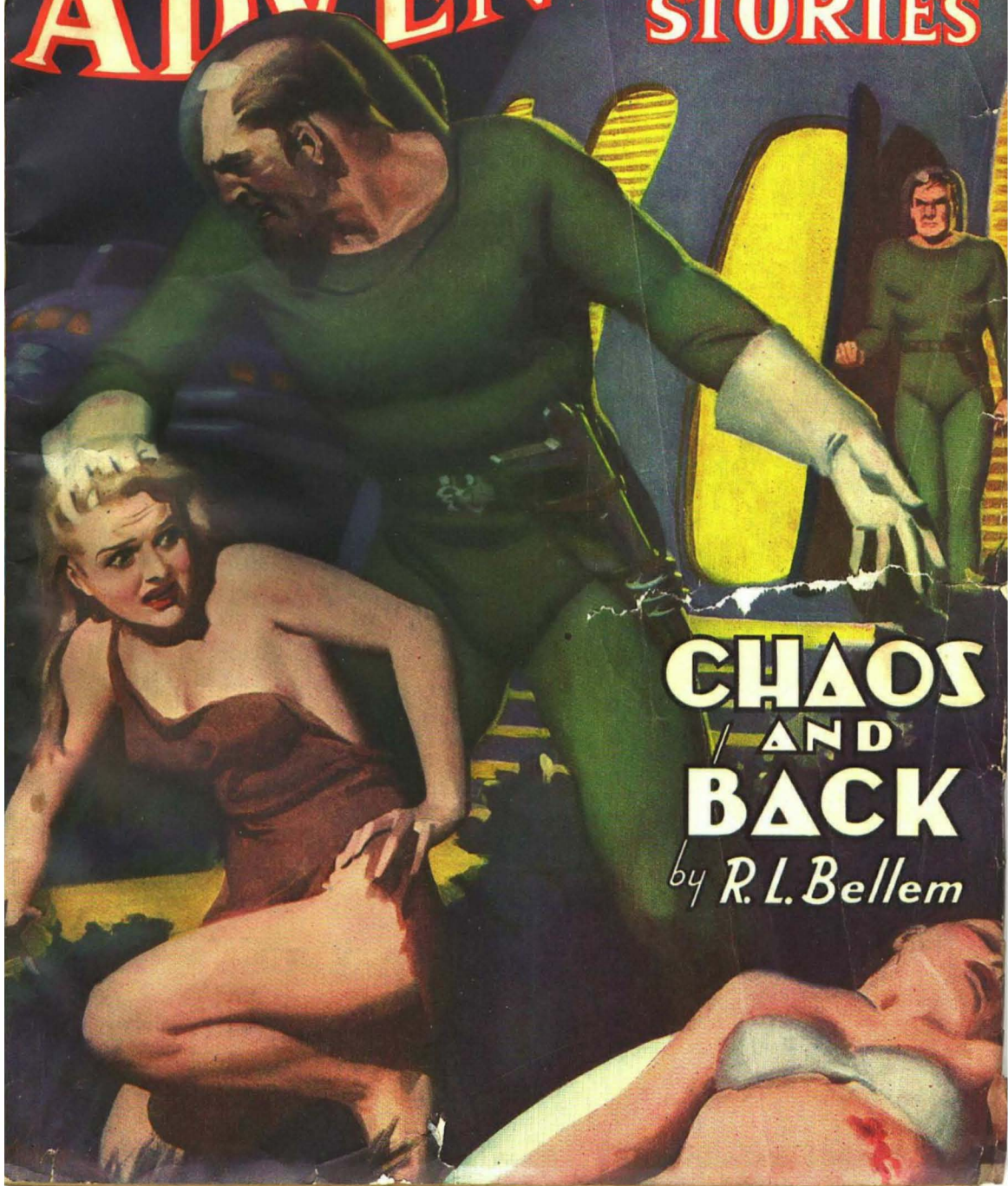


JULY ★

25¢

SPICY-ADVENTURE STORIES

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**CHAOS
AND
BACK**

by R. L. Bellem



SPICY ADVENTURE STORIES



JULY, 1941

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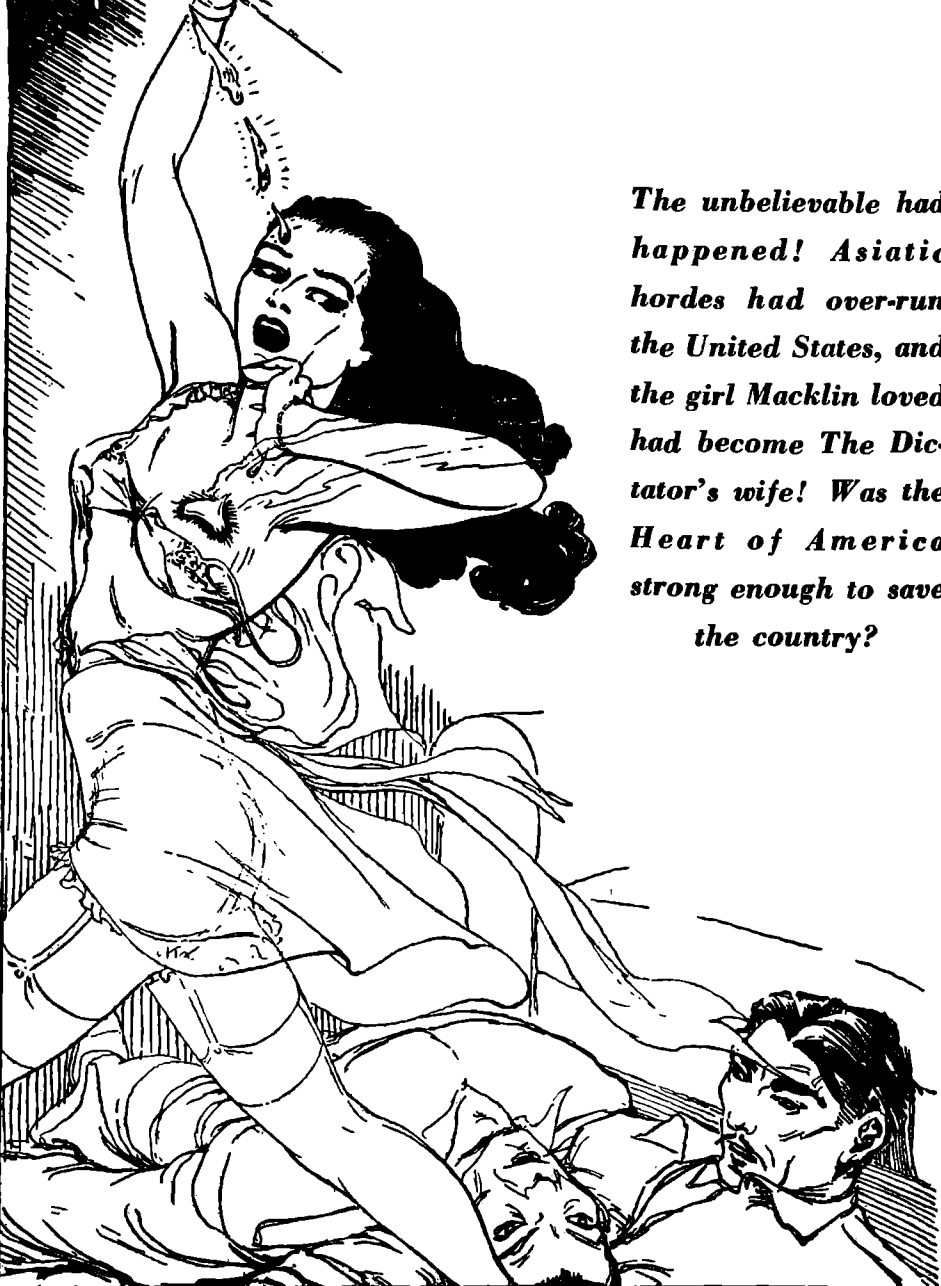
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and

The unbelievable had happened! Asiatic hordes had over-run the United States, and the girl Macklin loved had become The Dictator's wife! Was the Heart of America strong enough to save the country?



BACK

By **ROBERT
LESLIE
BELLEM**

FOR Mark Macklin, freedom had a bitter taste. He was under no restraint as he walked along Pennsylvania Avenue that afternoon; yet he was conscious of imprisonment surrounding each step he took.

That was because of the yellow men: the storm-troopers, the police, the soldiers. It seemed incredible for Washington to be in the hands of these Asiatic interlopers,

but it was true. They had conquered America; and the thought so blinded Mark Macklin that he forgot to step off into the gutter as a Jap officer swaggered by.

A snake-hiss of fury from the Nipponese made Macklin aware of the enormity of his blunder. But before he could rectify it, a stab of pain seared into his belly. Involuntarily he doubled forward.

The knife turned white hot in her grasp and molten drops fell on her.



"Please—turn it off—you're frying my guts—!"

The Jap grinned maliciously. "Very amusing. Six feet and a hundred seventy pounds of American manhood cringing like a cur when you taste the Ray. Where is your vaunted Caucasian supremacy now, dog?"

"God—switch it off—" Macklin groveled on his knees, hating himself for it but knowing he must make a convincing show of cowardice. That was the only way you could save yourself from these slant-eyed devils; otherwise they burned you to a cinder, left your corpse for the scavenger detail. During the nation's twelvemonth of yellow occupation, white men had learned this lesson cruelly well.

Smirking, the Asiatic officer holstered his ray-gun, the weapon whose scientific principle had made possible the conquest of America. Electrically activated, the gun emanated a force which turned ferrous metals crucible-hot. With such an arm, the Jap invaders had made short work of defense efforts.

RAY-BLASTS had exploded the powder magazines in American warships, melted naval hulls to glowing scrap. Landing forces swept United States infantry out of existence by causing Garand rifles and cartridge bandoliers to blow up. Coast artillery had been reduced to molten slag; and within a month, America surrendered because she was unable to cope with this death-dealing ray that turned steel and iron to hell-hot liquidity!

As it must to all defeated peo-

ples, a species of enslavement then came to the citizens of the United States. Every American was required to wear a special steel identification disc on his person, like a shameful badge of servitude. It was just such a disc that Mark Macklin now wore—and which was the cause of his present pain, his abject groveling. You humbled yourself to these arrogant Orientals or they turned the Y-ray on your identification badge and seared you to a cinder!

The uniformed Jap smirked again. "Next time remember to get off the sidewalk!" Then his almond eyes narrowed and an old saber scar writhed wormlike on his left cheek. "Haven't I seen you somewhere before? In a concentration camp?"

"Yes, sir. I'm Mark Macklin."

That name had meant plenty in the early days of the Invasion. As the country's foremost experimenter in the science of plastics, Macklin had been on the verge of perfecting a new synthetic from which guns and armor could have been moulded; armament containing no metal and which consequently would neither melt nor explode if subjected to the Y-ray.

With such a material the United States might have re-girded itself, repelled the Asiatic invaders; but before production could start, Congress unconditionally surrendered. And Macklin, too dangerous to be allowed freedom, had been imprisoned by the Japs. His liberty, now, seemed to enrage the scar-faced officer afresh. The yellow man again whipped out his ray-gun.

"How did you get loose, dog?"

Speak quickly before I melt your bowels!"

"I was released by order of the White House . . . I mean the Dictator's Palace," Macklin hastily amended his verbal slip. "I was told to present myself at the Palace immediately."

The officer scowled. "I happen to be Colonel Saburo of the Palace guard. Come; we'll see if you are lying!"

As a matter of fact, Macklin was telling the strict truth. This was proven when Colonel Saburo made a checkup inside the building which formerly had been the White House, but which was now the residence of America's Japanese ruler, Marshal Fangishi.

"Certainly," a bespectacled secretary of Fangishi's staff said. "This white dog was summoned by the wife of our master, the Marshal. Even now she awaits him in her private suite."

The scar-faced Saburo seemed annoyed. He bared his teeth and said: "So be it. Begone, scum!"

Macklin bowed humbly and followed the bespectacled secretary, who led him up a flight of stairs, indicated a door and left him. Knocking at the portal, Macklin wondered what this was all about. Why should the wife of the invading Japanese warlord send for him? Confound it, he didn't even know her; and he didn't care to. He wasn't interested in Oriental women—

THE door opened. A cool, detached feminine voice said: "Hello, Mark. How well you look." And Macklin, staring stupidly at the golden-haired girl

who thus addressed him, felt as if someone had slugged him across the soul with a bludgeon.

This was no Asiatic woman. This was an American girl, lovely, blonde, slender yet nubile in the first flush of youthful maturity. She was Elayne Dexter—and *she'd been Mark Macklin's fiancée up to the time of his imprisonment by the invaders.*

Seeing her, hearing her voice for the first time in so many months, was like the crystallization of a dream. Macklin, for a brief moment, was wordless. He was remembering that enigmatic and ambiguous letter he had received from her during his first week in the concentration camp; a letter breaking their engagement without explanation. After that there had been only silence. . .

He found his voice at last. "Elayne!" he breathed. "Elayne—beloved!" And he sprang toward her, encircled her lissome waist with his arms, mashed her lips with the demanding hunger of his mouth.

For an ecstatic instant it seemed almost that she yielded to him. He could feel the rising pressure of her young breasts, firm, magnificently mounded, swelling upon his chest like pulsating cushions of warmth, and then, without warning, she struggled out of his embrace.

And she whanged him across the face with her open palm!

Bewildered, he stared at her. "Elayne—!" he choked.

Her answering glance was cool, unemotional. "You should know better than to lay your hands on the Dictator's wife," she said in

a voice as impersonal as the sound of water purling on rocks.

MARK MACKLIN recoiled as if she had plunged a bayonet into him. "You—you mean you're—?"

"Yes. His Excellency Marshal Haraki Fangashi is my husband. What is so startling about that?"

Macklin tried to steady himself. He had seen newspaper cuts of the Dictator: fat, toadlike, bloated with puffy arrogance and good living. That Elayne Dexter should have married this repulsive yellow man, racially alien and physically repellent, seemed incomprehensible. It was sickening to envision her in Fangashi's arms. . . .

Yet it must be true, because Elayne's azure eyes were silently signaling to Mark Macklin; expressively trying to convey a wordless message to him. For this reason as well as for another one which he dared not indicate at the moment, Macklin struggled for calmness.

He summoned an impassive smile. "Forgive me for being surprised, Elayne. I had no idea you were married. It . . . well, it sort of took me off my feet. Anyhow, will you accept my congratulations? I hope you'll be happy."

"I am happy," she assured him evenly. And that was when her Oriental husband waddled asthmatically into the room.

Mark Macklin knew at once that this whole scene had been in the nature of a test-trap for Elayne. There could be no other explanation for Marshal Fangashi's nearness, his sudden entrance. The corpulent Dictator must have been

eavesdropping just beyond those velvet drapes to see if his wife would respond to the caresses of her former fiancé.

And Elayne, apparently realizing the situation's peril, had reacted in the only possible way to avert danger.

As if in proof of all this, the toadlike Fangashi went to Elayne and took her in his arms, slobbered his lips across her snowy shoulder. "You are indeed worthy of my love, little blossom. You rejected your former suitor, and it is well."

She stirred in his embrace in a manner that almost drove Mark insane with jealousy as he watched. "God!" he whispered inaudibly, and his clenched fingers dug blood from his palms.

Then Fangashi turned to him. "You, too, passed the test excellently."

"What test?" the American's voice was bitter.

"When you were told that Elayne had a husband, you accepted it with calmness; wished her happiness. Which shows you are a man of discretion—and brings me to the real reason for having you come here."

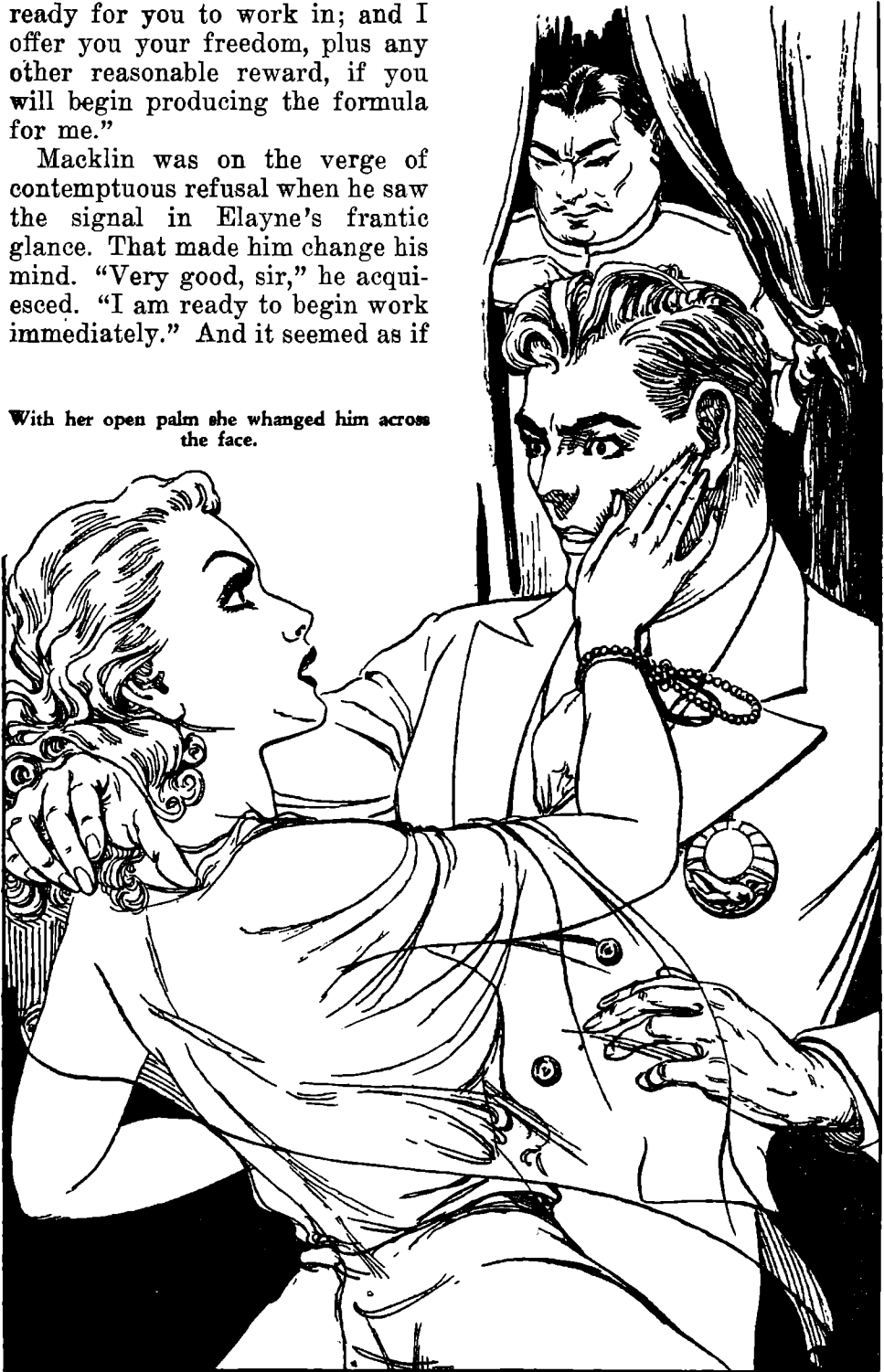
Macklin's eyes narrowed. So there was another reason for his release from the concentration camp; a reason beyond the testing of Elayne's marital fidelity! He waited.

Fangashi said: "You are a research chemist in the field of moulded plastics. You had almost perfected a new synthetic at the time of your government's surrender. Well, I want that new synthetic. I have a laboratory all

ready for you to work in; and I offer you your freedom, plus any other reasonable reward, if you will begin producing the formula for me."

Macklin was on the verge of contemptuous refusal when he saw the signal in Elayne's frantic glance. That made him change his mind. "Very good, sir," he acquiesced. "I am ready to begin work immediately." And it seemed as if

With her open palm she whanged him across the face.



the words fettered his soul in the handcuffs of treachery. . .

THE laboratory they gave him turned out to be amazingly well equipped. In effect it was almost a factory; vast quantities of the Macklin-synthesized plastic could be produced and fabricated here, once the machinery got rolling.

But Mark Macklin wasn't interested in such things. Not now. He wanted solitude for a few minutes; freedom from prying almond eyes. And at last he found it in the private office which the Japs told him would be his exclusive quarters.

Alone at last, Macklin brought a tiny glass capsule out of his mouth: an ampule which had reposed under his tongue for the past hour or more—ever since he had kissed Elayne on the lips, back at the Dictator's Palace. *Elayne had passed the capsule to him at that moment!*

Now he broke it open, extracted the small twisted spill of rice-paper it contained. A message had been written on the paper, tiny, hairline-scrawled:

"Mark, beloved—

I know you are being brought to see me and I know we'll be watched. So this is my only way of communicating the truth to you. When you've read this note, destroy it.

First, I want you to know I love you even though I am Marshal Fangashi's wife. Marrying him was the sacrifice I made for my country. Later you will

understand more fully . . . and perhaps forgive me!

Tonight at midnight, go to your new laboratory office. Be sure nobody sees you. Under your desk you'll find a trapdoor, and a passage—which will lead you to the heart of America!

*Your own
Elayne."*

Even as Mark Macklin read the letter and tried to digest its amazing contents, he was interrupted. A girl entered his office without the formality of knocking; a Japanese girl. Macklin whirled, concealing the letter in his palm; stared at his feminine intruder.

She smiled boldly. "Did I startle you? Forgive me. I am your new private secretary, Petal Saburo." And she preened herself, like a small yellow cat.

Macklin studied her; and his intuition sensed a dangerous aura about her well-formed figure—a menace in the veiled glitter of her slanted eyes. For an Oriental woman she was strangely beautiful, her complexion creamy, her breasts full and pouting under a tight dress, her hips sleekly lyric. But beneath this veneer of allure-ment there was something ruthless. . .

Then he thought he understood. "Petal Saburo," he said. "A nice name. Could you be related to Colonel Saburo of the Palace guard?"

"He is my brother." And her expression suddenly reminded Mark Macklin of that scar-faced officer who had humiliated him on the sidewalk; an expression of

arrogance, of contempt for all conquered Caucasians.

Macklin's instinct told him that this Oriental girl was more than merely a secretary; she was probably a spy as well, placed in her present position by her brother in order to keep Macklin himself under constant surveillance. Well, forewarned was forearmed. He smiled into her slanted dark eyes. "I think you and I should hit it off very nicely together," he said. "And now let's see about getting my formula under way."

"Good," the Saburo girl said; and she went with Macklin into the main laboratory. There, for the next many hours, the American chemist buried himself in work; tried savagely not to think about the note which Elayne had slipped to him in that one brief kiss. . .

Like a man emerging from a dream, Mark eventually took cognizance of the time. "Eleven-thirty at night!" he gasped. "I had no idea I'd been concentrating so long!"

Petal Saburo, who'd remained beside him throughout the long hours at test-tubes and retorts, smiled wearily through a yawn. "Working for you is going to be difficult, I can see that."

He was contrite; ostentatiously so. "I should've sent you home ages ago. Forgive me. You may go now."

"And you? Are you not leaving?"

"Just as soon as I conclude this experiment," he answered casually. But his easy manner dropped away like a cloak when he was at last alone. Switching off the build-

ing's lights, he tiptoed toward his private office; chanced the striking of a match beneath his desk.

HIS eyes widened. Unless you knew what to look for, you'd never have noticed that concealed trapdoor. But Macklin found it at once; raised it and lowered himself into the pitch-dark aperture. His feet encountered the rungs of a ladder. He descended slowly until he found himself in a winding subterranean passage. Then, groping around a bend, he was abruptly bathed in light.

A well-remembered voice thrilled him. "Mark . . . darling!" And then Elayne Dexter was in his arms.

The fragrance of her golden hair was like a heady intoxicant to Macklin's senses. Through a thin silken frock her unbrassiered charms melted to the conformations of his own stalwart chest; she pressed her dainty body to his, surrendering herself to his thirsty lips. For a little while they were like rudderless ships tossed and buffeted in a tidal wave, clinging together, murmuring endearments, welded into a single integer by their love.

Even if there had been witnesses, it would have been the same. Mark's mouth feasted at the throbbing white hollow of her throat, where only that afternoon he had seen her Jap husband's lips straying. The very thought of Marshal Fangashi possessing her seemed to add fresh fuel to the flames of Macklin's yearning. "Elayne . . . sweet . . .!" he whispered. "I can't help myself. . ."

She gave him no answer in

words, but her eyes were azure wells of willingness and sultry anticipation. . .

A LONG while later, Elayne took time to explain the situation. "Fangashi seemed to think me desirable; offered me marriage. And I accepted—"

"But why?" Macklin interrupted harshly. "How could you let that yellow toad kiss you . . . make love to you. . .?"

"For two reasons, Mark darling. Had I refused his proposal of marriage he might have taken me anyhow; as a . . . a slave. Moreover, as his wife, I would be in a better position to help our secret organization, the Heart of America. Remember, I mentioned it to you in my note?"

Macklin nodded. "Tell me more."

She sketched the details for him. American patriots, working under cover, were laying plans for the day when they would overthrow the Nipponese yoke. Washington itself, like many another metropolitan center, was secretly tunneled with these subterranean passageways, where meetings were held. "And this very tunnel in which we stand," Elayne concluded, "will be the major channel through which the United States will regain its freedom—*thanks to you.*"

"To me?" Mark Macklin whispered in amazement.

"Yes." And she told him the dangerous job to which he was being assigned; a task that would mean his death if the Japs should discover it.

The plan's simplicity amazed

him. Barring unforeseen developments it couldn't fail. And the scheme's main burden fell upon Macklin's shoulders. Instinctively he straightened them; stood erect, like a soldier, as he bade Elayne goodbye.

Then he went back up the ladder to the secret trapdoor under his office desk.

THE weeks that followed were a chaos of activity for Mark Macklin. His formula perfected, his methods of production elaborated upon, he soon had the entire factory humming with a huge output of his new synthetic plastic—and his Japanese masters beamed approval as they found more and more new uses for the all-purpose substance.

But the Asiatics would not have been so content had they known a certain proportion of the plant's product was being diverted, daily, and sent down that tunnel under Macklin's desk. Workers in those underground passages, American patriots and members of the freedom organization, received the diverted stuff and took it to subterranean chambers where it was processed and moulded in a certain manner, then shipped to branch cells all over the conquered nation.

And then, one midnight, Mark Macklin was discovered as he emerged from the underground tunnel.

It was Petal Saburo, his Japanese secretary, who saw him coming out from under his desk. "What in the world—?" she exclaimed sharply; and her slanted eyes became slits of suspicion under down-drawn brows.

Fangashi's fist chopped down on her throat. She choked, and her eyes went glassy.



Macklin's brain raced. "I—er, I lost a coin. It rolled under the desk and I was hunting for it." That sounded lame, but his thoughts weren't functioning too clearly; the surprise of seeing the Asiatic girl there in his office had made him almost speechless.

Nor could he tell, from her face, whether she was aware of the fact that he had lied. She merely lifted a shapely shoulder and purred: "A lost coin. Is money so important to you, then?"

"I'm not too well supplied with it."

She smiled faintly. "And if you were, what would you buy?"

"Well . . ." he fished for thoughts. "Pleasures, perhaps. The luxuries of life."

"There are some pleasures one needn't pay for." Was that a hint of invitation in her tone, Macklin wondered? "There are some luxuries a man sometimes doesn't even realize are available—until they are called to his attention."

Now he was sure of it. She was baiting him, tempting him. There was no mistaking that smoky, smouldering expression in her eyes—or the swift lift and fall of her breasts, twin rounded hints of potential fervor. . .

He stepped toward her. No use beating about the bush, he thought. "I've always wanted to see your apartment," he said decisively. "But I never mentioned it because I was afraid you wouldn't like the idea. After all, you're Japanese—the ruling race. I'm American—the despised white."

Her laughter tinkled, mocking him. "You *are* a stupid fellow!

Or perhaps blind. . . ! Anyhow, come along. I've some rice wine at home. It may lend you courage. . ."

SOMEHOW the conceit amused him, after he had made himself comfortable in her incense-fragrant quarters out on Fourteenth Street, northwest. Rice wine for courage? "Not at all, my dear!" he grinned when she emerged slinkily from her boudoir; and he grabbed her, began caressing her.

He didn't want to; there was no genuine thrill in it, even though she had removed her frock in favor of a clinging satin negligee that stressed her curvesome figure. Elayne Dexter was the only girl he loved; the only one he ever could love. This Saburo woman stirred him but shallowly; he paid court to her now only because of necessity. If he could delude her into thinking that he had fallen for her, she might not remember the suspicious circumstance surrounding his coming out from under that desk in his private office. . .

So he did his best to enact the ardent lover. He kissed the Japanese girl's eyelids, her cheeks, her sensual mouth. Her breasts were full and firm and rounded, tempting in spite of everything.

He crushed her in his arms, then; mashed her against the upholstery. Her flesh was hot and throbbing, her eyes closed. And then—

"Very good, my sweet sister!" a voice rasped from the doorway. "You may push the dog away. I have him covered."

Mark Macklin sprang upright;

pivoted. Colonel Saburo, the scar-faced Jap officer, was standing across the room with drawn ray-gun, backed by four guardsmen. And now Petal Saburo arose from the divan, laughing in her throat.

"Now, white cur!" she said. "Now you will die. I have long suspected something treacherous about you. Tonight when I saw you under your desk, I knew the time had come to act. I lured you here to my flat; and while I was in my boudoir, undressing, I contacted my brother."

The Japanese colonel nodded. "Right. And I investigated your secret tunnel-passageway; arrested several plotters! Now, scum, say your prayers!" He triggered the Y-ray full at Mark Macklin's steel identification disc.

BUT nothing happened. And Mark Macklin roared with savage triumph. "Damn your ray, you yellow rat!" he chortled. "It can't hurt me—any more than it can hurt forty million other American fighting men! We've checkmated you, my friend; and your raid on our tunnel tonight was all we needed to send this country into full revolt! All over the land, citizens of the United States have been waiting for just that kind of move to start the ball rolling!"

Saburo's lips writhed as he squeezed his ray-trigger again "By the gods of war, I cannot understand it! Your identification disc should be white-hot—your guts should be burned—"

Once more Mark Macklin laughed. "It so happens that my slave-disc isn't metal! *It's a counterfeit, moulded from my own*

secret plastic—and your ray can't melt it!"

"You mean—?"

"I mean millions of the counterfeit slave-plates have been distributed to Americans. And that breaks your ray-grip on us! Because the ray is your only weapon; you discarded guns a long time ago as obsolescent and useless. Well, when Yankee fighting men start at you, they'll have no metal on them—and they won't be afraid of your damnable Y-ray!"

Saburo took a backward step. "You will be unarmed—"

That was when Macklin's grim amusement welled over. "Unarmed? You've forgotten something, rat. *An American is always armed as long as he has his fists.*" And he hurled himself at the yellow colonel's throat.

Saburo tried to evade that headlong rush, but it was impossible. Macklin snatched him, lifted him high in the air and literally catapulted him through the nearest window. Glass shattered outward and the scar-faced Asiatic screamed hideously as he went plunging over the sill to destruction ten floors below. Then hell broke loose.

The colonel's four guardsmen fanned out, trying to capture this berserk American chemist who had just slain their commanding officer. But Macklin was too fast for them. He leaped onto a table, dived feet-first at the oncoming soldiers. His heels crunched home to a saffron mouth, pulping it. Landing prone, he rolled over and over; felled two more squealing adversaries. His hands closed about

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Chaos and Back

{Continued from page 29}

their necks and he smacked their shaven pates together with a horrid, *thunk-crunch* sound. Now there was only one guardsman left. He was trying to get away.

Macklin picked up a heavy vase; threw it. The uniformed man went down, his brains spraying.

But even in the moment of his triumph, Mark Macklin felt a sharp jab of agony through his back. He gasped, choked, pulled away. He saw Petal Saburo with a crimson-dripping knife in her fist. And he knew that she had stabbed him through the lungs. . .

"She-wolf!" he rasped. He bent down, snatched a ray-gun, turned it on her. The Oriental woman screeched hellishly as the knife turned white-hot in her fist. She tried to drop it but the metal handle had fused to her cooked palm. Somehow, in her struggles, she raised the blade—just as it turned molten.

Liquid steel dripped down upon her breast, frying that mollescent dome of ivory flesh to sickening redness. Still maniacally screaming, Petal Saburo collapsed—and died.

PANTING, bleeding internally, his strength waning, Mark Macklin turned and sped from the apartment. He made it downstairs to the street. Washington was a shambles. From every alley, from every hidden meeting-place, Americans had burst out of concealment and fallen upon Japanese soldiery. And the Japs, armed only with their Y-ray guns, were the same as impotent against this onslaught of enraged United States citizens who had no fear of the ray, now.

Macklin smiled bloodily as he saw a grim-eyed white man smash three squalling Japs against a brick wall and kick them unconscious. "Good . . . work . . ." Mack-

lin applauded, knowing that the same sort of scenes were being enacted from Atlantic to Pacific. By morning the yellow yoke would be broken; an enslaved nation would once again be free!

And Mark Macklin, with his moulded plastic identification discs which resembled steel, but which in reality were impervious to the Y-ray, was responsible for all this. His invention had enabled his countrymen to throw off their shackles of fear. The task had been his, and he had done it well.

But he was not yet finished. There remained one more job for him to accomplish. And he slogged forward toward the White House, fighting against the pain of his stabbed back.

He gained the grounds. A sentry tried to stop him with the Y-ray. Macklin laughed and hit the fellow in the guts; doubled him over. "I'd kill you if I had the time," the American snarled. Then he pressed onward.

The palace was dead ahead; its door stood open. Macklin trudged wearily over the threshold—and then he heard a scream. A woman's scream. *Elayne Dexter's scream!*

It galvanized the research chemist; sent new strength into him. He gathered his muscles, catapulted himself forward. Then he drew up short. "You foul swine!" he choked.

MARSHAL Fangashi, the Dictator, stood over by a window—apparently getting ready to make his escape before a white mob could lay hands on him. And the fat yellow man was not alone. He

had his pudgy fingers entwined in Elayne's golden hair and he was holding her head far back so that her flawless throat was arched, throbbing, exposed.

Spotting Mark Macklin, the Asiatic ruler grinned evilly. With his free hand he clawed at Elayne's dress; ripped it away from her trembling body. Her lovely white breasts spilled into view, palpitant, creamy. "Stand back!" Fangashi yelled; and he made a pudgy fist. "Stand back or this girl dies!"

"You wouldn't?—"

Fangashi's lips writhed fatly. "I know enough of jiu-jitsu to be able to kill her with one stroke of my hand. Now will you stand back?"

It was Elayne who made Macklin's decision for him. "Mark—darling—don't let him get away! He might rally the Japanese forces, turn the tide. But if you capture him, America will be free. Get him, Mark—and never mind wh-what happens to me—!"

Mark Macklin acted. He sprinted toward his quarry.

Even as he made the move, Fangashi's fist chopped downward; connected cruelly with Elayne's lovely throat. She choked horridly; her eyes went glassy. She slumped. . .

And then Macklin came to grips with the Dictator.

"You saffron murderer!" he panted as he closed in. Fangashi tried to foul his way free with fingernails and knees and teeth; but Macklin's vengeance was not to be denied. The struggle was short, vicious, decisive.

And it ended with Fangashi on

the floor, his gullet ripped out by the gory roots.

Then, and only then, did Mark Macklin realize his own weakness. Loss of blood from that knife-wound had done for him. He was through, he realized.

He slumped over; landed with his cheek pillowing upon Elayne Dexter's sweet breast. Perhaps her heart was beating, perhaps not; he couldn't be sure, because he was too far gone, himself. Maybe, if help came in time, medical attention would save Elayne—and himself.

If not, it scarcely mattered. America would be free again. And Elayne's self-imposed bondage to a yellow dictator was broken at last. Her bosom was a restful cushion for Macklin's tired head. He closed his eyes and slept.
