

# FUTURE

NOV. SCIENCE FICTION

20¢

**DOOMSDAY'S  
COLOR PRESS**  
by **RAYMOND F. JONES**



A  
DOUBLE-ACTION  
MAGAZINE

ALL STORIES NEW  
No Reprints



Robert W.  
Lowndes,  
*Editor*

Volume 3

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Number 4



*Feature Novelet*

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**"I'm busy selling newspapers—to robots who can read," Myrna said. And, somehow, that seemed to be the effect of the Tribune; people read the slanted stories, the glittering half-truths—and believed, even though they knew better!**



# DOOMSDAY'S COLOR-PRESS

You've all seen stories in various science-fiction magazines presented with the "This-may-be-more-than-Fiction" pitch. Mr. Jones offers us nothing in the way of subterranean little green men, lost continents, or flying chinaware. In fact, you will see why the editor wondered if this were science-fiction at all, at first. But, when you finish it, I think some of you may agree with me in hoping it is only fiction!

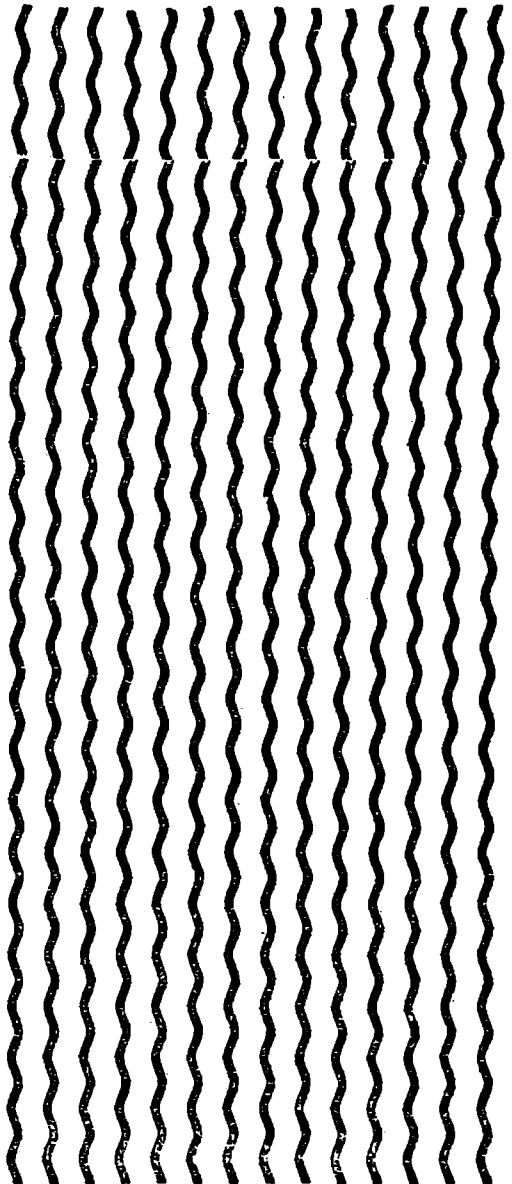
## Feature Novelet

## Of Fearful Possibility

by **Raymond F. Jones**

A journalist must know the Kiersten Equations, first of all. The text is two inches thick and requires a year of solid study after Basic Semantics and the Symbolic Logic of Communication. But you can't write a Chamber of Commerce puff without knowing them; Central Reviewing would trip you instantly.

Today, with communication free between every nation and race and color, there is no possibility of one group misunderstanding another. It is difficult to believe that there was a time when the Kiersten Equations



tions were not applied. The positive roots, that is.

Negative roots of the Equations were used in a haphazard way long before Kiersten's time. That, of course, is why Kiersten discovered the negative roots first—and why Myrna Doring had only these to use.

But, except for Myrna Doring and John Sanford, the Keirsten Equations might have been swallowed up for another century of interracial misunderstanding and war.

The texts don't mention Myrna Doring and John Sanford. All reference is to Kiersten himself and to Andrew Lollar, who developed the positive roots—which is as it should be. But in the news stories of a half century ago and in some of the early histories of that time you get a clue to what they did.

Myrna Doring died a long time ago, and Sanford's name was quickly lost in the glare of light that the Kiersten work shed on the communication of a world. But they are the ones who brought out of obscurity Kiersten's elementary principles of how all men could speak freely and be forever immune to lies.



**A**FTER SUNDAY School, it was funny-paper time in the Sanford household; Jack Sanford did the reading, and little Judy and Les did the listening.

As managing editor of the *Westport Tribune*, Sanford could bring the funnies home on Wednesday night, when they were printed; months ago, Georgia had made him save them for Sunday afternoon—to give her free reign in the kitchen to get dinner without the small fry underfoot.

Sometimes, Georgia worked closer to the kitchen door than necessary and kept an ear cocked for the latest adventure of "Betty, the Super-Cow-girl", and "Eagle Boy" in his quest for the Jasmin Trophy. San's delivery was worth listening to.

She glanced fondly toward him now, as he sat with Judy and Les on either arm of the chair; he fanned out the bright, colored pages of the comic-section, and raised one before him until

Georgia could see only his black and faintly-thinning hair above the edge of the sheet.

"Let's see, kids," he said. "Last week we left Dragon Man at the bottom of this inescapable well. How are we going to get him out today?"

Framed in the doorway Georgia made the kind of picture San never tired of. She had a crisp apron over her Sunday dress; the smooth lines of her hair swept back to an old-fashioned bun on the back of her head. She always complained about the need of losing ten pounds, and San equally remarked, "On you, honey, it looks good."

She frowned a little now. "I don't think you ought to read "Dragon Man" to the kids. It gives me a squitchy feeling."

San laughed the superior laugh of a comic connoisseur, and the children joined in. "You don't know what you're saying, woman," he said. "Why, "Dragon Man" gets in the most stupendous, super-colossal jams of any superman that ever breathed the red and green ink of a comic strip. Go back to your cooking, woman; after we've wrassltled Dragon Man out of this hole, we'll be ready for it."

Georgia smiled, but her face remained serious. "I mean it. There's something I don't like about that strip at all; you ought to get Myrna to take it out."

She went back to the kitchen and left San feeling let-down. Dragon Man wasn't very ingenious this week, anyway. He simply flicked his claws into the side of the hole and climbed out.

The kids thought it was great. They bounced around on the chair arms as San described with all the artistry he possessed the mighty exertions of Dragon Man climbing vertically upward a half mile or so.

"Mommy just doesn't know what's good, does she?" said Les.

"Sure doesn't," agreed San.

Georgia called, "Come and get it."

AFTER DINNER, San paced the living room floor, restless and undecided. He wanted to join the kids with their tinker toys, but he glanced at his watch. "I ought to go down to the office for a couple of hours."

"Not again!" said Georgia. "I don't think you have spent a Sunday at home since Myrna took over. Do you personally have to put every edition to bed?"

He ran his fingers through his hair. "She's planning how to handle a series on the Collins case. If she puts it through, we might as well change our name to the *Yellow-Backed Gazette*. I'll try to be back by five.

"You kids see if you can have me the five story windmill built by then. O.K.?"

Westport always looked its best on Sunday afternoon, San thought. The lawns seemed a little greener, and at this time of year the apple blossoms a little more fragrant than on other days. Even his neighbor, Matthews looked good wheeling San's noisy mower about, while San's own lawn was shaggy with a two week's growth.

It had never been necessary to work Sundays when Old Bob Doring had the paper.

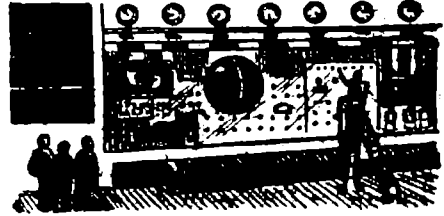
"The family man ought to be home on Sunday," he always said. "Us old guys and the young squirts can put out a paper that'll get by."

Old Bob had been dead for six months now, but the *Tribune* was Old Bob Doring; the *Tribune* would go on, even if his daughter was the owner and publisher now.

Doring had built the paper up from a small-town weekly that he had started nearly forty years ago. He had spent all his own younger days nursing it along, and had married later; Myrna was his only child. He had even left enough cash to pay the taxes, so that she'd had to borrow very little and now controlled the paper single handedly.

San parked at the rear of the build-

ing and let himself in through the shipping dock doors. He walked past the press room where the new twenty four sheet presses, Old Bob's pride and joy, were being readied for the evening edition. Upstairs, in the seventh floor editorial offices, the hall seemed lonely with only the scattered clicking of the skeleton Sunday staff at their typewriters.



His own office was near Myrna's. He stopped a moment to look at the lettering on the door: *John L. Sanford, Managing Editor*. It had been a day of incredible pride when he had come back from some wild goose chase Old Bob had sent him on, and found that new gold lettering.

It was a little flecked and tarnished now. Ought to be touched up, but it could go a while, he thought. He seriously wondered if Myrna Doring were going to keep him on.

On the desk he found a note from her: *Come to my office when you come in.*

She had known he would come in; she seemed to know just what everyone around her would do. San went down the hall to the door with the brand new lettering: *Myrna Doring, Editor and Publisher*.

She called out softly as he knocked. When he entered, she was sitting behind the desk by the window; sunlight made golden fire in her hair.

Myrna was as deceptive as the first sunny day of Spring. She was blonde and dreamy eyed, and at first sight you would have given odds that she was a night club singer. Just looking at her, you knew what she could do with a blues melody.

She had been running around the place in bobby sox when San was

made Managing Editor. Old Bob had great hopes for her; it was rumored that he used to put a drop or two of printers' ink in her nursing-bottle.

But Myrna had gone away after the bobby-sox period. College, travel, and a lot of activities that San knew nothing about. There had been some surprise when Old Bob left her the paper. There was even more when she took it, and announced her intention of running it.

**"I'M GLAD** you came in," she said to San. "I want your advice on planning these Collins stories."

"You knew I'd be in."

"Did I?"

"You know I don't agree with your slant on Collins."

She frowned. "I had really forgotten; I should have known you well enough by now to know you'd be sympathetic to him."

"Why shouldn't I be? The poor devil spent a life time building a business and a fortune and a good reputation, and now he's watching it all go down the drain because of a two-bit little sharpie who had conducted a merciless campaign to take him for everything he's got.

"She's a lying, stupid brat who ought to be tossed out on her plump little fanny. That's the way it was done when Old Bob Doring started here."

"We do things differently now," said Myrna. "Marylinne Porter is the innocent victim of a vicious old man who is going to be taught that all his money, even before taxes, isn't enough to buy a young girl's life which he can carelessly toss aside when he's through."

San sagged. "How do you expect me to go along with that garbage?"

"You know you go along with it—or you don't go along."

"That's what I mean."

"Those two kids of yours are going to be expensive in school," said Myrna.

Then she came up behind him and took his arm, turning him half around. They faced each other by the window. "Why don't we understand each other?" she said. "We've been fighting since I took over the paper, and it can't go on. I'll be honest with you, San; I don't know where I could find another editor who could run the office the way you do."

"Fine," he said. "So why not let me run it and you dally around the social high spots and pick out a husband you think you can handle?"

Another woman might have screamed and shouted and stamped her foot on the floor. Myrna expressed the same emotions by smiling slowly, and dropping her eyelids a trifle. "I'm not interested in a husband of any kind now, or for a long time in the future. For your private information, I'm interested in only one thing: selling newspapers. And if you've checked our circulation lately you're aware that I am doing a pretty good job of that.

"The Metcalf story, the police deal, the school trust fund expose, the Richardson case—all of them were handled the way I wanted them, after you tried to oppose each one. The result is an almost fifteen percent increase in circulation in six months.

"You'll appreciate that, since I'm sure even you admit a newsman's first job is to sell papers."

"I'm not so sure of that," said San slowly. "A newsman's first job is to provide a line of communication, to help people understand the truth about one another."

"What is the truth? How do you find it out? You see through a set of lenses so poor that no self-respecting optician would own up to them. You hear through an audio system with a response that's laughable. You touch, you smell, you taste—with equally feeble senses.

"This is your communication! You have no possibility of ever finding out the truth about anything, San.

You're a ghost, walking in a world of ghosts.

"A newspaper makes up a dream and it becomes a reality for a hundred thousand readers. You say a man is good and he *is* good. You say a man is bad and they clamor for his blood. And no one, not even you and I, know whether he really is good or bad.

"You communicate what you want to communicate. The readers accept what they want to accept. You may as well give them what they want; that is the only reality between you and them, and you achieve your ultimate goal of selling papers.

"That's what the gold letters on your door mean, San, and don't you ever forget it, or they aren't going to stay there."

He smiled bitterly. "I'll let you know when I'm ready to have them scraped off, Myrna—but not more than about five minutes before."

For an instant it seemed as if a shield about her went down. She spread her hands before him in a single gesture of pleading. "This is all so unnecessary. We both want the same thing, a successful newspaper; we can work for it together."

She seemed like the bobby-sox kid he used to let the climb on the big rolls of newsprint in the basement, but he knew how to kill that illusion. "Sure," he said, "as long as I help you crucify guys like Collins, and Dickinson, and the others."

The shield closed again. "We understand each other at least. And we both know whose policy is going to govern this paper."

"Yes, until you perhaps learn that human beings are not robots with a mechanical response to the waving of your printed pages, robots to be trapped by offering only the things they want to believe."

"That's all they are, until they are willing to act like human beings."

"You might help in that noble endeavor."

"I'm too busy selling newspapers—to the robots who can read!"



THE JAMES COLLINS divorce trial was a big affair for Westport. The multi-millionaire, home town manufacturer was being sued by his twenty three year old wife for half his fortune on as many grounds as her lawyers could fake up.

There is the traditional admiration of the home town boy who has made good. But below it is always the underlying envy ready to rise with vicious reaction when he fails. It was this envy, the smug contentment at the idol's downfall, that was rampant in Westport now. Myrna intended to make the utmost of it.

The plan for handling the Collins story had been laid out as Myrna wanted it. Chloe Pierdale was to do the courtroom stories. Chloe knew how to pull out all the stops on a story like this; she was a sob-sister of the old school. One of the last, and certainly one of the best east of the Mississippi.

Chloe had come in with Myrna. To San there seemed something poisonous about the very air that she breathed. He thought with pleasure of what Old Bob would have done to her.

So they were going to give Collins the works. He thought again of what Myrna had said—it takes a lot to educate a couple of kids. He didn't know anything but the newspaper business. A spot like this with the Tribune would be hard to find or work into somewhere else.

But there was far more to it than that. The Tribune was his, even if Myrna did own it. His and Old Bob Doring's.



When he reached home Georgia was feeding the kids. Their tinker toys were put away, but the five story windmill stood successfully on the piano.

"You must have driven slowly," said Georgia. "Some man has been trying to get you for the last half hour. You weren't at the office."

"It's a slow kind of a day," said San. "What did he want?"

"He left a number."

San picked up the slip and dialed. In a moment he heard a man's voice. "Hello," he said. "This is Jack Sanford calling back."

"I'm Collins. James Collins; you've had my name in your paper a good deal lately."

"Yes, Mr. Collins. What can I do for you?"

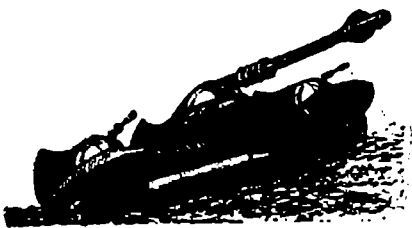
"You can have some photographers and some reporters sent over. I thought you would be interested in another scoop. I have just shot my wife."

San hung up with the feeling of being very old. He knew that Collins wasn't lying. His hand held down the phone cradle for a moment, then he dialed the police station. "Walters? Sanford of the *Tribune*. Lieutenant Harris there?"

In a moment Harris came on, and Sanford told him what Collins had said. Then he called Myrna.

"You fool!" she said, in a moment's loss of control. "What business did you have calling Harris first? You know he won't let us in now."

"Harris and I have known each other for a long time."



**W**ITHOUT finishing dinner, he left for Collins' apartment uptown. Chloe was already there. Frank Rogers, their staff photographer, was

waiting out in the hall. He was a new kid and had never seen anything quite like this before. He was white under his jaw-line. "Harris said we could come in after the police get theirs," he said.

San nodded. "It's o.k.; Harris always lets us get our story if we play square with him."

Myrna didn't show up. San thought she might, but Chloe was soaking up all the details that would satisfy the sadism of the readers. She made a little sketch of the position of the body, Collins sitting in the chair staring at it, the gun he'd dropped on the floor.

She asked him, "Why did you do it, Mr. Collins?"

San looked at Collins, too; he didn't want to speak. They had been distant acquaintances. They had belonged to a couple of the same clubs.

Collins looked little and old in the deep chair where he sat watching the police activity with staring eyes. His hair was half way to gray. His face was thin and very white now. There were hollows in his cheeks that hadn't been there a month ago.

He seemed to see Sanford suddenly after a long time. "You'll sell a lot of newspapers in the morning, eh, San?"



Sanford went back to the office to help change the layout of the front page. There wasn't much editing to do on Chloe's copy. It came out clean and in just the style that Myrna wanted. He scarcely read it. He knew what it would say.

Myrna had been in her office ever since he'd left earlier. He took Chloe's copy in to her. "I guess this makes it even better," he said. "A murder trial ought to sell more copies than a divorce case."

Myrna's face seemed worried and tired when she looked up, the first time San could recall seeing her that way.

She shook her head. "No. We're

not going to play this up. The divorce trial would have teased the audience along; this is cut and dried. We'll give it the front page in the morning edition. Follow it after that on the inside, and work it back to a couple of inches on the back page."

Sanford stared in exasperation. "Look, will you make up your mind what you want? Collins' lawyer isn't going to let him hang without a defense; he'll drag in the juiciest scandals he can think up on the Porter girl. Or is that why you don't want to use it—? But it would sell papers."

"You try to figure it out," said Myrna a little tiredly; "if you get the right answer I'll tell you. But this gets pushed back after tomorrow morning."

"We'll start building the labor negotiations at Johnston Electronics for the front page. The electrical union is set to pull a strike, and I think they are going to it this time. It ought to be a real fight; there's been trouble down there for a long time. Maxwell handled the stories on their preliminary meetings last week, didn't he?"

"Yes. What are we going to do now? Promote a strike, or stop it?"

"We're going to sell papers, editor. Let Maxwell stay on the story; he's good at that. We'll plan a systematic series if real trouble develops."

**H**E WENT back to his own office. Everything was under control. Simmons, the night editor, had the front page finished. It would be on the streets in another half hour.

San turned out the light and went down the hall. At the end he paused and turned back to the comic editor's office. He entered and flipped the light on. In the file of mats he found what he was looking for. Next week's "Dragon Man" strip.

He held the sheet up to the light to cast the lettering and figures into relief and read it through. He smiled to himself. It was better than this week's. The kids would like it.

There was the approaching sound of heel taps in the hall as he read. Myrna passed the open door and glanced in. "I'll bet it's 'Dragon Man' you're reading."

"Georgia doesn't like it," said San; "she doesn't think it's good for the kids."

"She wouldn't."

He didn't bother to pick that one up. He kept his eyes on the mat, and when he looked up Myrna was gone.

He slid the mat back into the file, and wondered what it was about "Dragon Man". There was something; you couldn't be neutral about the strip.

In the hall again, he remembered the morgue file on the Johnston labor dispute. Myrna had given it to him in her office, but he had left it somewhere.

He backtracked to his own office. The envelope was not there. He tried the door of Myrna's office, then entered and turned on the light. Old Bob had never locked the door, but he wouldn't have been surprised if Myrna did. She had brought in a small, old fashioned safe which she kept in one corner of the room. What was in it, San could not imagine, nor had he ever tried to guess.

On Myrna's desk were a few scattered papers. She must have been tired of thinking of something else, San thought. Nothing was ever left lying around in her office.

He leafed through the papers and turned them over. Underneath was the envelope he was looking for. He slipped it into his pocket and replaced her papers as nearly as possible in the order they were.

A page slipped out of one of the folders. He opened the cover to replace the sheet and pat them all down in order. He had no intention of becoming interested in anything she had in there, but he stared at a page that inadvertently caught his eye.

It was littered with curlicues and hatchet marks that looked like some

strange and ancient symbolism. For an instant he tried to imagine what it would be, and then his mind went back a long way and he recalled seeing something like this just once before.

It had to do with logic—symbolic logic. That was it. He wondered what in the world Myrna was doing with such stuff. He flipped through the pages. He saw the names Metcalf, Richardson, Collins, Johnston on various pages. And one he didn't know—Kiersten.

Bewildered, San shook his head and replaced the folders and left the office. He wondered if that hokuspokus was behind her erratic management of the paper. Crystal balls would be next order of the day, he thought; Old Bob had bred himself a strange pigeon when he fathered Myrna into this world.

**T**HE KIDS were in bed, but Georgia was sitting up listening to a Sunday evening symphony when he got home. "If you're finally ready to finish dinner, it's in the refrigerator," she said; "it will take just a minute to warm it up."

While he ate, she sat down across the kitchen table, her arms folded in front of her. He felt as if she were giving him the once over closely. She did that occasionally. It made him fidgety. He didn't look up now until he spoke. "Let's give it up; it's not worth it."

"What isn't worth it? What are you talking about?"

"The paper. It's never going to be the way it was when Old Bob was there. You've added five years to your face in the last six months; there's even some gray where the black used to be. You don't have to try to put up with Myrna for the rest of your life."

He'd known this was coming, but he wished she hadn't brought it up tonight. "There's nothing else to do!"

"You've always wanted to write—

political analysis, historical fiction—you're not getting any younger to make a try."

"We've got the kids to educate."

"They don't need anything fancy. We'll get along."

"No." He stood up and glared with an entirely unwanted anger on his face. "I'm not leaving the *Tribune* now, and I don't want to have to think about such things. I've got too many other problems trying to figure out how to keep Myrna from destroying the paper."

"Old Bob Doring is dead," said Georgia. "You can't bring him back to life no matter how loyal you are to his paper!"



**A** STRIKE town is an ugly thing. San had lived through it before. The Johnston plant was a big one, employing almost fifteen thousand people. He hoped it wouldn't go out.

But it did. Maxwell phoned the news Monday afternoon from the booth outside the conference room where negotiations were being held. "They start picketing at eight o'clock in the morning," he said.

"All right," said San. "Give it to the rewrite man. I'll look it over personally."

There were four editions of the *Tribune*, but Myrna would probably want an extra on this if it didn't make the evening home edition. San glanced at the clock. They might make it. He raised the phone to order the front page broken down.

There was a strange expression, half delight, half fear, in Myrna's eyes when San told her the news. "We'll play it big," she said softly. "Use the morgue stuff I gave you. Keep Maxwell on it, and get him to work the history into the current stories.

There're a lot of old grudges that'll be brought up here."

"We're strictly on the labor side, you understand; we can work another circulation jump of six or seven percent out of this if we're careful."

"How about the editorials? Aren't we going to try to analyze the issues and point out suggestions for settlement? We've always done that in the past," San said.

"You'll probably have to run at least a couple of editorials, but make it very general. Just hold to the line that the company is a big oppressor and it's about time they were whittled down. Let the regular news stories take the burden of the detailed argument."

San stood in the middle of the room and looked at Myrna. "I don't know where you learned your journalism, but didn't anyone mention the fact that a newspaper has an obligation to the community, an obligation to be a force for unity, for mutual understanding?"



"I've told you before it's a matter of believing, not understanding," said Myrna. "Readers will believe anything you tell them if you tell it in the right way—and in that lies the technique of journalism."

"It's the hairline difference in emphasis from day to day. What a person receives in communication one day determines much of what he is willing to absorb the next day. By feeding it out in the right doses you can push a hundred thousand people from one side to the other as easy as the wind can sway a field of ripe wheat."

"I've shown you a little of how

that can be done. You'll see it more on this story!"

He felt the difference in the town that night. On the way home, he found the business section crowded. Beside every third or fourth parking meter were little knots of men, six or seven of them, standing in close conference. Occasionally one would look furtively out from that circle as if fearful that they would be overheard.

As San drove slowly along the street, he knew that in every tight little circle the same talk was being made. The words would be a little different, but they meant the same.

There would be talk about tomorrow's meeting of the negotiators. There would be talk of what the government ought to do to protect the working men. There would be talk of getting out of this town and forever away from submission to the mastery of the corporation.

But of these last there would be few. Their words would meet with general disfavor because they stirred up desires the others preferred not to think of. They would be the first to leave the little conference, and some of them actually would go away, to Oregon, to California. But not many of them.

Along the streets the human flow eddied around these knots of conferees. Men still wore their work tans and had plant identification badges pinned to their shirt pockets. With some, their women walked by their side, and it was here you could see it, thought San. In the faces of the women.

**H**E STOPPED at the super market a few blocks from home to get some things that Georgia had reminded him to pick up. Scattered throughout the store were couples standing together, a market basket between them, the woman holding a list

on a white piece of paper, and both of them staring a little dumbly at that list knowing how far it might have to go.

He saw Lieutenant Harris ahead of him at the shelves. Harris lived a few blocks on the other side of the market.

"Too bad about the Johnston business," said San.

Harris nodded. "I hate these things. I'm glad we don't have more of them. We've got to cover the plant tonight. There's been a lot of ugly talk around town. Never know what might come of it."

"Anything we can get a story on?"

"Nothing definite. It would pay you to have a man and a photographer on deck if you want to be sure your dear public gets all the gory details."

He went out again after passing through the checking line. The sky was hot and heavy for Spring, and the stasis that filled the people seemed to be in the very air itself.

The streets swarmed with cars, nine-tenths of them having no place to go, San thought. Just people not knowing what to do with the sudden hoard of time on their hands, knowing that after enough of that time rations would grow short, and bills would have to go unpaid.

His weariness was almost an agony as he came into the house and put down the bag of groceries. After one look at his face, Georgia shooed the children gently away.

San felt guilty about the meal Georgia had set for him when he knew that in so many homes this night there was no contentment at mealtime, but only the beginning of an agonizing wonder about tomorrow's meals and the ones after that.

The first day of a strike was always the hardest, he supposed. After that there were compensations. No one would actually starve, maybe, but the emptiness of not knowing was almost as bad.

"What are you going to do?" said

Georgia. "Do you suppose they might ask you to help arbitrate?"

He shook his head. "They don't do that any more. The professionals come out of Washington. We aren't supposed to have sense enough to settle our own quarrels now."

"What are you going to do on the paper?"

"Sell more papers; that's all Myrna sees in the situation." He looked up with puzzled distaste on his face. "You women are supposed to be able to figure each other out. What makes Myrna tick? Can you tell me that?"

"No." Georgia shook her head. "I can't tell you. She lives in a different world than any I have ever known. She lives only to satisfy her own private purposes. I don't think a person like her should be allowed to run a newspaper.

"What was it Old Bob used to say about ink and newsprint?"

"He used to say that with a barrel of ink and a roll of paper a man could control the world; that seems to be one point at least where he and Myrna were in agreement!"

**A**FTER dinner San retired to the cubby hole that he referred to as his den. It was an eight by ten spare bedroom upstairs which he had lined with a few book shelves. A desk with typewriter took up the main area of the room.

He had done a lot of work here, mostly editorials, when Old Bob was alive. He hadn't touched the machine much since Myrna came.

He sat down to it now. He didn't know exactly what he was going to say or what he was going to do with it when he said it, but he started out.

*I saw your faces tonight, he wrote. I saw you talking on the streets and walking lonely and stunned along the sidewalks. I saw your wives standing in front of me in the line at the super market. They were buying mostly beans and potatoes, and the things*



*that would go a long way when the pay check wasn't coming in any more.*

*I wonder if you know why things are this way. Do you know why you won't be going back to your bench or assembly line this morning? Do you know why your wife is going to have to stretch the groceries through a time they can't possibly cover? I don't think you do.*

*I didn't see your face among us on the streets tonight, President Andrews. You came to us only a year ago when the Corporation gave you a fine promotion and set you up as head of the great plant in our community. That makes you one of us, Bill, whether you like it or not. And I feel pretty sure you like it. We've got a good town, and it's better because you're here and because Johnston Electronics is here. I wonder if you have any idea why the shop won't open tomorrow, Bill.*

*I don't think you have, and I'm sure you don't want it that way any more than the rest of us do.*

*There will be a lot of talk around the conference table this morning. I wonder if any one can figure out one good reason why everybody can't go back to the assembly-lines and have the pay checks go on while the talks are held, and we try to figure out what we are arguing about.*

San scanned it through. It was no masterpiece, but it said what he wanted to say, and he was going to say it.

He could guess what Myrna would say, but it would be in the paper before she saw it, and for once he didn't care very much what she did think about it. He put his hat on and drove out again to the office to give the piece to the night man to work into the front page.

He was in the office the next morning a few minutes ahead of Myrna. He had bought a copy of the *Tribune*

from a street boy, and his open letter looked pretty fair to him. He was reading it again when Myrna stepped in. She rested her ever-present briefcase on a chair. "I read your piece, San. It was a very nice job."

He looked up in surprise, and she let him wear that surprise while she stood smiling faintly with lowered eyelids. "You probably thought I was going to be awfully mad," she said. "I imagine you came down prepared to accept walking papers gracefully, and say goodbye to the *Tribune*."

"It isn't going to cost you that because I happen to like your piece; it fits quite well into my program. But you didn't know that; you *can't* always know it ahead of time. And so it must not happen again. Do you understand that? It must not happen again."

"And just what is your program?"

"To sell more newspapers—always."

She picked up the briefcase and went on to her own office.



At ten o'clock William Andrews called on the phone. His voice was irate and ragged. "Listen, Sanford," he said. "I don't want to see any more sloppy, gushy pieces like that one you had on the front page this morning. We're running things down here the way we see them. I'll thank you to keep your nose out of our affairs. This plant is going to stay shut down just as long as that union wants it shut down. This is one time they can bite off their noses to spite their faces without any interference from us. And I don't want any from you!"

He hung up before San said a word. San dropped the phone back into the cradle and picked up a long cigar and lit it thoughtfully. Myrna's plans—

He had just remembered that last name he had seen in her papers. Kiersten—it had irritated him. He thought he should have known it. He did; it was one he had heard Old Bob

mention a long time ago, just after the war.



ON SUNDAY afternoon again, they read "Dragon Man" and the rest of the comics. San put his heart into the reading.

"The *Tribune* is the best paper in the world, isn't it?" said Judy. "No other paper has "Dragon Man" like ours, does it?"

"Sure, "Dragon Man" goes all over the country," said San. "Kids all over the country get to enjoy him."

"Well, there's no paper like the *Tribune*, anyway," she insisted.

San was willing to agree with that. Circulation had climbed unbelievably in the last week, to a point that would have made Old Bob's eyes pop.

He scanned through the funnies again after the kids went away. He glanced through the news and feature sections. It was just right; Myrna had done something, and he couldn't figure out what it was.

Little of the styling and layout had been changed. It was the choice of contents; they balanced. Something for everybody in the family. It was the best-balanced Sunday edition they had ever put out. Beside it, their rival, the *Clarion*, looked like a clumsy country sheet.

The strike continued. Maxwell had a masterly summary of the issues on the front page. He was accurate, yet with Myrna's guidance he had skillfully made it appear that the company was wholly at fault in opposing the lily-pure union.

The city had grown uneasy, like some huge animal waiting for something it feared but could not name. The streets were more deserted now. The people seemed waiting—almost hiding—behind the walls of their houses. But in the whole city there

was a feeling—and San could not have told how he discerned it—that this couldn't go on. It didn't.

That night the thin, placid surface of the town broke like a cracking layer of ash on a molten stream of lava. At the union hall a gang attack flared up. The building was set afire.

San heard the sirens and called the office to find out about it. It seemed like the thing he had been waiting for. He had known somehow that it was coming. He had felt it. And suddenly he recognized where he had first felt it—in Myrna. She had been the first to know!

He dressed and went down to the office despite Georgia's protests. There wasn't much he could do. Films of the riot and the fire were in the dark room when he got there. Maxwell and a couple of the other boys were on the scene phoning reports every ten or fifteen minutes to the rewrite desk.

San stood in his own office with the lights out while he watched from the window. He could see the glare of the union hall fire and the shrouds of smoke it was weaving over the city.

Then in the distance he thought he heard a sharp sound, one that he didn't want to believe. He refused to believe it, but in a moment confirmation came.

Holliday, the night editor rang him on the phone. "A man's been killed at union hall!"

He went back to the window, and his vision of the city was changed. A man had been killed down there. It was his city, and while it had become inflamed to the point of murder he had stood by and done nothing but sell newspapers.

He had gone as far as he could go with Myrna Doring.

Old Bob had never studied journalism in college, but he understood it as communication in the highest sense of the word. San had learned from Old Bob, but tonight for the first time he understood the full meaning of the things he had learned.

Myrna had learned nothing, either from Old Bob or from whatever school of journalism she must have attended. She knew nothing of the heavy obligation carried by a man who controls communication between his fellows.

Somewhere she had picked up, evidently, some high-powered hokus-pokus that helped sell papers. Kiersten—San remembered that Old Bob had called the man a crack pot.

He sat down at his typewriter and began slowly pecking out the beginnings of another front page editorial. This one wouldn't fit with any one of Myrna's plans. He was very sure of that. But he had to give her one more chance.

He wrote until near midnight and left the piece in her office with a note for the early edition.

**T**HE RIOTING had quieted when he drove back through the streets. He passed the smoking, steaming wreck of union hall where the firemen were packing their hoses again. White and black police cars swept the streets—he was halted twice in town.

Everywhere the smoke and steam fog had lowered like a black curtain trying to hide the shame of Westport. But it couldn't hide anything, not the hate and terror that murder brought and left flowing up and down the streets between the houses like a black river that was felt but not seen.

He went home and slept until mid morning. He got up irritably after a glance at the clock. "Why didn't you call me?" he growled at Georgia.

"You didn't tell me you wanted to get up at any particular time, and you didn't set the alarm. You needed the sleep, anyway."

The fog hung in late, still trapping the smoke of the fire. The streets had a hush about them, that made him glance about involuntarily and keep his eye on the rear view mirror as he drove. This was his city now, and he had helped make it what it was!

He checked the previous editions at the office and went into Myrna. "You didn't use my editorial," he said.

She looked up in annoyance. "No; it wouldn't fit. I told you not to do that again, San."

"I'll be leaving," he said. "I can't work for the *Tribune* any more. I'm not your kind of newsman, Myrna; I guess I'm more interested in building communication within the community than I am in selling papers."

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm not sure. I've been thinking maybe I can make a deal with the *Clarion*. They need a lift over there. They're kind of old style, like Old Bob was, but they haven't got the savvy he had. Maybe I can get on as editorial assistant to start. Maybe a leg man, even. It wouldn't be too bad—a lot better than this."

"I see. When are you planning to leave?"

"As of now. I'm through with your kind of journalism."

"You ought to give me two weeks; I need you, San."

He gave a short laugh. "What for? I haven't been anything but a figure-head since you came."

"I'll need you tonight. Harris called before you came in. He said he didn't want us to get in the way tonight."

"Why? What was he talking about?"

"He's afraid something bigger is about to break. The union hall fire isn't the last. I wish you'd stick around until the strike ends, at least."

There was a kind of pleading in her eyes that was unfamiliar and totally unexpected. For a minute he had the impression that she was terribly afraid, and he wanted to help her—because of Old Bob Doring, and because of herself.

But he knew that if he gave in it would be too late; it might be forever too late.

"I'll be cleaning out my office this afternoon," he said.

"Come in just before you go, anyway."

IT WOULDN'T have taken long to gather his personal things and reassign his present editorial projects. But he made no hurry to begin. He sat down at his desk. It was going to be more painful than he thought. Everything in the room spoke of Old Bob and whispered that he was deserting, that Old Bob would have expected him to stay and see it through—that Myrna herself was Old Bob's own, and he couldn't desert one of them without the other.

He opened the drawers and slammed them shut again, one after another. He could leave all the junk, if he wanted to. He ought to simply put on his hat and walk out. But he didn't.



In the middle of the afternoon, he felt a sudden whip of turmoil that stung through the outer offices. He put his head out the door and called down to a passing rewrite man.

"What is it? What's going on?"

"The Johnston plant. Ten minutes ago—a mob attacked. The craziest thing you ever heard. Like a full scale war. Every cop in town is out. They'll probably have the militia or the National Guard by night."

San whirled back to the windows of his office. As he did so he heard the sudden ugly sound of distant gunfire and the wail of sirens through the city streets. To the north, where the plant lay, a small plume of smoke was coming from somewhere.

It couldn't be happening, he told himself numbly. On impulse, he reached for the phone and called Georgia. "Take the kids and take the train for Point View," he said. "Don't bother with packing. You've just got time to get a taxi and make the 6:54. I want you out of town."

"San—"

"Don't argue, please, Georgia. Just do it!"

He went into Myrna's office, and she was watching from the window, too. For just an instant, they almost forgot the differences between them. "It's like a war," she said.

"Multiply it by a thousand and it would be—and maybe that would be even better from the standpoint of newspaper sales—"

They listened to the radio in her office. The mayor came on in a plea for sanity, but the rioting only increased. It seemed that not only strikers, but hundreds of other citizens with no concern in the dispute were taking part on one side or the other.

Myrna turned away from the window and took up the phone. She switched into the interphone that covered the whole plant. "There will be no edition of the paper tonight or until further notice. All employees are requested to go home and return only when called."



Throughout the plant there was a moment's lull while the employees stared at each other. It made no sense; they should be among the last to leave their duties—the rioting was not that much of a threat. But they went in response to Myrna's orders, leaving the building empty like a stream of hive creatures abandoning their cells before disaster.

"What was that for?" San demanded. "Why don't we put out a paper tonight? We could sell a million copies—!"

"I've got something to show you, San."



**M**YRNA WENT to the corner of the office and stopped before the little safe. She twirled the dial and took out a sheaf of manila envelopes and file folders. San thought he recognized those that she had forgotten on her desk that night.

"I haven't very long to tell you this. Maybe you won't like what I say, but please don't argue with me now. Did you ever hear my father mention Dr. Alfred Kiersten?"

He remembered all of it now. "There was something about meeting a crack pot by that name during his stint with OWI during the war."

Myrna nodded. "That's where Dad met him. I didn't know about their meeting until I ran into his name elsewhere; I never met him, personally. Dad said the government kept him on only because he could use words like magic. He could write a story that would make a Nazi general weep if he wanted to."

"What about him?" said San impatiently. "What's that got to do with this?" He gestured towards the window where the fires at the plant were growing brighter than the setting sun.

Myrna followed his glance and was silent a moment. "Kiersten—and I—" she said, "are responsible for what you see out there."

"What are you talking about?"

"I want to tell you about myself, first. You remember how Dad wanted me to go into newspaper work when I was a kid around here. He thought if I absorbed ink in the shop I would never get it out of my system.

"He was more right than he knew, but he was disappointed when I wanted college after high-school. He said I could learn everything right here, and when he was gone I could take over;

he was probably right in his own way.

"I was interested in far more than the narrow scope of the business of finding news and printing papers. He had only a fragment of the field of man's communication with man; I wanted the whole field. That's why I went away. But I always knew the ideals and traditions he had were fine and good and he made the *Tribune* a great force in Westport for better understanding."

"Then why did you change all that," said San, "merely to sell newspapers?"

"I didn't; I was doing something else. I told you I wanted to know the whole field of communication between men. I tried to find out why men misunderstand each other, why they willingly believe lies instead of truth. I wanted to find out how communication could be improved."

"And you found it, I suppose! And sacrificed men like Collins and Richardson, and puffed this Johnston dispute to violence. Is that the way to promote understanding?"

"I didn't say that I found it," said Myrna wearily. "I found something totally different; I found Alfred Kiersten. His work, at least. He was dead by the time I heard his name.

"For my doctorate thesis—you didn't know I was Dr. Myrna Doring, did you?—For my doctorate I made a study of propaganda—the distortion of truth, and the methodical manufacture of lies. That's how I encountered Kiersten's work."

**T**HERE WAS a haunted expression in her eyes as she continued. "He was an Englishman. He had been here for a long time before the war teaching semantics and symbolic logic at a small university. When the war broke out he approached the Allied leaders with a theory he had developed.

"He told them that by controlling the population of a nation you could control its armies. And he told them that he had the means of controlling the populations of any country as if



they were no more than puppets on strings.

"Perhaps his claims were too broad. But he tried to promote his work vigorously; he succeeded only in making it sound fantastic. He was finally laughed out of military intelligence offices of every Allied nation. He wound up working in a two-bit OWI job at a desk next to Dad. A year after the war ended, he died alone."

San listened quietly, shifting his evaluations of Myrna while she talked. Dr. Doring. He hadn't known about her degree.

Her voice had been growing husky while she talked. "I found an original thesis of Kiersten's in the college library while working on my own. That led me to the tracing down of all his work. Other papers were in obscure journals, but I found what I believed to be all his original work in an abandoned trunk in a storage warehouse.

"His work was summarized in a series called Kiersten's Equations. Do you know what symbolic logic is, San?"

"Hocus-pokus done with curlicues is all I know about it."

"Kiersten's Equations were in terms of symbolic logic. They show exactly how a given mass of population will react, or can be made to react, under a tremendous variety of circumstances. He showed the necessary elements of communication to a population in order to make it react in a pre-determined manner.

"I don't know whether you understand the importance of this or not, San. 'Propaganda' is a word that has been with us for a long time; it's a loose way of saying that you are going to tell a man a lie and make him believe it. Kiersten showed how it could be done with incredible precision."

"Then why was he laughed away during the war?"

"That's something that will be forever to the discredit of the officers he approached," said Myrna. "It's not

the first time such a thing has happened—nor will it be the last.

"Unfortunately, all Kiersten's work was done with the negative roots of the equations, as he termed them—the roots which produced fear, hate, and violence. But he knew that positive roots must exist—by which men could be induced to love and cooperation. He died before he carried out any investigation there.

"I am not qualified to work them out, either; I can barely follow him as far as he went. But I *can* do that."

"And so, I am to believe that our present turmoil in Westport is due to your careful planning, the running of this newspaper along the lines of Kiersten's Equations?"

"Yes; that's what I have done. You think you know what a force a newspaper can be in a community? You don't know a fraction of it! It's the most powerful communication-medium we have ever known. Radio and television are feeble beside a well managed newspaper.

"It hits them all, everyone in the family. The kids grab the funnies; the husband takes the front section or the sports; his wife goes for the second section with local news and women's features.

"On a mass basis, you can produce any kind of negative result you want. Leave the kids unhappy about the state of 'Dragon Man'—let them feel he's let them down. You didn't know that's what was actually happening, did you? But Georgia caught it.

"In the lovelorn column, you depress the women with the letters about unhappy romance. You defeat father with the constant pounding of perilous world news.

"Sure, this is the common substance of news communication. But when you know how to do it with the unerring rapier skill of Kiersten's Equations, you never miss; the populace goes constantly down into mass depression or rage at a given target. You saw it work; you know how I ordered the

material shaded for maximum effect."

"All for the benefit of humanity!" San exclaimed savagely. "Will you tell me, in Heaven's name, what was it for?"

**S**HE GLANCED toward the window where the distant fires were brighter against the encroaching evening. "Don't you see? If the Kiersten Equations are right, they represent one of the greatest developments of the age? A far greater force than any discovered by the atomic physicists!

"If you can understand that, you can understand me. I *had* to know the truth about the Kiersten Equations. I had to know, because Kiersten said they were already in use *elsewhere*—and I believed him.

"I tell you that somebody knows those principles; they *are* being used—against us. Every day, new thousands become our enemies; we pour out our wealth in bewilderment that we can't make friends or buy allies.

"You know this is true; you see it on the wires. From Cairo, from Teheran, from Calcutta, Tokyo, Cape Town. The whole world is being swept by the principles that Kiersten begged and pleaded the Allied leaders to accept. Look at the map; we are being pushed back until we'll soon be a mere island in a world swarming against us.

"It's no wonder they haven't been overly concerned about our atom-bombs, they have a weapon ten thousand times as potent—an understanding of how to tell a man a lie and make him believe it with all his heart!"

She clutched his arm and he felt her fingers digging into his flesh. "San, do you understand, now, why the Kiersten Equations had to be tested? Do you understand why I had to do it?"

"They work! With only this newspaper as a weapon, I have turned an American city into a hell of hate. It has been done before—by random,

haphazard methods—but never so precisely as I have done it, nor so quickly. It could be done in any or all towns the country over.

"I had to show that the equations worked, because they were already working—against us—in nearly every country of the world!"

He put his arm around her, and her head went down on his shoulder, and she began sobbing. The grief of past months poured out of her.

San felt his own eyes moisten. This was Old Bob's little pigtailed kid again, climbing on the rolls of newsprint, making the linotype men nervous while she stood chewing gum in their ears.

"Do you think I wanted this?" she said. "Do you know what it feels like to take the responsibility of experimenting with the lives of a hundred thousand people? But *someone had to prove Kiersten right or wrong. And I proved he was right.*"



**S**AN HELD her while the sound of rioting grew louder as if it were drawing closer. He knew that what she said was true; you could sense it in the words that came out of Europe and Africa and Asia. He could understand why no one would fear the atom bomb when they could wield the force of Kiersten's Equations.

"What will you do?" he said softly. "How can you expect to convince them, even now, when you have to claim responsibility for this in order to do it? Didn't you think of anything beyond this point?"

She drew away from him and dried her eyes. She lifted her head at the sound of nearing confusion in the streets. "I thought of it all," she said quickly. She gathered up the papers

she had taken from the safe. "It's all here; no one can delay it who can understand the manipulations of Kiersten's symbolic logic. The facts are inescapable."

In the distance another flare streaked against the night.

"I think we better get out of here," said San. "The mob looks like it's coming this way. Do you suppose—?"

"Take these," Myrna said urgently. She handed him the locked briefcase with the papers inside. "Tomorrow—or as soon as the riot is over—go to Professor Andrew Lollar of Columbia. He knows me; he was my advisor on my doctorate. Tell him all you've seen and all I've told you. Get him to read the papers. He will, and he will understand and help you; I've explained fully what I want done."

"But where will you be? What's going to happen to you?"

"I'll be all right. Now hurry—before the mob closes the streets."

He glanced out the window and his entire body went cold. A writhing human stream was flowing toward the *Tribune* building.

"You're coming now!" he said.

She pushed him away. "No, San. I've got to stay. You don't understand; there's a certain point in the insanity of a mob like that when they've got to have—*somebody*. Afterwards, they disperse quickly, but if it doesn't come to a climax they'll wreck the city. I've done all I started out to do. Take the papers and go to Lollar. Quickly, San!"

With the briefcase in one hand he scooped her up in his arms and ran down the hall. The self-service elevator for use of the paper personnel was still in operation. He carried her into it.

"All right," she said. "I'll go with you; put me down." Her voice was almost inaudible. "It's going to be too late if you delay over me; perhaps it is already.

"We'll take our own cars. One of us will have to get through. Head

west over the bridge. The rioters are concentrated between here and the Johnston plant; you follow behind me."

THEY WERE breaking in the big glass doors at the front of the building when San and Myrna came out of the darkened shipping dock doors. The parking lot was clear.

As he and Myrna got their cars into motion he heard the mob cries behind them. Someone fired a shot. Myrna wheeled out of the lot with squealing tires and turned on Main.

San followed. He had been a fool to let her go alone, he thought, but she was right—the information had to get out; he knew that it did.

The street was virtually deserted, and almost dark—lights had been shot out by the rioters. Myrna's car moved swiftly ahead of him. He wondered if she were trying to lose him; his speedometer touched seventy five and her convertible remained three blocks ahead.

Then, as if a hand had raised a toy automobile, he saw her yellow car twist into the air. Its front end rose first and then it rolled sidewise over and over until it stopped against a building. A spurt of fire gushed up.

She had hit a darkened road-block. His brakes squealing, San glimpsed figures that sprang up about it, and heard the sound of shots. They were not police figures.

He twisted the steering wheel hard at the intersection ahead of the block, and hurtled through a darkened, narrow street that led to the waterfront highway. He had no way of knowing whether this road was blocked, but doubted that the mobbers had encompassed the whole area.

Forever after, he would wonder, San thought, why he had turned aside. But he knew. He knew that Myrna was dead; she had planned it that way. Back at the newspaper office she had intended to turn herself over to the mob. He was glad it hadn't

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## **DOOMSDAY'S COLOR-PRESS**

*(Continued From Page 30)*

been that way. This was quick and merciful; it, too, had been deliberate, he was sure. She had suspected ambush, or blocks, and had gone ahead to flush them out. If they hadn't turned up, she would have smashed the car some other way when she had seen him safely through.

He slowed his plunging flight as he came out onto the highway and saw no pursuit behind him. The traffic here was light, for the news of Westport's insanity had spread.

The wash of breakers against the sea wall made a welcome friendly roar through the open window of the car. He felt for the briefcase on the seat beside him.

He didn't know what the verdict would be. If Lollar found Myrna was right, history would have to pass

judgment on her. For himself, he wouldn't try. As she had said, maybe there was some other way. Neither she nor Kiersten had found it, and San knew he could not say for himself that there should have been.

If the world were better for her gamble in coming years, it would have been worth it; if not, the magnitude of her failure was no greater than that of other attempts by man to find peace on Earth.

And whatever the judgment of history, San knew that Old Bob would have been proud. She had tried to make the world better for having been in it—and for Old Bob, no newspaperman could do any more.

