

FANTASTIC

OCTOBER

STORIES OF IMAGINATION

DELUGE II

By Robert F. Young

THE MOTHER

By David H. Keller, M.D.

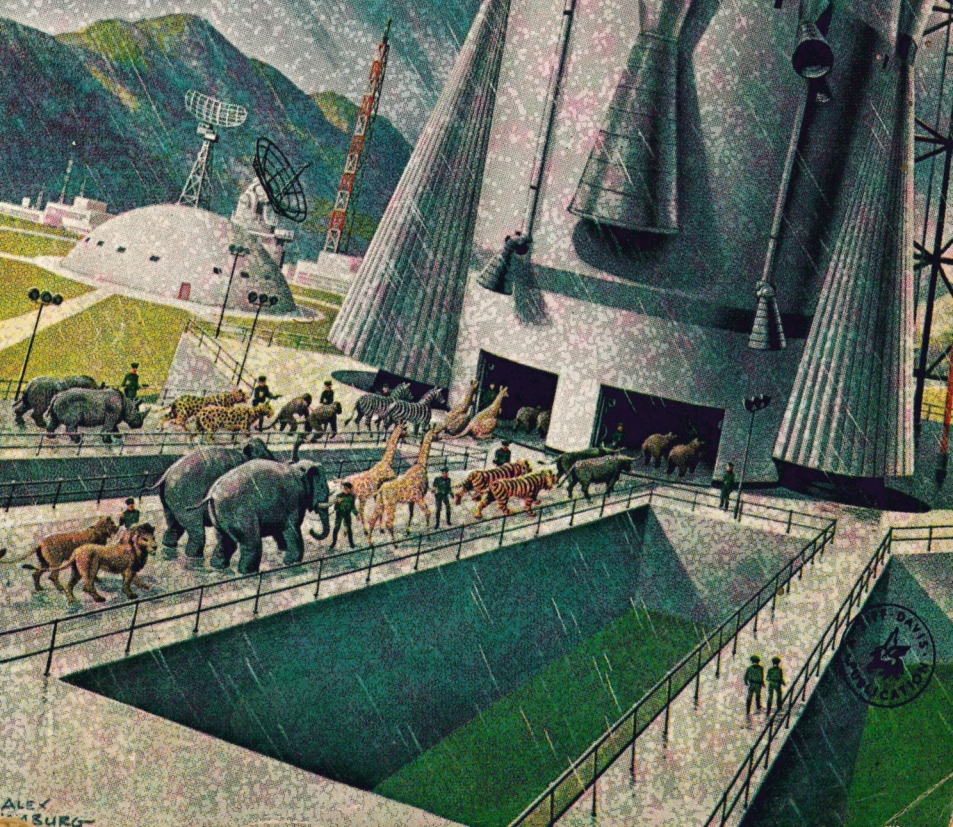
LAST DRUID

By Joseph E. Kelleam

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STORIES OF IMAGINATION

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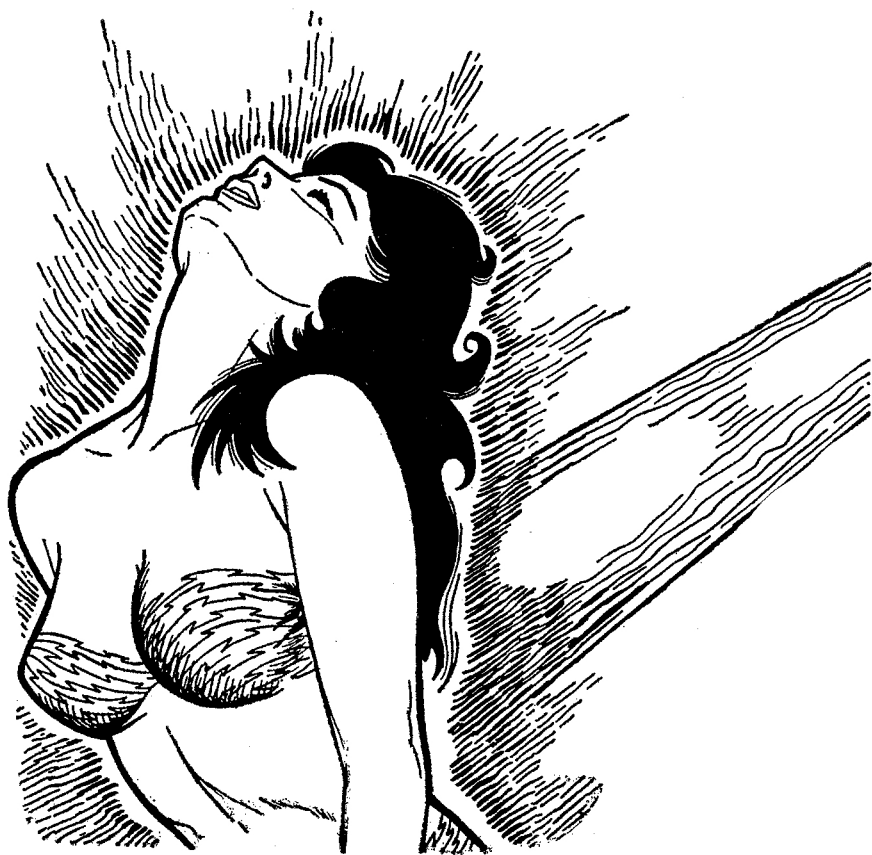
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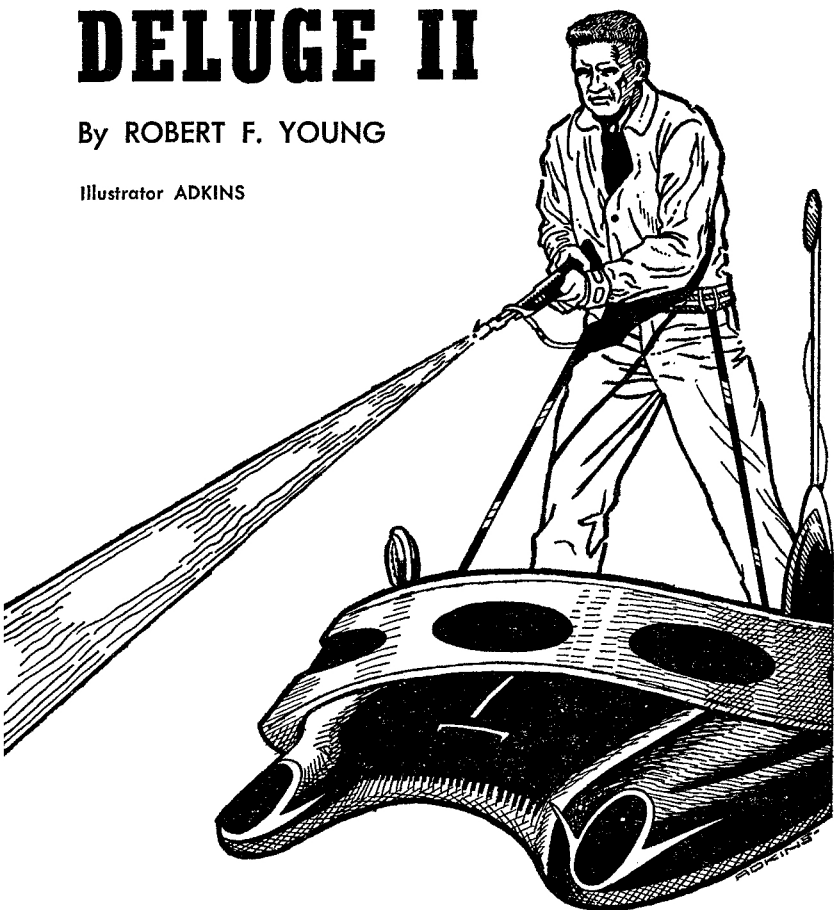
The ancient stresses were ready to tear the earth apart, and only Anton Burke was ready. He planned to choose his passenger-list with care. But when the time came, his space-ship Ark was empty—save for the strangest friends a man could have on a journey to the stars.



DELUGE II

By ROBERT F. YOUNG

Illustrator ADKINS



*The brazen throat of war
had ceased to roar; All now
was turned to jollity and
game—*

—PARADISE LOST

IN COMMON with Stendhal, he sought after mistresses; in common with Stendhal, he won but few; in common with Stendhal, he was ugly to look at; in common with Stendhal, he was gifted with foresight. But he was destined to give his world no Julien Sorel, no ex-

quisite Madame de Rênal. His world would have received them with even less grace than Stendhal's had. What he had to give was of a much more material nature—and yet, ironically, it brought him ridicule rather than fame. His name was Anton Burke.

He looked down now on the veldt over which his noiseless shooting-platform was bearing him. It was a vast veldt, and he owned every inch of it. Zebra roamed it; gnu, okapi and giraffe. Lion and lioness lolled in its sun-warmed grasses, hippopotamus and water buffalo wallowed in its muddy streams, rhinoceros and elephant grazed on its rolling plains. Incongruously there were tiger, kangaroo and ocelot. An acreage of riotous jungle harbored chimpanzee, gibbon and baboon; gorilla, *Cercopithecidae*—and orangoutang. The Veldt, as the gleaming sign above its ornate entrance on Diversion Street in Old York proclaimed, was an all-purpose hunting-ground. Anton Burke, rich to begin with, had populated it at great expense with the species of fauna that had almost been killed off during the pre-exodus era, and as a result had become even richer.

Far to his right, smoke rose in a tenuous blue-white column. There were numerous hunting-

parties abroad, and one of them could have grounded their platform in order to cook a midday meal. Or perhaps one of the maintenance androids was burning litter. Burke weighed both possibilities, tentatively rejected them. Recently the apartheid savages, whose reservation adjoined his land, had devised a means of penetrating his force-field fence and begun poaching—a circumstance that had prompted his present tour of investigation. The smoke could very well be their doing.

He veered the platform to the right, leaned back in the harness and unslung his rifle. The ground dipped into a shallow gully, and the platform lurched slightly with the change of terrain. The source of the smoke proved to be a small cook-fire on the bank of a little brook. A solitary figure squatted before it, turning a spit over the flames—the figure of a girl. She did not see the platform till it was almost over her; then, too late, she sprang to her feet and began running along the bank. Burke raised the rifle, aimed and squeezed the trigger. The girl collapsed in midstride and rolled into the brook.

HE grounded the platform, stepped off and pulled her up on the bank. She was clad in a skimpy sarong made of ante-

lope hide—standard attire for apartheid females. Her long hair was midnight-black, and her dark delicate eyebrows were so vivid that they gave the impression of having been penciled on. Her face was thin, and surprisingly young—at the very most, she couldn't be a day over thirty. Indeed, the striking symmetry of her body denoted an even younger age. The apartheidids had been less susceptible than had the coloreds to the radiation storms, and consequently sterilization had not occurred in them quite so soon.

While he was waiting for the girl to recover from the stun-charge, Burke walked back along the bank to her cook-fire. Skewered on the crude spit was a hind-quarter cut of okapi flesh. A dozen yards away, the carcass lay half-hidden in the deep grass, the shaft of a primitive spear protruding from its side. He stared at the carcass in cold fury, mentally estimating how much the girl's contemplated meal had cost him; then he kicked the spit and the fire into the brook and returned to the platform. After contacting the veldt-base on the radio-phone, he gave his location and told his wife to send out a maintenance android to pick the carcass up. It would never do for any of his carnivores to get a taste of okapi flesh, else they

might come to prefer it to the standard beef-rations each of them was fed daily. Okapis, in common with the rest of his animals, had been unaffected by the radiation storm, and their numbers were increasing. Nevertheless, they were still too rare to risk decimation.

The girl had not yet stirred. He sat down on the platform, rested his rifle on his knees and idly ran his eyes over her. He hated every inch of her, but he had to admit that every inch of her was good to look at. Ironically, the sun had tanned her skin a golden brown, and in comparison his own was lily-white. But then, he was a light-complexioned man.

As he sat there, he found himself thinking of his current mistress. Eulalie Bernard was the best Frivolity Street had to offer, but her blond beauty withered into tinselly prettiness next to the dark and vivid beauty of this savage he had felled. Eulalie hated him quite cordially, and he knew it; he also knew that she put up with him solely because he could afford a more luxurious love-nest than his rivals. However, a man in his position needed a striking mistress and Eulalie had been the most striking he could find.

A striking mistress . . . This apartheid savage now—wouldn't she be striking though?

Washed and dressed, her hair aligned in a cosmetically correct coiffeur; her crude manners disciplined to conform to the conventions of mid-twenty-sixth century society? He pictured himself showing up at the forthcoming mayorial ball in Old York with her on his arm, and he found the picture thrilling—so thrilling, in fact, that when the girl's eyes fluttered open, his heart began to pound and blood throbbed thickly in his temples.

The eyes were a deep cold blue. Loathing leaped into them the second she saw him. He directed the muzzle of the rifle at the center of her forehead. "Get up," he said.

Grudgingly she complied. He got a nylon snare-net out of the platform locker, dropped it over her upper body and secured it. He shoved her toward the platform. "Get on."

She whirled, blue eyes diamond-bright with fury. "Don't touch me, nigger!"

He drew back his hand to slap her face, but it was an empty gesture and he knew it. He was incapable of hitting anyone, Anton Burke was, and an apartheid savage was no exception. Self-contempt suffused him. "Get on," he repeated.

THIS time she complied. The platform was a standard two-man job, and after securing

her in one of the two harnesses, he secured himself in the other, lifted to sixty feet and headed back for the base. Mountains rimmed the western edge of the veldt, and for a long while nothing was visible against their misty-blue background. Gradually, however, the tall tapered shape of his reconditioned and reconverted starship emerged from the blueness, and not long afterward the dome of the old radar-telescope building that housed his veldt living-quarters could be seen gleaming in the afternoon sunlight. Beyond the dome, the base-buildings showed faintly at the feet of the mountains, and far to the right lay the deserted structures of the old Bantu staging-area.

The girl never once took her eyes from the ship from the moment it emerged from its blue background till the moment they came down in front of the dome. Despite her undisguised loathing for him, Burke found the picture he had drawn more and more intriguing. And there was an excellent chance that it could be brought to life. Poaching by an apartheid was punishable by death, and with such an alternative hanging over her head, she should prove to be most cooperative.

He ushered her into the dome and down a paneled hall to the living room. The living room oc-

cupied the entire rear-half of the building, and a wide window extending from the apex of the concave ceiling to the floor provided a splendid view of a jungle-clad mountainside. After removing the snare-net, he indicated a twenty-foot sofa, and she sat down reluctantly.

He wasted no time in outlining his proposition. Standing before her, his short bulky body silhouetted against the mountainside, he pointed out first of all what would be in store for her if he turned her over to the Old York authorities; then he told her what he had in mind. She was sitting bolt-upright on the sofa when he finished, eyes glittering with hatred. "Do you think I'd sleep with *you*?" she demanded.

He wanted to point out that he was not a negro, but a colored, and that the negro blood that flowed in his veins was as negligible as the negro blood that flowed in the veins of most modern Americans; but doing so would have given her the false impression that he was ashamed of that blood. Therefore, he let the epithet pass. "You would be my mistress in name only," he explained, "and the whorl-lock on the love-nest in which I established you would be adjusted to respond to your touch alone. Surely you can see the advantages of such a way of life. For

the first time since you were born you would have enough to eat and a roof other than a skin tarpaulin over your head. You would have clothes to wear—the best clothes Old York has to offer—and you would be a respected member of civilized society. And your only obligations would be to attend public gatherings with me and to give the impression while doing so that you respected and admired me. I am, in effect, offering to touch you with my magic wand—and my magic wand is hard cold cash.

She was regarding him narrowly. Why?"

"I—I need someone like you. Someone unusual who will attract favorable attention to me and to my business." He withdrew a lavender kerchief from the pocket of his tailored hunting-jacket and patted his forehead. To his astonishment, he saw that his hand was trembling. He replaced the kerchief and took a deep breath. "There is yet another advantage that would accrue from your acceptance."

"Yes?"

"I had two reasons for purchasing this tract of land," Burke said. "One was its rich potentials as a hunting-ground; the other was the spaceport and ship that came with it. The ship is the last of its kind—the last

the World-office of Stellar Migration had built—and it was never put into use because at the time of its completion, the predicted radiation storms had already begun and the emigration ban was in effect. Both the ship and the spaceport then became the property of the new center of world-government—Old York—and after the few Bantus who had been left behind took telepassage to the city, both were allowed to fall into desuetude. I got them for a song, and several months ago, when I became convinced that my seismograph extrapolations were correct, I had the ship reconditioned. When the forthcoming tectonic revolution begins, I, and I alone, will have the means of escaping destruction, and I and I alone, will choose my fellow-passengers. Many of them I have already chosen, though I've informed none of them yet. I have room for many more."

HE paused, searching her eyes for the awe which his words should have evoked. He did not find it. Presently, "Let me elaborate," he went on. "In tech-school I specialized in seismology. Today it is no longer taught, and the tutorobot who taught it has since been scrapped; but even then it was an unpopular subject. But for some reason it

fascinated me—so much so, in fact, that I have made a hobby of it ever since. Today, in the basement of The Veldt building in Old York, I have a central co-ordinator which is attuned to hundreds of hypersensitive seismographs located in key positions all over the world. The co-ordinator interprets their recordings, correlates them and projects the result on a huge graph. I instituted the setup because I had been led to believe from my earlier seismic observations that centuries of weather-control have interfered with the normal cooling-off process of the planet and have brought about the conditions necessary for a new kind of tectonic disturbance. I have found out since that such is actually the case, and thanks to the efficiency of my seismic setup, I can predict the beginning of the end almost to the day. The new tectonic revolution will commence on or near the seventh of July—less than a month from now."

He began pacing up and down, and when he spoke again, his voice was slightly louder than it had been before: "But this time, as I inferred, the revolution will be the result of expansion, rather than contraction. This time, the mountains will not rise, but the continents will sink, and as a prelude, there will be rains such as man has

never known before!" He swept his arm in a wide arc, and his voice rose higher. "All will be covered, save for the tops of the highest mountains, and they will be as barren islands in a vast planetary sea. Let the civic dignitaries and their mistresses laugh at me behind my back—I don't care! When the time comes they'll listen to me. 'Save us, Anton Burke!' they'll say. 'Save us, please!'" He darted over to a huge tele-window, tuned it into the spaceport. He pointed at the ship with a rigid forefinger. "There it is—the *Deucalion*—and I own it, it's mine! It will carry me and whomever I choose to accompany me to Alpha Centauri VI, and there I will establish a colony far superior to the one established on Alpha Centauri V by the unfortunates who escaped the radiation storms, and I will call it Asgard—the abode of the gods!" He turned from the tele-window and triumphantly faced the girl. His blob-like body and ugly moon-shaped face anticlimaxed his rhetoric, but he was blissfully unaware of the aspect he presented. "As my mistress," he concluded, his voice calmer now, "your salvation would, of course come first."

There was awe in her eyes now all right—or was it simply fear? "Be—before your wife's?" she asked.

He nodded. "Before my wife's. In Old York society," he explained, "a marriage is no more than a merger. My wife owned the Diversion Street frontage that I needed for my veldt enterprise; I possessed the money and the business acumen necessary to put that frontage to profitable use. Hence our partnership—or marriage. She has, of course, no claim to the *Deucalion*—I bought that and the spaceport in my own name. And now, if you will give me *your* name, or whatever other one you care to go by, I'll have the necessary papers fabricated and by tomorrow morning you will be a citizen of Old York."

She got up from the sofa, walked over to the huge window and looked out at the green mountainside. At length, "It is very pleasant here," she said.

He knew then that he had won, and relief suffused him. "Your name?" he asked in a slightly thicker voice.

She did not bother to turn. "Leah Volkertszoon."

"We'll make it 'Volker'." Modern apartheid's often replaced their real surnames with historical substitutes in an attempt to suggest a genealogy that oftentimes did not exist. In all probability she didn't know herself whether she had descended from the original Dutch settlers, the English settlers who had fol-

lowed, or from the American expatriates who had migrated to South Africa in the last years of the twentieth century when desegregation had finally triumphed in their own country. "I'll inform my robotler of your presence and it will take care of your needs. It will also see to it that you don't leave this building. I'll be back for you in the morning."

She continued to look at the mountainside. He waited several moments, then, angrily, he left the room, climbed a spiral stairway to his sleeping quarters and changed into pastel street-clothes. After summoning his robotler and giving it the necessary instructions, he left the building and returned to the base on the shooting-platform.

IT was but a few steps from the platform-hangar to the Safari Room. Here, half a dozen customers were being briefed on platform-shooting by his wife, Pamela. He was careful to bestow an ingratiating smile on each of them as he passed through the room on his way to the teleportal. Pamela was wearing a translucent yellow blouse and fawn-colored jodhpurs. Her cupreous hair was coiffeured in accordance with the latest style—parted in the middle, one side braided, and coiled behind her right ear, the other side combed

down in such a way as to create a spray-effect above her left breast—and gave her oval face an aristocratic cast. As he passed, her intelligent gray eyes met his in the withdrawn way attractive women reserved for him, and he cursed her silently behind his empty smile. In a moment of weakness, he had included her name on his mental passenger-list; now, with sudden savage glee, he struck it off.

After unlocking the teleportal, he stepped across northwestern Africa, the Atlantic Ocean, the Brooklyn ghost-city and the East River, and emerged on the mezzanine of The Veldt building. He had made the transition so many times that the brief tingling of his nerve-ends no longer registered on his consciousness, and he descended the marble steps to the concourse as casually as though he had just emerged from one of the private lifts that gave access to his and Pamela's twenty-story multi-plex. Presently he stepped into Diversion Street and hailed an aircab.

Diversion Street had once been Park Avenue, just as Old York had once been New York. The latter change in name had resulted from the founding of a New York on Alpha Centauri V, while the former had resulted partly from the post-exodus re-

building of Manhattan—the only section of the city still in use—and partly from the disappearance of the last vestiges of puritanism from the make-up of its re-builders when it was discovered that instead of altering their genes and making future mutations of the race inevitable, as had been expected, the cosmic radiation storms had rendered them sterile and simultaneously quintupled their longevity. Old York was Babylon and Sodom and Gomorrah, all rolled into one. Except for the self-exiled apartheidists, who had been denied the right to migrate by the centuries-old East-West World Government that had come into being after the cold-war “cease-fire”, and a scattered residue of other primitive left-behinds, everybody lived there. And why not? Its teleportals possessed maximum transmission-power and gave access to every corner of the world worth visiting; even more important, they gave access to the automated farms that constituted the world’s richest food-supply. Sinecures could be had for the asking, and money ran as unrestrainedly as wine. There were still people who had more of it than other people, and there were still women who walked the streets; but there were no longer any have-nots, and the few women who walked

the streets did so because they wanted to. On a planet that had once sustained some three billion souls, half a million people living in the right place needed to deny themselves nothing. Nor did they.

THE cab bore Burke aloft, whisked him over Frivolity Street—formerly known as Fifth Avenue—and came down to rest in Aphrodite Acres—formerly known as Central Park. The round, saucer-and-cup shaped houses scattered over the greensward had something of the aspect of a recently-landed squadron of UFO’s. Burke’s house was one of the largest. Instructing the android operator to wait, he stepped out on the concrete cab-pad, approached the shrub-bordered entrance and thumbed the whorl-lock.

After a moment the door opened, and he walked into a large living-room, the cynosure of which was a 70’ time window. In accordance with contemporary architecture, the enormous complex time-grid that ferreted whatever moments out of the past that the viewer wanted and brought them to life on the screen, had been made to function as a sort of sub-ceiling. Except for the huge cabinet that housed the window, there was no furniture. The floor functioned

as a sort of enormous sofa, and lying upon its cushioned surface, watching the rape of the Sabines in the time window, long legs drawn up and crossed, and hands clasped behind her blond head, was Eulalie Bernard.

When she saw him, she swung a slippered foot in insolent greeting and went on watching. The screams of the Sabine women filled the room. Burke went over and turned the window off and swung around and faced her. "Get out," he said.

She raised herself on her elbows, fear flickering in her lambent gray eyes. "Why Anton, darling, what's come over you?"

He went into the bedroom, gathered an armful of her clothes returned and threw them at her. He threw a handful of credits after them. Then he went over and opened the door. "There's a cab waiting outside," he said.

She gathered up the clothes and the credits. In the doorway she turned and faced him. Her once voluptuous mouth had become a thin white line, and her cheeks seemed sunken. "Whoever you found, she'll hate you too!" she said. "You're not a man—you're a mimic. You do what other men do because you think it's your duty, not because you want to. You're—"

He closed the door and leaned against it, shuddering. Abruptly he ran over to the time window

and turned it on. After tuning in the pastime he wanted, he sat down on the floor, drew up his knees and hugged them against his chest. He concentrated on the window, shutting all else from his mind. Slowly the window brightened. Rain could be seen falling out of a leaden sky. In the background loomed the dark hulk of a rough-hewn vessel. In the foreground, at the base of a crude but sturdily-built gangplank, stood the commanding figure of Ut-napishtim. Slaves were carrying artifacts and treasures up the gangplank, their rain-wet bodies gleaming dully in the gray light. Ut-napishtim was shouting commands in a language that had been dead for centuries. Burke knew every movement, every sound, by heart. After the treasures and the artifacts, came the animals. First by sevens, then by twos. The rain fell harder and harder. Burke hugged his knees more tightly, rocked gently back and forth. He began to whisper. "Up," he whispered. "Up—ship—up!"

THE mayoral ballroom was larger than Madison Square Garden once had been, and the building that housed it stood on the site formerly occupied by Columbia University. The walls exhibited the latest in three-dimensional décor—deep space pied with multicolored stars—and a

huge chandelier in the shape of a spiral nebula was suspended from the apex of the concave ceiling. Opposite the wide entrance, a series of polished steps led up to a railed, luxuriously carpeted dais on which were arranged a number of plush sofas and chairs.

All of the civic dignitaries were present on the dais when Burke entered with Leah Volker on his arm, and the other guests, who had already paid their respects, were standing around waiting for the first dance to begin. It was as he had hoped: he and Leah had no sooner started across the floor than the eyes of every person present were upon them. Small wonder. Attired in a thousand-credit bikini-gown that gave golden glimpses of her legs and breasts, Leah was a vivid flame of a woman in a room that had not, until the moment she had entered it, known what true feminine radiance was. Her black hair had lent itself stunningly to the prevailing coil-and-spray coiffeur, and her blue eyes seemed more diamond-bright than before. Looking at her sideways, Burke found it difficult to believe that less than a week ago she had been a barefoot savage in an antelope-hide sarong.

The mayor, tall and blond and cordial, advanced to meet them when they stepped up on the dais. He was around Burke's age—

forty-eight—and his skin-tone fairly shouted the longevity which the left-behinds had fortuitously fallen heir to. His mistress, a striking redhead, came up and stood beside him, while the lesser dignitaries and their mistresses ranged themselves behind him. Burke gave an inward groan when he saw Townsend Mallory, the Director of Waterways, flawlessly attired in blue pleated trousers and white gold-trimmed coat, standing at the end of the line. In his eagerness to exhibit Leah, he had forgotten that Mallory was a Bantu, and his oversight could very well prove fatal.

"Welcome, Bwana Burke," said the mayor, employing the sobriquet by which Burke had been known ever since opening The Veldt. He turned expectantly and faced Leah.

Burke took a deep proud breath. "Mayor Lindquist, may I present Miss Volker. Leah—Mayor Lindquist."

Lindquist was charmed, and said as much. He introduced Leah to his mistress, then proceeded to escort her down the line of dignitaries. Burke hovered nervously at her elbow. He was certain that she had never seen a full-blooded negro in the flesh before—she couldn't have had: ever since the bloody apartheid wars that had almost exterminated South Africa's negro popu-

lation, the apartheid had been rigidly confined by the World Government to the Bechuana-land Reservation. If she betrayed her instinctive hatred now, she would be recognized for what she was and he would be ruined. What a fool he had been to play Pygmalion and jeopardize the social-standing he had fought so hard to attain!

He sensed a tautness in her when she came opposite Mallory, saw the slightly heightened color of her cheeks. However, she acknowledged the introduction in the same polite tone of voice in which she had acknowledged all the others. Mallory bowed graciously, betraying only by his slightly increased blink-rate that he was affected by her beauty, and then, miraculously, it was all over and Lindquist was raising his hand in a signal for the music to begin.

THE first notes rained softly down from the hidden ceiling-speakers. Lindquist turned to Leah. "As a prerogative of my office, I hereby claim the first dance," he said.

She gave him her arm and he escorted her down the steps to the ballroom floor. Burke followed, stared after them as they disappeared among the other dancers. They went quite well together. Lindquist, it was said, had no negro blood in his veins,

and such could very well be the case: the American negro had been completely absorbed by the white race, but the apartheid were by no means the only whites who had not participated in the absorption.

There was a bar beneath the dais. Entering it, Burke ordered a double brandy. It did nothing whatsoever in the way of alleviating the icy lump of fear that had settled in his throat, and he ordered another. The bar, at this early hour, contained only a handful of patrons. Two of them Burke knew—Buffalo Bill McIntyre, the owner of The Prairie, and Alligator Smith, the owner of The Amazon. He nodded to them, but did not join them as he ordinarily would have done. Instead, after drinking his second brandy, he returned to the ballroom.

It was some time before he managed to locate Leah, and an even longer time before he managed to obtain a dance with her. Her blue eyes, on a level with his made him painfully aware of his lack of height. She no longer recoiled from his touch, but he still had the feeling that she despised him. He tried desperately to think of something suitable to say, but when he finally did, Lindquist cut in and whirled her away before he could say it.

He retired to the sidelines, the icy lump of fear larger now. The

evening inched by. Several times he glimpsed the tall white-coated figure of Townsend Mallory, and remembering the epithet Leah had instinctively employed on the veldt, he dreaded the possibility of the man's asking her to dance. However, his concern was wasted, for never once did Mallory go near her.

Remembering his position, Burke made it a point to dance with the mistresses of the various dignitaries. He obtained only one more dance with Leah, and he was glad when at last the evening was over. As they were leaving the ballroom, Leah gave a slight start, and following the direction of her gaze Burke saw a tall man, discernible only because of the white coat he wore, standing in the shadows just to the right of the entrance. However, she made no reference to Mallory, and soon they were ensconced in an aircab, heading for Aphrodite Acres.

Burke told the android operator to wait and walked with her to the door. The June night was warm and fragrant, and a gibbous moon dispensed an argent luminescence that was almost tangible. "You enjoyed yourself, didn't you?" he said when they reached the shrub-bordered doorstep.

She looked out across the moonlit lawn. "Yes, very much."

"The mayor is very charming."

"Ralph? Yes, he certainly is."

Burke cleared his throat. "I think I should point out here and now that being my mistress in name only does not give you the right to engage in . . . promiscuity."

Her slap numbed the whole side of his face, and a moment later he found himself standing all alone on the doorstep.

HE stood there for some time, debating with himself. He had kept only half his promise, and while the whorl-lock now responded to Leah's right thumbprint, it also responded to his own. There was nothing to prevent him from deactivating the lock and entering the love-nest—nothing except his pride. And where matters of the heart were concerned, Anton Burke had very little pride.

He pictured her beyond the door. He knew exactly what she was doing. She was tuning in lynching on the time window. It would be hours before she would go to bed. Since the moment he had installed her in the nest she had spent every minute of her spare time sitting cross-legged in front of the window, avidly devouring one lynching after another. He shuddered. No, he would not force himself on her tonight. Perhaps later on—when she became more civilized . . .

He couldn't get Lindquist out of

his mind. Thoughts of the man's blond handsomeness still lingered when he arrived at The Veldt building, and knowing that he would be unable to sleep he headed straight for the mezzanine-teleportal and stepped across one third of the world to the Safari Room. A light burned in the adjoining office, and he knew that his wife was working late. However, he did not go in, but continued on to the hangar. After securing himself in the harness of the first platform he came to, he lifted and sped out over the veldt.

He veered the platform in the direction of the sound, slowed it to a crawl and turned on the search beam. Now a bright lake of light traveled before him over the veldt, bringing each detail of the terrain into sharp relief. Presently he saw the lion. It was a magnificent black-maned male, and it was lying on its tawny side, licking its left forepaw. Protruding from the bottom of the paw was the broken end of a large thorn.

Burke swore, stopped the platform and locked it in hovering position. His lions constituted The Veldt's biggest attraction, and he had very few of them. This particular one was an unusually splendid specimen and it had probably been "killed" a hundred times and bragged about in as many different bars.

Sportsmen, who had been exposed to the braggadocio, would undoubtedly visit the veldt for the sole purpose of adding the beast to their trophy list too. He simply couldn't take a chance on losing it.

He decided to do the job himself. There was nothing to it, really. All he had to do was knock the beast out with a stun-charge, extract the thorn, cleanse the wound and vacate the premises before the charge wore off. He fumbled for his rifle-sling in the darkness. He fumbled in vain.

THIS time he swore in earnest. He hadn't really forgotten his rifle—there simply had been no reason for him to remember it. Just the same, he should have brought it along. Only a fool traveled the veldt without one. But then, wasn't he a fool?

He shrank from radio-phonng his wife and asking her to send out a maintenance android. She wouldn't ask him what he was doing all alone on the veldt at this time of night, but she would wonder, and somehow that was worse. Besides, he had paid no heed to his direction, and consequently did not know exactly where he was; hence he would be unable to give his location. And if he returned to the base himself to pick up his rifle, he might not find the lion again.



He regarded it contemplatively. Its eyes were a baleful yellow in the search beam; its tail flicked sinuously from side to side. Did he dare take the chance? The beast had no taste for human flesh, but it had been "killed" time and time again by creatures like himself, and even

now, if the search beam wasn't blinding it and the wind had been right, it would undoubtedly have been charging the hated platform, thorn or no thorn.

Or perhaps fleeing from it.

Abruptly the lion roared again, and this time the note of pain was even more pronounced than

it had been before. His mind made up, Burke got a pair of pliers out of the tool chest and rummaged through the first-aid kit for sulfa-salve. He grounded the platform gently, keeping his eyes on the lion. When it did not move, he stepped down to the ground and walked gingerly into the lake of light.

The lion started, and he paused. For a long moment the yellow eyes gazed enigmatically into his. Then the beast resumed licking its forepaw, and he resumed his approach. Probably it had never been able to distinguish hunter from platform and hence was unable to associate a man on foot with danger. Valid or not, Burke found the explanation reassuring.

With several feet still to go, he knelt down and inched his way forward on his hands and knees. The lion whined. Tentatively Burke extended the hand that held the pliers. The lion did not move. He brought the jaws together upon the thorn, tightened them. Suddenly the absurdity of what he was doing overwhelmed him. Here was he, Anton Burke, risking his life to save the life of a lion that would die anyway, once the imminent tectonic revolution began. Worse, here was he, the man who had foreseen the forthcoming end of the world and who held the salvation of the left-behinds in the

palm of his hand, jeopardizing that salvation for the sake of an insensitive carnivore so incapable of gratitude that it would undoubtedly kill him the very next time the opportunity presented itself. But then, hadn't man always been preoccupied with immediate threats to his security and disdainful of distant ones? And wasn't he, Anton Burke, as basically short-sighted—for all his foresight—as the rest of the human race?

He braced himself and pulled with all his strength. It was over in an instant, and he was toppling backward, the extracted thorn gripped in the jaws of the pliers. The lion leaped to its feet with a roar of pain and regarded him with feral eyes. He did not move. Then, as abruptly as it had leaped up, the lion lay back down again and resumed licking its forepaw.

Burke moved then, and once again approached the beast. He was sure of himself now, and his hands did not even tremble when he opened the sulfa-salve container. He swabbed the wound thoroughly, then stood up and walked boldly back to the platform. Turning, he looked at the lion once more. It had just tasted the salve, and the wry expression on its huge face was almost comical. Suddenly Burke laughed. He boarded the platform, lifted to one hundred feet and traveled

in a wide circle till he picked up the lights of the base. They lay like a handful of diamonds at the dark feet of the mountains, and high above them, dawn was creeping into the sky. He sped over the veldt toward the new day. It was all right now. Now he could sleep.

ON the eighteenth of June, Anton Burke began loading the *Deucalion*. Its huge hydroponic garden would supply half of the nutritional needs of his two hundred passengers during the three subjective months of the 4.35 light-year journey, and all he needed in the way of additional ship's provisions were fruit, meat, milk and eggs. However, it would be months before the new colony would be self-sustaining, and additional provisions had to be included to cover this period. Also, tools, temporary shelters and weapons had to be taken along. The cost exceeded Burke's estimation, but he was determined that his passengers should lack nothing in the way of food and comfort.

The supplies were transmitted through the freight-teleportal of his warehouse on East 57th Street, and transported on cargo-platforms from the veldt warehouse to the ship. Despite the unfamiliarity of the operation, his maintenance androids

carried it out with dispatch, and by the twentieth of June, the *Deucalion* was ready to go.

Next, Burke set to work on his passenger-list. By now, it was complete in his mind, and all he had to do was transfer the names on paper. The passengers included the mayor, his wife and mistress; the lesser civic dignitaries, their wives and mistresses; Burke's business acquaintances, their wives and mistresses; certain of The Veldt customers whose patronizing attitude toward him needed revising; and Leah Volker. With the exception of Leah, he had not as yet apprised any of his prospective passengers of their forthcoming salvation. He would apprise them when the torrential rains began . . . and they would realize then how wrong they had been in laughing at him when he talked about the second deluge, and they would be sorry they had called him "Little Ut-napishtim" and "Little Zuisudra" in a joking tone of voice. Admiration would come into their eyes, admiration and respect, and they would look up to him and accord him the veneration he deserved, and during the long and lonely journey to Alpha Centauri VI, the wives and the mistresses would come to him in the night and he would turn them disdainfully away from his stateroom door.

ON June twenty-fifth—twelve days before the revolution was supposed to begin—he took Leah Volker to the spaceport and showed her through the ship. He had forced himself to stay away from her since the night of the mayorial ball, and he was surprised at the increased thinness of her face, taken aback by the shadows under her eyes. Had she missed him? he wondered, hope blooming in his breast. Did she realize now that Anton Burke wasn't someone you could cast aside like an old shoe?

His heart sang, his step grew light. Enthusiastically he conducted her through the commodious staterooms, the huge lounge, the lush hydroponic garden. He showed her the reactor room and explained what went on beyond the massive door. High in the prow, he ushered her into the control room and described how a single person could control and navigate the ship simply by feeding verbal instructions into the mechanical tympani of the automatic pilot. Admiration came into her eyes—but it wasn't admiration for him. However, that would come later, he told himself.

They returned to the base, stepped back through the teleport to The Veldt building and thence into Diversion Street. To his astonishment, she slipped her arm through his. "Let's visit the

Administration Building," she said.

He frowned. "I'm afraid you'd be disappointed—there's not much to see. Practically all of the administrative procedures are automated and the offices are little more than private suites."

"It may be warm tonight. In fact, I am quite sure it will be. Probably I shall leave my door ajar—I love fresh air."

He looked at her. The blue eyes gazed steadily back into his. Impromptu promises burned in their blue depths, and his voice, when he spoke again, seemed to come from far away. "All right," he said, "I'll take you there."

The Administration Building stood on the site once occupied by St. Patrick's Cathedral. It was twenty stories high, and each floor was given over to a separate department. The top-most one was reserved for the mayor. When apprised of Burke's and Leah's presence, he came eagerly into the ornate anteroom to greet them. "Hello, Bwana. Hello . . . Leah."

Leah's face told Burke nothing. Turning toward Lindquist, he said, "Miss Volker hoped you might find the time to show us around." He emphasized the "us" slightly.

"Nothing could please me more," Lindquist said.

He conducted them through the mayoral suite, then, in turn,

through the Department of Entertainment, the Department of Buildings, the Department of Parks and the Department of Streets. Burke grew nervous when they descended to the Department of Waterways. In common with the other departments, it was fronted by a large luxurious office lined with impressive tiers of gilt filing cabinets—and in common with the other dignitaries who had thus far received them, the Director of Waterways had been informed of their coming and met them when they stepped out of the lift.

TOWNSEND Mallory seemed even more striking than usual in his immaculate white coat and dark blue trousers. Proud of his ebony complexion, he chose the sort of attire that would enhance it the most, regardless of prevailing fashion. It was an indulgence which Burke had always considered both justifiable and proper; now, however, he found the effect disquieting, and fervently wished that he hadn't acceded to Leah's request.

Again he sensed a tautness in her, again he noticed the heightened color of her cheeks. But her words were pleasant, and her tone of voice gave not the slightest hint of her apartheid attitude. Burke relaxed. Perhaps she was more civilized than he had thought.

Mallory was politeness personified. He insisted on showing Leah each facet of his luxurious office, and he explained in detail each aspect of his official duties. He even insisted on showing her his private library. Burke was surprised as well as relieved when she graciously consented.

He exchanged small talk with Lindquist till they returned from the adjoining room. Throughout the rest of the tour, Lindquist seemed pre-occupied. After it was over, Leah lingered behind, thanking him profusely for his trouble; then she joined Burke, and together they stepped out into the street.

He took her to The Villa for dinner, and they ate on a wide cool patio that overlooked the Mediterranean. In this part of the world darkness had already fallen, and the sky was riotous with stars. Leah was withdrawn, but Burke hardly noticed. All he could think of were the impromptu promises her eyes had held that afternoon. Soon she would have to keep them. He had fulfilled his half of the bargain; now it was up to her to fulfill hers.

It was twilight in Old York when they stepped back through The Villa's teleportal, and night had fallen by the time they reached Aphrodite Acres. After following Leah out of the cab,

Burke told the android operator not to wait. Coldly Leah countermanded the order, said good night and walked away.

FOR a moment Burke was stunned. Then, recovering, he ran after her and confronted her on the doorstep. "But you promised," he began. "You said—"

"I said that if it was warm to-night I'd leave my door ajar." She pulled her two-thousand credit stole higher around her lovely neck. "It's cold, and you know it!"

He had to admit that it was cold—astonishingly cold for Old York. But that was beside the point. "Very well," he said stiffly. "I'll turn you in in the morning. I can play it your way too."

She laughed in his face. He could not see her eyes, for the sky was overcast, but he sensed the loathing in them. "Turn me in and lose your precious prestige? You wouldn't dream of such a thing! You couldn't bear what people would say. You couldn't—"

"What does it matter what people say now? The end of the world is less than two weeks away." He paused, shocked by his own words. Why, it was true—it didn't matter! He hadn't realized it before because he hadn't been able to correlate the present with the future except in regard to his forthcoming

role as savior. "And even if some of them should speak against me," he went on, "I can eliminate them from my passenger-list. Just as I can eliminate you."

Again she laughed in his face. "You fool! You contemptible fool! Why, you're the laughing-stock of Old York. Do you think anyone *believes* in your silly prophecy? Do you think I believe in it? Do you think that I agreed to be your mistress because I thought you could *save* me? You couldn't save anyone, Anton Burke—not even yourself. I agreed to your plan because I was hungry, because I was sick of living in dirt. And most of all I agreed to it because I knew that once you had given me what I wanted you would be afraid to take it back!"

She started to turn away. Abruptly the long and empty corridor of the lonely night appeared before his eyes, stretching into eternity, and he flung himself at her feet and clung to her the way a little boy who is terrified of the dark clings to his mother's skirts. "Please don't send me away," he said. "Please!"

The sadist in her was moved, but the masochist was repelled. She twisted free from him and thumbed the whorl-lock. He heard the door open. He heard it close. He heard the silence of the night.

For a long while he did not move. Then, numbly, he rose to his feet and walked slowly back to the aircab. Blades whirring soundlessly, the cab climbed into the lowering sky. High above the streets and the lights and the laughter, the wine and the women and the song, he wept.

The cab deposited him on the roof of The Veldt building. Descending to his den, he poured himself a tall brandy at the bar, drank it down without stopping. He poured another. He wondered idly where his wife was. With her lover, probably—or working at the veldt-base. He sighed. It did not matter. Nothing mattered any more—least of all the love-life of a wife he hardly even knew.

HE drank the second brandy, poured a third. There was a warmth in him now, and the corridor of the night no longer seemed quite as empty. 'A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country,' he said to himself. He savored the words, spoke them aloud. "'A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country,'" he said. And then, "Up, ship—up!" He downed the third brandy.

The mech-maid came into the room, curtsied. "Did you call, sir?"

Burke threw the empty glass at her. "Get out of here!"

The glass missed, shattered against the wall. The mech-maid curtsied again. "Sorry, sir," it said, and backed dutifully through the doorway.

Burke didn't bother getting another glass, but drank out of the bottle. Time picked up her subjective skirts and began to run; hours shrank and minutes flickered. Deep in his alcoholic haze, Burke found a truth and pounced upon it. He owned Leah Volker. Whether she knew it or not and whether she admitted it or not, he owned her. He owned the floor-sofa she lolled on, the time window she gazed into, the bed she slept in, the clothes she wore and the air-conditioned air she breathed. He owned her as completely as he owned the *Dev-calion*, as completely as he owned the spaceport. And a man does not suffer affronts from his property, be it animate or inanimate; quite the contrary—a man's property is his to do with as he sees fit.

It was raining when he returned to the roof and climbed into the aircab he had summoned. He hardly noticed. Lightning zigzagged over the Old York skyline; thunder brought giant jaws together and masticated Broddingnagian mouthfuls of the night. In Aphrodite Acres, the love-nest buildings stood in the rain like rows of gray cab-bages. It was a cold rain, and it

pummeled Burke's face when he got out of the cab and approached the shrub-bordered entrance. Still it did not register on his consciousness.

He felt for the whorl-lock in the darkness, thumbed it the instant he found it. The alternate personality with which the brandy had provided him needed momentum, in the absence of more brandy, to sustain it, and if he hesitated he would be on his way back to being Anton Burke again. Nevertheless, a moment later, he did hesitate. Just within the door. He had expected to find Leah sitting cross-legged in front of the time window, and his tentative plan of action had been projected from that point on. But the time window was in darkness, and Leah was nowhere to be seen.

Had she gone to bed then?

A trembling began in his knees, spread throughout his body. He stepped deeper into the dim-lit room; then, becoming bolder, he walked across it. Suddenly he saw the coat lying on the floor just to the right of the bedroom doorway, and he stopped in his tracks as though a stone had struck him between the eyes. In a sense, one had.

Lindquist's handsome Nordic face exploded into being on his mental retina. Again he saw Leah whirling off in the man's arms, again the icy lump of fear

settled in his throat. Her motive in wanting to visit the Administration Building was agonizingly clear now. It should have been clear before, and it would have been—to anyone except a fool. And he had thought that *he* was the cause of the shadows under her eyes and the thinness of her cheeks!

The coat blurred in the dim light, and for a moment he half-believed, half-hoped that he wasn't really seeing it at all; that he had conjured it into brief existence in an unconscious effort to torture himself. He bent over it, praying that it would go away altogether. It did not. Instead it stood out with sudden, horrid clarity, and for the first time its color registered on his mind.

It was a white coat.

BURKE was cold sober when he stepped out into the rain. It was coming down harder than ever, and by the time he climbed into the cab he was drenched. Perhaps it was the coldness of his soaked clothing that finally brought him completely back to life, that shocked him into realizing that the rain was wrong.

It was wrong for a number of reasons. It was wrong because the three-day weekend was just beginning, and on weekends rain *never* fell. It was wrong because of its intensity; rain was sup-

posed to fall gently, not in wild abandon. It was wrong because of its temperature; rain was supposed to be warm, not cold—

Burke was sitting bolt-upright on the seat. Was it possible that he had erred in his extrapolations? Was it possible that the tectonic revolution was already on hand? Heart pounding, he told the android operator to take him to The Veldt building. Ten minutes later he stepped out of the lift into the basement and approached the huge coordinator. A glance at the graph told him all he needed to know: the preliminary seismic disturbances which he had predicted along the western South American littoral were occurring ahead of time, and the first of the world-wide net-work of weather control stations which dated from the pre-exodus era had been destroyed, thereby deranging the entire system. The revolution was only hours away.

Unless he was as big a fool as a prophet as he was a lover.

He shouldered the thought aside and headed for the lift. There was still time, of course, to get his passengers together, but he would have to hurry. He went to the mayor's residence first. The robotler informed him that Lindquist and a number of the dignitaries were having a private conference in the den and did not wish to be disturbed.

Burke grunted, shoved the mech-man aside and burst into the room. As he had suspected, the "conference" was a poker-game.

LINDQUIST'S blue eyes were frosty in the radiance of the electric screen that depicted his hand. The chip-totaler screen on the wall showed that he was losing. "What is the meaning of this intrusion, Bwana Burke?"

Burke had dreamed of the moment a thousand times, and each time he had conducted himself with impeccable dignity and said what he had to say in a detached tone of voice. Now, however, he began pacing back and forth, and when he spoke, his voice was shrill and his words sounded melodramatic even to his own ears. "The tectonic revolution is at hand," he said, "and I have come to offer you the salvation which only my starship can provide! I—"

The mayor raised his hand. "Bwana Burke, I think that even you will agree that I and the other dignitaries have been as tolerant of your obsession as we could reasonably have been expected to be; but when you come barging in here uninvited and begin mouthing absurdities, you're straining that tolerance to the breaking point. I beg you to leave before you force me to say something unpleasant."

Burke was so taken aback that he stopped pacing. "But it's raining!" he gasped. "Don't you understand? It's raining, and it's Thursday night. It's pouring in fact!"

Lindquist sighed. "No weather-control system can be expected to function flawlessly forever. I am sure that the maintenance-mechs will find the source of the trouble soon, and that it will be corrected in a matter of hours. Besides, for all we know, the discrepancy may be confined to the immediate vicinity of Old York. I suggest that you go home and read Montaigne. "To him who feels the hailstones patter about his ears, the whole hemisphere appears to be in storm and tempest'."

The quote infuriated Burke. He thought of the fortune he had expended on his world-wide seismograph-setup, of his years of painstaking study, of his carefully evaluated extrapolations, and a redness rose up and filmed his sight. "All right," he shouted, "if that's the way you want it, I'll leave you here to drown, to sink beneath the sea along with your contemptible city! I'll go alone!"

Lindquist looked at him mockingly. "How about your mistress—aren't you going to take her along?"

Knowing looks traveled around the table. Several of the

dignitaries winked broadly. One of them snickered. Burke went cold all over. He did not even feel his legs beneath him as he turned and staggered from the room. The first wave of laughter broke even before the den door closed behind him. "I'll show you out, sir," said the robotler.

The rain was torrential now. Burke walked in it, head bowed. His own words echoed in his head—"I'll go alone". But he knew he would not, for if he did, there would be no one to show gratitude toward him, no one to look up to him and accord him the respect he deserved. Whom should he take then? There was no point in contacting his business acquaintances—they would not believe him any more than the dignitaries had. The same held true for The Veldt customers he had singled out. Whom then? Eulalie Bernard? She was the mistress of the Director of Longevity-research now, but if he could convince her that the second deluge was on hand and that he and he alone could save her, she might consent to accompany him. It was worth a try.

THE Director of Longevity-research's love-nest was not far from his own. He had no trouble finding it. Eulalie answered the door. "Eulalie," he began, "I am here to—"

She had a glass of champagne in her hand. She threw its contents into his dripping face. "Go away, you detestable little mimic!" she said, and slammed the door.

His wife then?

He found her in her private apartment on the sixteenth floor of The Veldt multi-plex. She was watching her favorite pastime in the time window—the birthday banquet of Herod Antipas. He spoke of the imminence of the tectonic revolution, of the need for haste. She heard him out. "Will you go with me?" he blurted.

She looked at him for a long time. In the time window, Salome was being presented with John the Baptist's freshly-severed head. Finally, "I said nothing when you bought your silly ship and spaceport," she said, "but if you think you're going to involve me in your naive attempt to impress people, you're quite mistaken. Run along to the veldt now and play with your grown-up toys like a good little boy."

He realized presently that he was in the street again. Walking. For a moment the ground seemed to tremble beneath his feet, but he could not be sure. Soon, though, it would tremble, tremble and quake, and the continents would be rivened with ragged wounds and the land would shud-

der and sink and the face of the world would be a mighty raging sea. But by then he would be long gone, he, Anton Burke, would—

Noah with an empty ark. Utnapishtim with a payload of nothing. Deucalion headed for a lonely Parnassus in the sky.

Would no one believe him before it was too late?

Would Leah? She hadn't believed him before, but with the downpour to bear him out, he might be able to convince her now—if he still wanted to.

Sickened, he knew that he still did, and hailed an aircab. The cab swam in the sky, its windows portholes against the driving rain. Aphrodite Acres was more like a cabbage patch than ever—and the cabbages were rotten to the core. Hating himself, he thumbed the familiar whorl-lock and stepped into the love-nest. Would he kill Mallory, he wondered, if the man was still there? He knew that he wouldn't—couldn't—and he hated himself even more.

SHOUTS affronted his ears, and there was a background sound of many voices. The room was in darkness, save for the glow emanating from the time window, and at first it appeared to be empty. He went over and looked into the window. It had not been turned on, and yet there

was a scene in progress in its depths. A lynching scene. Torch-es burned garishly in the night, illuminating eager faces. They illuminated one face that was not eager—a dark tortured face with eyes that held the naked fear of death.

As he stood there, puzzled, he felt something brush the top of his head. Looking up, he saw her feet. One of them was bare; the other was covered by one of the two-hundred credit slippers he had bought her. He saw her lithe tanned legs, and the filmy folds of her negligee clinging to them like pale mist. He saw her limp arms . . . her awry neck . . . her swollen face with its protruding tongue . . . He saw her long hair raining down, as dark as death, upon her shoulders . . . The other end of the stocking that she had knotted round her neck before stepping off the time-window cabinet was tied to one of the bars of the time-grid, and it was her weight upon that particular bar that had materialized the scene in the window.

Burke cut her down, but it was too late. Horrified, he ran from the room, plunged through the blinding sheets of rain to the aircab. The cab rose loggily, its blades slowed by the rising wind. High above Frivolity Street, Burke, looking through the floor-viewer, saw the huge wave rushing darkly in from the sea, and

for the first time since the rain had begun he felt fear. An Atlantic tsunami was the last thing he had expected.

The rain was combining forces with the wind now in slowing the churning blades, and the cab began to settle. Clearing a final rampart of buildings, it came down in the middle of Diversion Street, its once soundless motor sputtering. The water had receded, but it was still knee-deep, and Burke felt a frightening undercurrent tugging at his ankles when he stepped into the street. The Veldt building was six blocks distant, and fearing the advent of another wave, he decided to make for the 57th Street warehouse instead.

The going was difficult. Old York's lighting system had failed, and there was no illumination whatsoever save for the sporadic lightning flashes. In the darkness around him, people were shouting and screaming, and several times he stumbled and fell. Once he collided with another person, and both of them clutched each other for support. Lightning flashed, and Burke saw the pretty painted face of a professional street-walker inches from his own. She twisted free from him as night closed round them again, and moved away. "Wait," he called, "I can save you!" She did not answer. "But don't you under-

stand!" he screamed. "I'm Anton Burke. I'm Noah. I'm Deucalion!" The rain came down harder than ever.

HE was almost to the warehouse when the water, which had been gradually receding, began to rise again. He knew then that a second wave was on its way and that he had only minutes at best to gain the freight teleportal. Fortunately the first wave had smashed the warehouse door, so he lost no time there; but the water was up to his armpits by the time he gained the interior, and he had to swim the rest of the way to the teleportal. Frantically he began diving for the whorl lock. The water continued to rise, more rapidly now. On the third dive, he found the familiar concavity and pressed his right thumb into it with all his might. The teleportal responded, but before its automatic locks could secure it again, thousands of tons of water were transmitted along with Burke and emerged with him in the veldt warehouse. There, they battered down the door, carried him out over the veldt on a rapidly dwindling crest, deposited him in a rainfilled gully, and left him to die.

But he did not die. He awoke beneath a gray sky out of which rain was falling steadily but not with the same intensity as it had

been falling in Old York. He was lying on a muddy slope, half in, half out, of rushing water. He sensed that he was not alone even before he saw the huge black-maned head poised above him, even before he smelled the lion's fetid breath. As he lay there, petrified by his horror, the head lowered, and he felt the pressure of mighty jaws closing upon his shoulder. But the teeth did not penetrate his flesh, and presently he felt himself being dragged the rest of the way out of the gully, and then the pressure was no more and the lion was standing over him, looking down into his face.

Slowly it raised a huge forepaw, on the mud-coated pad of which a half-healed wound was visible, and placed it lightly on his breast. Burke understood his destiny then, and he accepted it. Getting to his feet, he locked his fingers in the lion's mane, and together they walked through the rain to the base.

NOAH had three sons—Shem and Ham and Japheth. Anton Burke had thirty androids. Embarkation took place in a cold slanting rain beneath a lowering cobalt sky. Two each of tiger and water buffalo and hippopotamus. Two each of rhinoceros and gorilla and orangoutang. Two each of kangaroo and zebra and okapi. Two each of giraffe and

leopard and lion—the one lion the very special one that had shown kindness to a man who in all his miserable other-directed life had never known what kindness was.

“Up—up ship!” said Noah Ut-napishtim Deucalion Burke when the water tanks were emptied and the locks were tight,

and the *Deucalion* lifted on fiery flames and floated on the sea of space—

*Where luxury late reigned,
sea-monsters whelped
And stabled . . .*

*How didst thou grieve then,
Adam, to behold
The end of all thy offspring?*

—PARADISE LOST

THE END