prefer. She was attracted to me instantly. After all, the body I have devised is perfect in every detail . . . actually a not-world ideal.

I didn't lose any time overwhelming her susceptibilities. I remember distinctly that just as I stooped to pick up a large roll of money I had dropped, her eyes met mine and in them I could see her admiration. We went to my suite and I showed her one of the money rooms. Would you believe it? She actually took off her shoes and ran around through the money in her bare feet! Then we kissed.

Concealed in the dermis of the lips are tiny, highly sensitized nerve ends which send sensations to the brain. The brain interprets these impulses in a certain manner. As a result, the rate of secretion in the adrenals on the ends of the kidneys increases and an

enlivening of the entire endocrine system follows. Thus I felt the beginnings of love.

I sat her down on a pile of money and kissed her again. Again the tingling, again the secretion and activation. I integrated myself quickly.

Now in all the motion pictures —true representations of life and love in this world—the man with a lot of money or virtue kisses the girl and tries to induce her to do something biological. She then refuses. This pleases both of them, for he wanted her to refuse. She, in turn, wanted him to want her, but also wanted to prevent him so that he would have a high opinion of her. Do I make myself clear?

I kissed the blonde girl and gave her to understand what I then wanted. Well, you can imagine my surprise when she said yes! So I had failed. I had not found love.

I became so abstracted by this problem that the blonde girl fell asleep. I thoughtfully drank quantities of excellent alcohol called gin and didn't even notice when the blonde girl left.

I am now beginning to feel the effects of this alcohol again. Ha. Don't I wish old Blgfty were here in the vibrational pattern of an olive? I'd get the blonde in and have her eat him out of a Martini. That is a gin mixture.

I think I'll get a hot report off to the old so-and-so right now. I'll take him a gleeb to figure this one out. I'll tell him I'm setting up an atomic reactor in the sewage systems here and that all we have to do is activate it and all the not-people will die of chain asphyxiation.

Boy, what an easy job this turned out to be. It's just a vacation. Joe, you old gold-bricker, imagine you here all these gleeks living off the fat of the land. Yak, yak. Affectionately.

Glmpeauszn

Sacramento, Calif.

July 25

Dear Joe:

All is lost unless we work swiftly. I received your revealing letter the morning after having a terrible experience of my own. I drank a lot of gin for two days and then decided to go to one of these seance things.

Somewhere along the way I picked up a red-headed girl. When we got to the darkened seance room, I took the redhead into a corner and continued my investigations into the realm of love. I failed again because she said yes immediately.

The nerves of my dermis were working over time when suddenly I had the most frightening experience of my life. Now I know what a horror these people really

are to our world.

The medium had turned out all the lights. He said there was a strong psychic influence in the room somewhere. That was me, of course, but I was too busy with the redhead to notice.

Anyway, Mrs. Somebody wanted to make contact with her paternal grandmother, Lucy, from the beyond. The medium went into his act. He concentrated and sweated and suddenly something began to take form in the room. The best way to describe it in not-world language is a white, shapeless cascade of light.

Mrs. Somebody reared to her feet and screeched, "Grandma Lucy!" Then I really took notice.

Grandma Lucy, nothing! This medium had actually brought Blgftury partially across the vibration barrier. He must have been vibrating in the fringe area and got caught in the works. Did he look mad! His zyhku was open and his btgrimms were down.

Worst of all, he saw me. Looked right at me with an unbelievable pattern of pain, anger, fear and amazement in his matrix. Me and the redhead.

Then comes your letter today telling of the fate that befell you as a result of drinking alcohol. Our wrenchingly attuned faculties in these not-world bodies

need the loathsome drug to escape from the reality of not-reality. It's true. I cannot do without it now. The day is only half over and I have consumed a quart and a half. And it is dulling all my powers as it has practically obliterated yours. I can't even become invisible any more.

I must find the formula that will wipe out the not-world men quickly.

Quickly!

Glimpauszn

Florence, Italy
September 10

Dear Joe:

This telepathic control becomes more difficult every time. I must pick closer points of communication soon. I have nothing to report but failure. I bought a ton of equipment and went to work on the formula that is half complete in my instructions. Six of my hotel rooms were filled with tubes, pipes and apparatus of all kinds.

I had got my mechanism as close to perfect as possible when I realized that, in my befuddled condition, I had set off a reaction that inevitably would result in an explosion. I had to leave there immediately, but I could not create suspicion. The management was not aware of the nature of my activities.

I moved swiftly. I could not

afford time to bring my baggage. I stuffed as much money into my pockets as I could and then sauntered into the hotel lobby. Assuming my most casual air, I told the manager I was checking out. Naturally he was stunned since I was his best customer.

"But why, sir?" he asked plaintively.

I was baffled. What could I tell him?

"Don't you like the rooms?" he persisted. "Isn't the service good?"

"It's the rooms," I told him. "They're—they're—"

"They're what?" he wanted to know.

"They're not safe."

"Not safe? But that is ridiculous. This hotel is . . ."

At this point the blast came. My nerves were a wreck from the alcohol.

"See?" I screamed. "Not safe. I knew they were going to blow up!"

He stood paralyzed as I ran from the lobby. Oh, well, never say die. Another day, another hotel. I swear I'm even beginning to think like the not-men, curse them.

Glimpauszn

Rochester, New York
September 25

Dear Joe:

I have it! It is done! In spite

of the alcohol, in spite of Blgfury's niggling criticism, I have succeeded. I now have developed a form of mold, somewhat similar to the antibiotics of this world, that, transmitted to the human organism, will cause a disease whose end will be swift and fatal.

First the brain will dissolve and then the body will fall apart. Nothing in this world can stop the spread of it once it is loose. Absolutely nothing.

We must use care. Stock in as much gin as you are able. I will bring with me all that I can. Meanwhile I must return to my original place of birth into this world of horrors. There I will secure the gateway, a large mirror, the vibrational point at which we shall meet and slowly climb the frequency scale to emerge into our own beautiful, now secure world. You and I together, Joe, conquerors, liberators.

You say you eat little and drink

as much as you can. The same with me. Even in this revolting world I am a sad sight. My not-world senses falter. This is the last letter. Tomorrow I come with the gateway. When the gin is gone, we will plant the mold in the hotel where you live.

In only a single gleeb it will begin to work. The men of this queer world will be no more. But we can't say we didn't have some fun, can we, Joe?

And just let Blgfury make one crack. Just one xyzprlt. I'll have hgutry before the ghjdksla!

Glmpauszn

Dear Editor:

These guys might be queer drunk hopheads. But if not? If soon brain dissolve, body fall apart, how long have we got? Please, anybody who knows answer, write to me—Ivan Smernanda, Plaza Ritz Arms—how long is a gleeb?

—CHARLES SCHAFHAUSER
