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all that goes up

BY KIRBY BROOKS

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At fifty, a man should be too old to go around flying off the handle, or wandering around on the ceiling. But what could a man do when he had a son who insisted on being a genius?

For a man my age, the middle 50's, life has a number of compensations. There're children—we have two; there's a good wife, and I'm certainly blessed in that respect with Mary; and there's the joy of coming home, slipping on my slippers, having a good dinner, then relaxing with coffee and a pipe. There's no compensation for being plastered to the ceiling. But, more of that later.

The after dinner coffee with a dash of rum in it, tasted very good, and so did the pipe. The meal was satisfying too. Thank goodness for that meal, because it was the last decent one I've had for quite some time. Oh, I've eaten all right, but you'd have to stretch your imagination to call any of it a meal. Can you picture

eating food that keeps trying to move away from your face? That is, if you can keep the plate from moving away too?

As I say, Mary and I had just finished dinner, when Jim, our 22-year-old gangly son, who's home on summer vacation from MIT, called me.

"Can you come here a minute, Dad?"

"Sure," I said, heading down the hall to his combination laboratory, dark room, aviary, and just plain bedroom. Fortunately it was a big room so there was space for a bed in addition to all the stuff a boy can collect who becomes enamored of science while in High School, and who consummates the wedding with studying electronics in college



I pushed his door open a little wider and looked in before entering; a trick the family had acquired when Jim was in the Zoological-Biological, or frog-collecting age. "What do you want, son?"

"Just want to show you something," he said, pointing to the floor. He was bent over looking intently at what seemed to be a sheet of that fluorescent plastic that's used for signs. It was lying on the floor, was about two feet square, and was glowing a dim pink. Whether from light within itself, or from the desk lamp, I couldn't tell.

"What is it?"

"I don't really know, Dad, but watch what happens." So saying, he picked up a glove from the desk, tossed it onto the plastic plate. I should say he tossed it *at* the plate, because it didn't land, but rose fast, straight up! I watched it hit the ceiling with a splat! Where it stuck. It was then I noticed several other things all plastered to the paneling too; the mate to the glove, a package of cigarettes, a cigarette lighter and a golf ball or two.

Well, I had learned years ago in the Prestidigitation Age, or, "You too can amaze your friends with feats of Magic" that quite often Jim would go to great

lengths to mystify anybody handy. I wasn't too impressed.

"Next thing will be to make a rope stand up, or saw a woman in half, I suppose?"

"No, Dad, this is no trick. Fact is, I think I've stumbled onto something that could be important . . . anti-gravity. Or, something that looks like it."

"Well," I said, "It could be, but just what is this thing?"

"Up at school I started fooling around with various metals, and one idea I had was to suspend them in tiny particles, colloiddally almost, in plastic. Then I'd run various voltages and varying frequencies through the plastic."

"Yes, but why?"

"Well, the thing I had in mind originally was a wall or ceiling panel that would serve as a source of either cold light using a given voltage and frequency, or as a source of radiant heat, using some other voltage and frequency. All from the same panel."

"And you wind up with this?"

"Yes, and I'll be darned if I can explain just what this is. I'm really going to have to do some digging."

While Jim was talking, I had been looking the rig over. It consisted of the plastic plate lying on the floor, with two sets of wires running into it, and out of it. In turn, these four wires led

into what I took to be a transformer of some sort. Such as you'd use for a toy electric train. It had roughly calibrated dials on the top of it. A regular AC line from the transformer was plugged into the wall socket.

"What I can't figure," Jim mused, "Is why it does what it does. The measly three years I've spent at school don't even qualify me to make a good guess. Does it only work on small things that can be lifted without too much effort anyway? Or, if I increase the size of the plate will I also have to increase the voltage? Will it . . .?"

"Look boy, I'm confused enough already. What do you say we sit down and think about this a bit? It'll give you a chance to collect your wits, and besides that, I want another cup of coffee."

Four cups and two pipes later, after Johnny, that's our fourteen-year-old, and Mary had gone to bed, Jim and I were still just sitting. He was obviously thinking, and I was mostly sitting. Not much thinking. The trouble with my thinking was that a background of selling everything from Encyclopedias to, at present, used cars, and an education consisting mostly of high school and hard knocks just didn't qualify me in Jim's league.

The silence lengthened. Pretty soon he stirred in his chair, cleared his throat and said, "Let's go look again."

"Have you come to any conclusions?"

"Well, yes and no," Jim said. "Look at it this way Pop; suppose this is not a fluke and I'm able to duplicate this thing. Suppose I'm able to take this transformer and duplicate it too. All on a larger scale. How could it be used to good advantage? It'd probably do away with elevators in most cases, except you'd have to walk down. But then, by making the field weaker, maybe I could fix it so's you'd float down. Then too, I wonder if it can be applied to aircraft of any kind . . . I suppose you could take it and . . ." his eyes were shining.

I interrupted; "Jim, you haven't really tested what the thing will do and it is late, so before you go into many more schemes, let's sleep on it. We can get right after it in the morning. You can, that is, because all I can do is watch."

The next morning bright and early I was awakened by Johnny, who was dancing around the room, shouting something on the order of "Hey! Somebody's got-toget'erdown! Somebody's got-toget'erdown!"

Making myself heard over the din, I hollered, "Who's got to get

who down? For Pete's sake, stop yelling so loud!"

Having been out-shouted, Johnny calmed down enough to catch his breath and gasp, "Say, Dad, Duchess is in Jim's room and she's on the ceiling, and you-gottoget'erdown!"

Well, it dawned on me then what he was talking about. Duchess is our nine-months-old Great Dane pup. Weighs about a hundred pounds. So, pulling on bathrobe and slippers, I went down stairs, and hurried into Jim's room. Sure enough, plastered on the ceiling and looking mighty scared and sick and sheepish was Duchess. When I came in she wagged a feeble tail at me and squirmed a bit. Mary, Johnny and Jim were all standing looking at her.

"Dad, I don't know how it happened," Jim said. "Guess I forgot to pull the plug last night. First I knew was when I heard a thump and a yelp . . . woke up and she was practically right over my bed."

Duchess was apparently unhurt, so I walked over and reached up to coax her down. Just then Jim shouted, "Dad! Don't do . . .!" And my head hit the ceiling! Like a fool I had walked right over the plastic plate!

As soon as I could get my eyes to focus properly, I shut them

again quickly. I was lying, (lying!) next to Duchess, on the ceiling, and she was thrashing me in the face with her tail. As soon as I pushed her around so my face was out of range I could see the dumbfounded looks on the rest of the family.

"Ralph," said Mary, in a tone of exasperation, "You and that dog come right down from there this minute!"

"Honey, I'd just be delighted to come down there, and if you and the boys will shove that bed under us, we'll try. Soon as Jim turns this damn thing off."

By this time, Johnny was lying on the floor about to bust a gusset laughing at his father and long-legged Duchess sprawled on the ceiling, and even Jim, who is always rather straight-faced, was beginning to grin a little around the edges. Mary still seemed convinced that Duchess and I had done it on purpose.

Jim finally gathered his wits enough to start pushing the bed under us. Between the three of them they managed to bypass the wires to the plastic plate and set the bed over it. I noticed that it bucked a little as the edge went over the plate, but I didn't get time to see much because no sooner had the bed been pushed over it than the whole thing with the exception of the frame, rose straight up

and smothered the dog and me very effectively! After the first moment of panic, consisting of flailing arms, legs, muffled barks and curses, I was able to shove the bedding aside so we could breathe again. I had just started to yell at Jim to turn the thing off and stand aside, when that's just what he did. I clutched at Duchess, hoping to break both our falls I guess, but nothing happened!

I looked at Jim, and he was looking at the plug in his hand. There was a dazed look on his face, and I'm sure there was one on mine too. Duchess just licked my face and wagged her tail. For a space of about two breaths no one spoke, then all started at once . . .

"Jim, you pull out that plug right now and get your father down from there!" That was Mary.

"Don't just stand there like a dope . . . turn that damn thing off!" That was me.

"Jimmy, where's your camera? I want to get a picture of this!" That was Johnny.

Duchess just whined, and wagged her tail apologetically.

"Jim," I said, very softly, "Will you please stop messing around and get us down from here?"

"I unplugged it, Dad . . . I don't know why you're still up

there." He shook his head.

Johnny, bless his little heart, had what seemed to be a good idea; "Why not get hold of the wires and pull the plate out from under them?"

So Jim eased up to within about a foot of the plate, grabbed the wires and started pulling. I had no sensation at all. We just stuck there. Even with the plate out in the hall!

Jim stood for a moment in thought, then looked up at us and said, "Well, maybe it'll wear off in a little while, as you gradually discharge whatever kind of charge you got from the plate."

"What do you mean by 'charge'?" I asked.

"Well, not knowing what kind of field I generated with that plate, I couldn't tell you offhand, but it is probably something like this; you see, apparently what I did was not cut gravity off exactly, but changed the normal electrical charge in whatever object came into the field. Seems to me if I had cut gravity with the plate, you would have fallen when I turned it off. As it is, you're still there," he added rather unnecessarily.

And Jim, as his teen-age friends used to say, wasn't just whistling Dixie. We were definitely, unquestionably still there.

About this time I became aware of a pain in the small of my back. For a man who is pushing 60, I'm in pretty good shape except for my sacroiliac. Just my luck, I thought. Here I am, plastered to the ceiling, and that thing has to start acting up. In moving a bit though, I heard a scraping sound and found I had more than one pain in my back. Feeling carefully under me, I found that it wasn't the sacroiliac at all, but a cigarette lighter, two gloves, a pack of cigarettes, and two golf balls. I tried to toss the balls down to the floor and all they did was go almost down then curve right back up and bounce on the ceiling, where they settled. I tried the same thing with the gloves and back they came too. So I lit one of the cigarettes, even without my morning coffee.

Mary had been silent for awhile, but apparently she had the same thought. "Ralph, aren't you coming down for breakfast?" she asked, pleadingly.

"I don't know, honey. But I do know I'm sure getting hungry, even in this position." And turning so I could see her better, if you can turn while lying on the ceiling looking down, I said, "Do you suppose you could whip up something to eat? And maybe put it on a pole so you could hand it up?" She allowed as how

she could, but Jim, who had been in one of his brown studies, again spoke up; "I don't believe we'll need a pole, Dad. Now that the plastic plate's been turned off and moved, everything's all right."

"Everything's all right!" I growled. "If everything's so all right, why don't we come down? How long's it going to take, anyway?"

"Well, it's hard to say," Jim shrugged. "In fact, I've been thinking maybe I ought to call Professor Jordan up at school and ask him what to do."

"Is he an expert?"

"Well, I'd call him that. The trouble is, I don't know what I did, so I certainly don't know how to un-do it. Maybe he'll have an idea."

"Does he know about anti-gravity?"

"I don't imagine so, but he's the head of electronics and I know he's been working on the unified field theory just as a hobby. He's the fellow who got me to wondering about energized metal particles in colloidal suspension. Think I'd better call him?"

"Son," I said, trying to retie my bathrobe belt, "You not only call him, but if it's possible, get him to come here . . . I've got to get down. Hell, I haven't even

shaved yet this morning, and I've got to be at work in about two hours."

"You may not get down from there that soon, but I'll go call him right now."

Jim left for the phone, and shortly Mary came in with a steaming tray of food. That's where the fun began.

First of all, picture the old house. It was very old, and had high, pine-paneled ceilings . . . probably twelve feet high. Duchess and I were a little off-center, closer to the door, I guess. The room was big, and being on the ground floor, had a dormer window looking out on our rather scraggly garden. In fact, pretty soon I began to get the impression from the pine "boards" "beneath" me, that I was actually lying on a floor, and the ceiling to floor dormer window didn't do anything to help either. Curtains looked rather odd though, sticking straight "up."

About the food: Mary was right under us with the tray. She put it down, picked up a bowl of oatmeal and started to hand it to me. She couldn't reach high enough and I couldn't reach down far enough. The thought crossed my mind, "why not stand up?" Well, I tried it, Brother! what a sensation! As I began gathering my legs under me, the idea of being on a pine floor in-

creased. Increased until I made the mistake of looking out the window! It's just plain impossible to describe, but try to imagine how it would look right now. if you looked out your window . . . at the top (to you) is the ground, and at the bottom? Nothing! Just nothing, but blue sky. The vertigo was pretty bad and I flopped back down, or rather "up" and tried to regain my equilibrium.

"What's the matter?" My wife asked. "Don't you want any breakfast?"

As soon as I caught my breath, I said, "Well, yes and no, honey. Could you or Johnny get a ladder? I think that might do it." I could stay lying down that way.

Johnny brought in the short stepladder, so without standing "up" I at least got my hands on the food. Hands is about all. Here's a picture for you . . . Flat on your back; an open dish of hot oatmeal open side to, coming right at you. When you grab it you have to reach around behind it to keep it from falling. You get it right up to your face, take the spoon and start to take a bite. How do you do it? I don't know either. I gave up oatmeal right then and there. Johnny, and again, bless his little heart, had the idea that saved us. "Hey,

Dad, why don't you try a banana?" It worked! In fact, most any food that was in a chunk could be eaten. Difficult, but it could be done. The big problem then was liquid, and again Johnny came to my rescue with some fountain straws from the corner drugstore. For Duchess it was easy. She just lapped.

About the time we finished the battle of breakfast, Jim came back with word from Professor Jordan.

"Dad, I don't think the professor believed me, but he's on his way here."

"Well, thank the Lord," I exclaimed. "Did he think you were completely out of your head?"

"Not exactly, but he did think I might be exaggerating just a little, I think."

"When will he get here?" Mary asked.

"He said he'd catch a plane out of there as soon as he could, and it's only a two and a half hour flight, mother."

"Then he'll be here this afternoon?" I asked.

"He seemed to think he would."

"Oh, goodness, I hope so," Mary said. "We've got a date with the Ripleys to go to a movie tonight."

I snorted. "Movies at a time like this! Why it might take days for us to get discharged."

Days? Holy Smoke! I wondered how long it *would* take? Already I was getting tired of lying down. Hey, wait a minute! What about the springs, mattress and covers stuck up here with me? There indeed was a thought.

Pushing Duchess aside and getting licked in the face once again for my trouble, I reached over and got hold of the mattress. In doing so I had to roll over partially. I really got the sensation then of being on a pine board floor. So much so in fact, that I rolled clear over onto my hands and knees. It wasn't so bad after all! Just like being on a regular floor, reaching for a mattress and covers. Really had to keep my eyes away from that window though!

I finally got the bed straightened out and got comfortable. Duchess, no doubt figuring this was a rather special occasion, proceeded to ease herself in bed with me. At that point I didn't care too much so I let her stay. It was a funny thing but she didn't seem to have much trouble standing up at all. In fact, she seemed perfectly happy with the whole arrangement, but every-time I glanced at that dormer window and pictured vast reaches of blue nothing, my stomach turned over a little.

Guess I must have dozed off,

because the next thing I remember was Johnny standing on the ladder, poking me with a tennis racquet.

"Wake up Dad," he was saying. "Mother wants to know if you and Duchess want any lunch."

"I don't know about Duchess," I yawned, "But I could certainly do with a bit to eat. Like to shave and brush my teeth too. Think you could figure out something?"

Johnny figured, and oddly enough it's no trick to brush your teeth (I'm lucky to still have my own) upside down. It's much the same as when you do it normally . . . bent over the lavatory. As for shaving, well I never cared much for them, but I used Jim's electric razor and that was taken care of. No shower though. Not even Johnny could figure that one out.

Mary came in with sandwiches and coffee, and with straws it turned out all right. Duchess did her usual lapping. There wasn't anything else to do but wait, so Johnny brought me the morning paper. Let me tell you, that's no snap, trying to read a paper that's continually trying to pull away from you. My arms got awfully tired after awhile so I gave that up. Noticing it was rather stuffy, I asked Johnny to lower the upper sash of the dor-

mer so the air could circulate a bit, and as it became more comfortable, I must have dropped off to sleep again.

The next thing I knew I was awakened rather forcibly by loud screams and yells from the garden just outside the window. When I got my wits together and looked, the first thing I noticed was that Duchess was nowhere around. About that time, Johnny burst into the room, tears streaming down his face, and crying as though his heart would break. Close on his heels was Mary, also crying, and Jim was bringing up the rear.

"What in the world's the matter?" I asked.

"Oh, Ralph," Mary sobbed, "It's Duchess . . . she's gone!"

"She just flew right up in the air!" Johnny added.

"What do you mean, 'flew right up in the air', what are you all talking about?"

"She got out of the window, Dad," Jim said. "We were out in the garden talking, and I guess she heard us. Looks like she went to the window, scratched the screen loose, and out she went."

"Oh, Ralph, it was just horrible," Mary sobbed. "That poor thing, going up just like a balloon . . . getting smaller and smaller."

"Yeah, Dad," Johnny sniffed,

"We watched her till she went clear out of sight . . . she was kickin' her legs and we could hear her barkin' too."

"For heaven's sake, Ralph," Mary cried, "don't you go near that window!"

"Yes, you'd go up too, Dad," Jim added.

Clutching tightly to the mattress, I assured them I wouldn't go near the window, or the door either, for that matter. Just the thought of that poor dog sailing up in the air made me sick in the pit of my stomach.

"How high will she go, Jim?" I asked.

"Gee, I don't know, Dad. But I think she'll just keep right on going, clear up out of the air." Jim had a hard time keeping a sob out of his voice too.

"What'll happen to her, son?"

"Well, you see, between the cold and the lack of oxygen, she'll just go to sleep . . . I remember reading about fliers at high altitude."

"Thank Heaven," Mary breathed. And I added a silent "Amen."

About 3:30 Professor Jordan arrived and Jim brought him in and introduced us. The professor was probably 40, but looked hardly older than Jim, and was built along the same tall and gangly lines. A very business-like man though, thank heaven,

and he got right to the point. After the first shock of seeing me on the ceiling, he turned to Jim, "Now, tell me. Exactly what happened, and what is this rig you have here?"

Jim told him the whole story of how Duchess and I got caught, then went into great detail about the plastic plate, the kinds of metal he had used, and the different settings on the transformer. He finished by telling how Duchess had sailed off into space.

At this, Professor Jordan looked more closely at the transformer hookup. "You say the settings are still the same?"

"Yes, sir, it's still the same. I haven't changed a thing except to pull the plate out in the hall."

"Have you tried it since your father was caught?"

"No, sir . . . in all the excitement I haven't gotten around to fooling with it again."

The professor walked out in the hall, reached in his pocket for a handkerchief, tossed it over the plate. It rose! Straight up, and stuck to the ceiling!

"My gosh! Jim blurted. "Somebody must have plugged that thing in again!"

Mary and Johnny, who were watching in silence, both spoke up to say that neither of them had. Jim reached down and picked up the AC line. Sure

enough, it *wasn't* plugged in!

"Well, this is going to take some studying," Professor Jordan muttered, looking rather awed at Jim's gadget. "Jim, let's start at the beginning again, and be sure you tell me everything you did, every move you made, what kind of metal you used, how finely divided it was, what concentration you used and what voltages and frequencies you used."

"I'll try, Professor," Jim said, "But it's going to be sort of a hit or miss proposition because I fiddled with this thing for an hour or so before accidentally dropping my cigarettes on the plate. When they went up, I was surprised, to say the least, so I tried other things."

"What we've got to figure out first of all, is whether it was caused by a combination of changes, or whether it was the last setting you used," Professor Jordan said. "If it was a combination of voltage and frequency changes, then we've certainly got a problem on our hands."

All this time of course, Mary and Johnny had been standing more or less open-mouthed, listening, and I, from my vantage point high on the ceiling, had been taking it all in too.

"Can you think of any way to run the experiment over?" The

professor asked. "Do you think you can remember the formula for the plastic plate?"

Jim thought a moment, snapped his fingers and said, "By golly, I believe I've got another piece of that plastic around here somewhere. I made it up at school and had to cut a little piece off so I could get it in my suitcase. I'll see if I can find it." And stepping gingerly around the plate in the hall he came back into the room and started rummaging around in his luggage.

The professor looked at me. "Mr. Wilson, what sort of sensation did you have when you stepped on the plate?"

"Well, as near as I can remember, I *don't* remember," I said. "I started to reach up and pull Duchess down, and the next thing I knew my head hit the ceiling. Still got a bump big as an Easter egg."

"Did you have a giddy, light sensation?"

"No, as I say, I don't remember anything but the whack on the head."

About that time, Jim hollered, "Hey! I found it! Now maybe we can find out what goes on here."

Jim and the professor very carefully disconnected the transformer from the plate in the hall,

made sure the dial settings were the same, then hooked up the new plate. It was a lot smaller than the first one, being only about six inches wide and two feet long.

"I wonder if shape has anything to do with it?" the professor mused.

"We'll find out in a minute," said Jim. "Everybody stand back now, and I'll plug in the transformer."

He plugged it in and in a few seconds the plate began to glow the same as the other one. "We'll give it a few more seconds," Jim said, "then we'll see if it works."

The professor fumbled around in his pockets, started to toss his pipe onto the plate, thought better of it and put it back in his pocket. Johnny, who had been watching the whole proceedings, pulled out his Boy Scout knife. "You can use this, Professor."

Professor Jordan took the knife, got up close to the plate, gave it a toss, and plunk! It flew over the plate and went straight to the ceiling! And stuck!

"Well, thank goodness, we know it's the present combination of voltage and frequency, and not a series of changes," Jim said, relieved.

"Yes, and size and shape apparently have little to do with it too," the professor answered. "Now all we have to do is find

out why. That's our problem."

"And how long it lasts too," said Jim, glancing up at me. Then turning to the professor; "Sir, I've been wondering what you think of the idea that maybe these plates change the electrical charge of whatever object is placed on them, or over them."

"I had that thought too, Jim, when I found out we couldn't turn that plate off. Any ideas how we might go about grounding or dissipating the charge?"

"Or getting me down from here? I don't know if you or Jim realize it, but old Mother Nature is going to make things rather uncomfortable for me pretty soon. I've been up here for almost eight hours already, and I'm getting a bit uneasy, to say the least."

For the first time the professor's eyes crinkled a bit at the corners, and looking up at me, he chuckled, "Mr. Wilson, you've brought up a rather touchy subject, and we'll hurry as fast as we can."

Mary came in then with some more sandwiches and coffee, and I went through the same routine with the straw, only this time I got choked. Thank Heaven I did! That sounds funny, but while I was coughing and sputtering, spewing coffee all over the place, Jim had walked over so that he

was right under me. He stood for a moment watching me sputter, then let out a whoop and hollered.

"Hey! Dad! Professor! Mom! I've got it! I've got it," He paused a second, then, "I hope . . ."

I was still sputtering, but Mary and Professor Jordan both grabbed him and started asking questions . . . "What are you talking about? What's your idea?"

"Professor, did you see what happened to the coffee?"

"Your father got choked, why?"

"When he sputtered, did you see what happened? The coffee went up!"

"Well, yes, it did. But I don't see . . . By jove! Wait a minute! I see what you're driving at!" And turning to Mary, the professor added, "Mrs. Wilson, do you have a garden hose long enough to reach into this room?"

Mary was shocked. I was still listening between sputters.

"Why, yes, we have. What are you going to do?"

"I hate to tell you this, Mother," Jim said, "But if Professor Jordan is going to do what I think he's going to do, you're not going to be very happy about it. Neither is Dad."

"But we hope to get Mr. Wilson down," the professor said,

"Even though it may get a little damp in here."

"If you can get Ralph down, I won't mind how damp it gets," said Mary. And turning to Johnny, who was standing open-mouthed, "Johnny, will you hook up the hose?"

"Yes, Johnny, and run it through the window so it'll come inside the room," Jim explained, quickly.

This whole thing sounded like Greek to me, but by now I had recovered from the sputtering spell, and if a garden hose run through the bedroom window would get me down I was certainly in favor of it. "Will this garden hose scheme you both seem to have thought of really work?"

"We hope so, Dad. It's going to make a mess in my room, but it's worth a try."

"What do I do, climb down it?"

"In effect you do," said the professor. "We'll know in a little while, I hope."

"Will someone unhook the screen?" Johnny was outside.

Jim unhooked the screen and pulled the hose into the room. "Do you want to try it, Professor?"

"Yes, but first, let's clear things out of the way."

"Hey!" I hollered. "You're not

going to turn that hose on in here are you?"

The professor chuckled. "Hope you don't mind too much, but we hope it'll get you down."

"Well, I sure don't see . . ."

"Dad, the professor and I had the same idea. Maybe I can explain it . . . you see, apparently anything you come in contact with takes on a bit of your 'charge.' In the case of the coffee, the small drops became charged and went up. I imagine that the plates and cups picked up a small charge too, while you held them, but it wasn't enough to make them rise. Is that about right, Professor?"

"It seems that way, Jim. Anyway, it's worth a try." The professor looked up at me, "Mr. Wilson, I'm afraid you aren't going to care much for this. As soon as we clear the room a bit I'm going to turn the hose on you."

My mouth dropped open. "Turn the ho . . .?"

"Yes . . . You see, if whatever you touch picks up a bit of the charge, then about the quickest way to 'discharge' you would be to touch you with a large volume of something. Water sounds logical, doesn't it?"

"Well, I suppose so," I mumbled. "But, there must be something . . . some other way . . ."

"There may be, Dad," Jim

said, "but you want to get down from there fast, don't you? OK! Here we go!"

So, Jim turned the water on and in a few minutes of course, I was soaked through my bathrobe and pajamas, right to the skin. Johnny was looking through the window laughing fit to kill, and with a look of horror on her face, Mary was watching the water cascading across the ceiling and down into the room. Jim and Professor Jordan were watching me like hawks. Waiting for me to fall, I guess. Fortunately the weather was warm, because the water certainly wasn't. This must have gone on for an hour, but it apparently wasn't, because when they turned the water off, Jim said to the professor, "I hope you timed that, sir. I forgot to."

The professor had, and it turned out to be about ten minutes. He looked up at me, "Do you feel any lighter?"

"What do you mean, lighter?"

He grinned. "I mean can you push yourself away from the ceiling?"

I rolled over on my side and tried to push. By golly! I *did* seem to move a little easier! "I may be a little lighter, Professor, or maybe it's my imagination, but turn that hose on again!"

Splat! On it came, and it's

been on and off and on and off for, let me see, this must be the third day now. And I don't mind telling you I'm not going to need a bath for at least two months when I get down. When I get down! Do you know where I am right now? I'm about two feet from the ceiling, which puts me still ten feet from the floor . . . hanging there in the air like the assistant to an Indian fakir! Only this is no trick.

Oh, it's not so bad now; I'm wearing swimming trunks and Jim and Professor Jordan with the assistance of Johnny and Mary, rigged a sort of trough arrangement to carry the 'charged' water out of the window and up into the sky. The water that didn't pick up a charge and fell to the floor is being pumped out the window with a hand pump. Oh, yes, they had to dam up the doorway to

keep the rest of the house from being inundated. And I shudder every time I think how much damage has been done to Jim's bedroom. I'm coming down though, slowly, and Professor Jordan has it figured that at the present rate it's going to take five to six more days. I don't know how he came to that conclusion, but I sure hope he's right and hasn't underestimated. The constant soaking has my skin looking like damp corduroy. All over too.

What about the transformer and plate? Well, I believe Professor Jordan is going to take a leave of absence and he and Jim are going to do some full time research on the device, whatever it is. They both think it has many possibilities. So do I, but I'm going to keep my feet on the ground. If they ever get there!
