

SUPER SCIENCE STORIES

25¢

THE BIG BOOK OF SCIENCE FICTION

VOL. 6

MARCH, 1950

NO. 3

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Cover by Saunders

Illustrations by Bok, Collé, Lawrence, Leydenfrost and Van Dongen

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Published 4-monthly by Fictioneers, Inc., a subsidiary of Popular Publications, Inc., at 1145 E. Valle Ave., Kokomo, Indiana, Editorial and Executive Offices, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. Henry Blosser, President and Secretary, Harold S. Goldsmith, Vice-President and Treasurer. Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office at Kokomo, Indiana, Copyright, 1950, by Fictioneers, Inc. This issue is published simultaneously in the Dominion of Canada. Copyright under International Copyright Convention and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. All rights reserved, including the right of reproduction, in whole or in part, in any form. Single copy, 25c. Annual subscription for U. S. A., its possessions and Canada, \$1.50; other countries, 38c additional. All correspondence relating to this publication should be addressed to 1225 E. Valle Ave., Kokomo, Indiana, or 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. When submitting manuscripts, enclose stamped, self-addressed envelope for their return if found unavailable. The publishers will exercise care in the handling of manuscripts, but assume no responsibility for their return. Printed in U. S. A.



By ARTHUR C. CLARKE

EXILE OF THE EONS

Exiled to an utterly remote future, Trevindor thought he suffered the ultimate punishment . . . until he met the second exile—and learned that the Universe holds things more fearful even than loneliness!

ALREADY the mountains were trembling with the thunder that only man can make. But here the war seemed very far away, for the full moon hung over the Himalayas and the blinding furies of the battle were still hidden below the edge of the world. Not for long would they remain. The Master knew that the last remnants of his fleet were being hurled from the sky as the circle of death closed swiftly on his stronghold.

In a few hours at the most, the Master and his dreams of empire would have vanished into the past. Nations would still curse his name, but they would no longer fear it. Later, even the hatred would be gone and he would mean no more to the world than Hitler or Napoleon or Genghis Khan. Like them he would be a blurred figure far down the infinite corridor of time, dwindling towards oblivion.

Far to the south, a mountain was suddenly edged with violet flame. Ages later, the balcony on which the Master stood shuddered beneath the impact of the

ground wave racing through the rocks below. Later still, the air brought the echo of a mammoth concussion. Surely they could not be so close already! The Master hoped it was no more than a stray torpedo that had swept through the contracting battle line. If it were not, time was even shorter than he feared.

The Chief of Staff walked out from the shadows and joined him by the rail. The Marshal's hard face—the second most hated in all the world—was lined and beaded with sweat. He had not slept for many days and his once gaudy uniform hung limply upon him. Yet his eyes, though unutterably weary, were still resolute even in defeat. He stood in silence, awaiting his last orders. Nothing else was left for him to do.

Thirty miles away, the eternal snow-plume of Everest flamed a lurid red, reflecting the glare of some colossal fire below the horizon. Still the Master neither moved nor gave any sign. Not until a salvo of torpedoes passed high overhead with a demon wail did he turn and, with one backward glance at the world he would see no more, descend into the depths.

The lift dropped a thousand feet and the sound of battle died away. As he

No, he would not, he dared not dream. He would only sleep . . . sleep . . . sleep . . .

stepped out of the shaft, the Master paused for a moment to press a hidden switch. The Marshal smiled when he heard the crash of falling rock far above, and knew that pursuit and escape were equally impossible.

As of old, the handful of generals sprang to their feet when the Master entered the room. He walked to his place in silence, steeling himself for the last and the hardest speech he would ever have to make. Burning into his soul he could feel the eyes of the men he had led to ruin. Behind and beyond them he could see the squadrons, the divisions, the armies whose blood was on his hands. And more terrible still were the silent specters of the nations that now could never be born.

At last he began to speak. The hypnosis of his voice was as powerful as ever, and after a few words he became once more the perfect, implacable machine whose destiny was destruction.

"This, gentlemen, is the last of all our meetings. There are no more plans to make, no more maps to study. Somewhere above our heads the fleet we built with such pride and care is fighting to the end. In a few minutes, not one of all those thousands of machines will be left in the sky.

"I know that for all of us here surrender is unthinkable, even if it were possible, so in this room you will shortly have to die. You have served our cause and deserved better, but it was not to be. Yet I do not wish you to think that we have wholly failed. In the past, as you saw many times, my plans were always ready for everything that might arise, no matter how improbable. You should not, therefore, be surprised to learn that I was prepared even for defeat."

Still the same superb orator, he paused for effect, noting with satisfaction the ripple of interest, the sudden alertness on the tired faces of his listeners.

"My secret is safe enough with you," he continued, "for the enemy will never find this place. The entrance is already blocked by many hundreds of feet of rock."

Still there was no movement. Only the Director of Propaganda turned suddenly white, and swiftly recovered—but not swiftly enough to escape the Master's eye. The Master smiled inwardly at this belated confirmation of an old doubt. It mattered little now; true and false, they would all die together.

All but one.

"Two years ago," he went on, "when we lost the battle of Antarctica, I knew that we could no longer be certain of victory. So I made my preparations for this day. The enemy has already sworn to kill me. I could not remain in hiding anywhere on the Earth, still less hope to rebuild our fortunes.

"But there is another way, though a desperate one.

"Five years ago, one of our scientists perfected the technique of suspended animation. He found that by relatively simple means all life processes could be arrested for an indefinite period. I am going to use this discovery to escape from the present into a future which will have forgotten me. There I can begin the struggle again, with the help of certain devices that might yet have won this war had we been granted more time.

"Good-by, gentlemen. And once again, my thanks for your help and my regrets at your ill fortune."

He saluted, turned on his heel, and was gone. The metal door thudded decisively behind him. There was a frozen silence; then the Director of Propaganda rushed to the exit, only to recoil with a startled cry. The steel door was already too hot to touch. It had been welded immovably into the wall.

The Minister for War was the first to draw his automatic.

THE MASTER was in no great hurry, now. On leaving the council room he had thrown the secret switch of the welding circuit. The same action had opened a panel in the wall of the corridor, revealing a small circular passage sloping steadily upwards. He began to walk slowly along it.

Every few hundred feet the tunnel angled sharply, though still continuing the upward climb. At each turning the Master stopped to throw a switch, and there was the thunder of falling rock as a section of corridor collapsed.

Five times the passageway changed its course before it ended in a spherical, metal-walled room. Multiple doors closed softly on rubber seatings, and the last section of tunnel crashed behind. The Master would not be disturbed by his enemies, nor by his friends.

He looked swiftly around the room to satisfy himself that all was ready. Then he walked to a simple control board and threw, one after another, a set of tiny switches. They had to carry little current—but they had been built to last. So had everything in that strange room. Even the walls were made of metals far less ephemeral than steel.

Pumps started to whine, drawing the air from the chamber and replacing it with sterile nitrogen. Moving more swiftly now, the Master went to the padded couch and lay down. He thought he could feel himself bathed by the bacteria-destroying rays from the lamps above his head, but that of course was fancy. From a recess beneath the couch he drew a hypodermic and injected a milky fluid into his arm.

Then he relaxed and waited.

It was already very cold. Soon the refrigerators would bring the temperature down far below freezing, and would hold it there for many hours. Then it would rise to normal, but by that time the process would be completed, all bacteria

would be dead and the Master could sleep, unchanged, forever.

He had planned to wait a hundred years. More than that he dared not delay, for when he awoke he would have to master all the changes in science and society that the passing years had wrought. Even a century might have altered the face of civilization beyond his understanding, but that was a risk he would have to take. Less than a century would not be safe, for the world would still be full of bitter memories.

Sealed in a vacuum beneath the couch were the electronic counters operated by thermocouples hundreds of feet above, on the eastern face of the mountain where no snow could ever cling. Every day the rising sun would operate them and the counters would add one unit to their store. So the coming of dawn would be noted in the darkness where the Master slept.

When any one of the counters reached the total of thirty-six thousand, a switch would close and oxygen would flow back into the chamber. The temperature would rise, and the automatic hypodermic strapped to the Master's arm would inject the calculated amount of fluid. He would awaken. Then he would press the button which would blast away the mountainside and give him free passage to the outer world.

Everything had been considered. There could be no failure. All the machinery had been triplicated and was as perfect as science could contrive.

The Master's last thought as consciousness ebbed was not of his past life, nor of the mother whose hopes he had betrayed. Unbidden and unwelcome, there came into his mind the words of an ancient poet:

To sleep, perchance to dream . . .

No, he would not, he dared not dream.

He would only sleep . . . sleep . . . sleep . . .

TWENTY miles away, the battle was coming to its end. Not a dozen of the Master's ships were left, fighting hopelessly against overwhelming fire. The action would have ended long ago had the attackers not been ordered to risk no ships in unnecessary adventures. The decision was to be left to the long-range artillery. So the great destroyers, the airborne battleships of this age, lay with their fighter screens in the shelter of the mountains, pouring salvo after salvo into the doomed formations.

Aboard the flagship, a young Hindu gunnery officer set vernier dials with infinite care and gently pressed a pedal with his foot. There was the faintest of shocks as the dirigible torpedoes left their cradles and hurled themselves at the enemy. The young Indian sat waiting tensely as the chronometer ticked off the seconds. This, he thought, was probably the last salvo he would ever fire. Somehow he felt none of the elation he had expected; indeed, he was surprised to discover a kind of impersonal sympathy for his doomed opponents, whose lives were now ebbing with every passing second.

Far away a sphere of violet fire blossomed above the mountains, among the darting specks that were enemy ships. The gunner leaned forward tensely and counted. One-two-three-four-five times came that peculiar explosion. Then the sky cleared. The struggling specks were gone.

In his log, the gunner noted briefly: "0124 hrs. Salvo No. 12 fired. Five torps exploded among enemy ships, which were destroyed. One torp failed to detonate."

He signed the entry with a flourish and laid down his pen. For a while he sat staring at the log's familiar brown cover, with the cigarette burns at the edges and the inevitable stained rings where cups

and glasses had been carelessly set down. Idly he thumbed through the leaves, noting once again the handwriting of his many predecessors. And as he had done so often before, he turned to a familiar page where a man who had once been his friend had begun to sign his name but had never lived to complete it.

With a sigh, he closed the book and locked it away. The war was over.

FAR AWAY among the mountains, the torpedo that had failed to explode was still gaining speed under the drive of its rockets. Now it was a scarcely visible line of light, racing between the walls of a lonely valley. Already the snows that had been disturbed by the scream of its passage were beginning to rumble down the mountain slopes.

There was no escape from the valley: it was blocked by a sheer wall a thousand feet high. Here the torpedo that had missed its mark found a greater one. The Master's tomb was too deep in the mountain even to be shaken by the explosion, but the hundreds of tons of falling rock swept away three tiny instruments and their connections, and a future that might have been went with them into oblivion.

The first rays of the rising sun would still fall on the shattered face of the mountain, but the counters that were waiting for the thirty-six-thousandth dawn would still be waiting when dawns and sunsets were no more.

In the silence of the tomb that was not quite a tomb, the Master knew nothing of this. And he slumbered on, until the century was far behind—very far indeed.

After what by some standards would have been a little while, the earth's crust decided it had borne the weight of the Himalayas for long enough. Slowly the mountains dropped, tilting the southern plains of India towards the sky. And presently the plateau of Ceylon was the highest point on the surface of the globe,

and the ocean above Everest was five and a half miles deep. Yet the Master's slumber was still dreamless and undisturbed.

Slowly, patiently, the silt drifted down through the towering ocean heights onto the wreck of the Himalayas. The blanket that would one day be chalk began to thicken at the rate of an inch or two every century. If one had returned some time later, one might have found that the sea bed was no longer five miles down, or even four, or three. Then the land tilted again, and a mighty range of limestone mountains towered where once had been the oceans of Tibet. But the Master knew nothing of this, nor was his sleep troubled when it happened again and again and yet again.

Now the rain and the rivers were washing away the chalk and carrying it out to the strange new oceans, and the surface was moving down towards the hidden tomb. Slowly the miles of rock were winnowed away until at last the sphere which housed the Master's body returned to the light of day—though to a day much longer, and much dimmer, than it had been when the Master closed his eyes.

LITTLE did the Master dream of the races that had flowered and died since that early morning of the world when he went to his long sleep. Very far away was that morning now, and the shadows were lengthening to the east; the sun was dying and the world was very old. But still the children of Adam ruled its seas and skies, and filled with their tears and laughter the plains and the valleys and the woods that were older than the shifting hills.

The Master's dreamless sleep was more than half ended when Trevindor the Philosopher was born, between the fall of the Ninety-seventh Dynasty and the rise of the Fifth Galactic Empire. He was born on a world very far from Earth. Few were the men who now set foot on the

ancient home of their race, so distant from the throbbing heart of the Universe.

They brought Trevindor to Earth when his brief clash with the Empire had come to its inevitable end. Here he was tried by the men whose ideals he had challenged, and here it was that they pondered long over the manner of his necessary fate.

The case was unique. The gentle, philosophic culture that now ruled the Galaxy had never before met with opposition, even on the level of pure intellect, and the polite but implacable conflict of wills had left it severely shaken. It was typical of the Council's members that, when a decision had proved impossible, they had appealed to Trevindor himself for help.

In the whitely gleaming Hall of Justice, that had not been entered for nigh on a million years, Trevindor stood proudly facing the men who had proved stronger than he. In silence he listened to their request; then he paused in reflection. His judges waited patiently until at last he spoke.

"You suggest that I should promise not to defy you again," he began, "but I shall make no promise that I may be unable to keep. Our views are too divergent and sooner or later we should clash again.

"There was a time when your choice would have been easy. You could have exiled me, or put me to death. But today—where among all the worlds of the Universe is there one planet where you could hide me if I did not choose to stay? Remember, I have many disciples scattered the length and breadth of the Galaxy.

"There remains the other alternative. I shall bear you no malice if you revive the ancient custom of execution to meet my case."

There was a murmur of annoyance from the Council, and the President replied sharply, his color heightening.

"That remark is in questionable taste.

We asked for serious suggestions, not reminders—even if intended humorously—of the barbaric customs of our remote ancestors.”

Trevindor accepted the rebuke with a bow. “I was merely mentioning all the possibilities. There are two others that have occurred to me. It would be a simple matter to change my mind pattern to your way of thinking so that no future disagreement can arise.”

“We have already considered that. We were forced to reject it, attractive though it is, for the destruction of your personality would be equivalent to murder. There are only fifteen more powerful intellects than yours in the Universe, and we have no right to tamper with it. And your final suggestion?”

“Though you cannot exile me in space, there is still one alternative. The river of Time stretches ahead of us as far as our thoughts can go. Send me down that stream to an age when you are certain this civilization will have passed. That I know you can do with the aid of the Roston time-field.”

There was a long pause. In silence the members of the Council were passing their decisions to the complex analysis machine which would weigh them one against the other and arrive at the verdict. At length the President spoke.

“It is agreed. We will send you to an age when the sun is still warm enough for life to exist on the Earth, but so remote that any trace of our civilization is unlikely to survive. We will also provide you with everything necessary for your safety and reasonable comfort. You may leave us now. We will call for you again as soon as all arrangements have been made.”

Trevindor bowed, and left the marble hall. No guards followed him. There was nowhere he could flee, even if he wished, in this universe which the great galactic liners could span in a single day.

FOR THE first and the last time, Trevindor stood on the shore of what had once been the Pacific, listening to the wind sighing through the leaves of what had once been palms. The few stars of the nearly empty region of space through which the sun was now passing shone with a steady light through the dry air of the aging world. Trevindor wondered bleakly if they would still be shining when he looked again upon the sky, in a future so distant that the sun itself would be sinking to its death.

There was a tinkle from the tiny communicator band upon his wrist. So, the time had come. He turned his back upon the ocean and walked resolutely to meet his fate. Before he had gone a dozen steps, the time-field had seized him and his thoughts froze in an instant that would remain unchanged while the oceans shrank and vanished, the Galactic Empire passed away, and the great star clusters crumbled into nothingness.

But, to Trevindor, no time elapsed at all. He only knew that at one step there had been moist sand beneath his feet, and at the next hard, baked rock. The palms had vanished, the murmur of the sea was stilled. It needed only a glance to show that even the memory of the sea had long since faded from this parched and dying world. To the far horizon, a great desert of red sandstone stretched unbroken and unrelieved by any growing thing. Overhead, the orange disk of a strangely altered sun glowered from a sky so black that many stars were clearly visible.

Yet, it seemed, there was still life on this ancient world. To the north—if that were still the north—the somber light glinted upon some metallic structure. It was a few hundred yards away, and as Trevindor started to walk towards it he was conscious of a curious lightness, as if gravity itself had weakened.

He had not gone far before he saw that

he was approaching a low metal building which seemed to have been set down on the plain rather than constructed there, for it tilted slightly with the slope of the land. Trevindor wondered at his incredible good fortune at finding civilization so easily. Another dozen steps, and he realized that not chance but design had so conveniently placed this building here, and that it was as much a stranger to this world as he himself.

There was no hope at all that anyone would come to meet him as he walked towards it.

The metal plaque above the door added little to what he had already surmised. Still new and untarnished as if it had just been engraved—as indeed, in a sense, it had—the lettering brought a message at once of hope and of bitterness.

To Trevindor, the greetings of the Council.

This building, which we have sent after you through the time-field, will supply all your needs for an indefinite period.

We do not know if civilization will still exist in the age in which you find yourself. Man may now be extinct, since the chromosome K Star K will have become dominant and the race may have mutated into something no longer human. That is for you to discover.

You are now in the twilight of the Earth and it is our hope that you are not alone. But if it is your destiny to be the last living creature on this once lovely world, remember that the choice was yours. Farewell.

Twice Trevindor read the message, recognizing with an ache the closing words which could only have been written by his friend, the poet Cintillarne. An overwhelming sense of loneliness and isolation came flooding into his soul. He sat down upon a shelf of rock and buried his face in his hands.

A long time later, he arose to enter the building. He felt more than grateful to the long-dead Council which had treated him so chivalrously. The technical achievement of sending an entire building through time was one he had believed

beyond the resources of his age. A sudden thought struck him and he glanced again at the engraved lettering, noticing for the first time the date it bore. It was five thousand years later than the time when he had faced his peers in the Hall of Justice.

Fifty centuries had passed before his judges could redeem their promise to a man as good as dead. Whatever the faults of the Council, its integrity was of an order beyond the comprehension of an earlier age.

Many days passed before Trevindor left the building again. Nothing had been overlooked: even his beloved thought records were there. He could continue to study the nature of reality and to construct philosophies until the end of the Universe, barren though that occupation would be if his were the only mind left on Earth. There was little danger, he thought wryly, that his speculations concerning the purpose of human existence would once again bring him into conflict with society.

Not until he had investigated the building thoroughly did Trevindor turn his attention once more to the outer world. The supreme problem was that of contacting civilization, should such still exist. He had been provided with a powerful receiver, and for hours he wandered up and down the spectrum in the hope of discovering a station. The far-off crackle of been speech in a tongue that was certainly not human. But nothing else rewarded his search. The ether, which had been man's faithful servant for so many ages, was silent at last.

The little automatic flyer was Trevindor's sole remaining hope. He had what was left of eternity before him, and Earth was a small planet. In a few years at the most, he could have explored it all.

So the months passed while the exile began his methodical exploration of the there was a burst of what might have static came from the instrument and once

world, returning ever and again to his home in the desert of red sandstone.

Everywhere he found the same picture of desolation and ruin. How long ago the seas had vanished he could not even guess, but in their dying they had left endless wastes of salt, encrusting both plains and mountains with a blanket of dirty gray.

Trevindor felt glad that he had not been born on Earth and so had never known it in the glory of its youth. Stranger though he was, the loneliness and desolation of the world chilled his heart; had he lived here before, its sadness would have been unbearable.

Thousands of square miles of desert passed beneath Trevindor's fleeting ship as he searched the world from pole to pole. Only once did he find any sign that Earth had ever known civilization. In a deep valley near the equator he discovered the ruins of a small city of strange white stone and stranger architecture. The buildings were perfectly preserved, though half buried by the drifting sand, and for a moment Trevindor felt a surge of somber joy at the knowledge that man had, after all, left some traces of his handiwork on the world that had been his first home.

The emotion was short-lived. The buildings were stranger than Trevindor had realized, for no man could ever have entered them. Their only openings were wide, horizontal slots close to the ground; there were no windows of any kind. Trevindor's mind reeled as he tried to imagine the creatures that must have occupied them. In spite of his growing loneliness, he felt glad that the dwellers in this inhuman city had passed away so long before his time. He did not linger here, for the bitter night was almost upon him and the valley filled him with an oppression that was not entirely rational.

And once, he actually discovered life. He was cruising over the bed of one of the lost oceans when a flash of color caught

his eye. Upon a knoll which the drifting sand had not yet buried was a thin, wiry covering of grass. That was all, but the sight brought tears to his eyes.

He grounded the machine and stepped out, treading warily lest he destroy even one of the struggling blades. Tenderly he ran his hands over the threadbare carpet which was all the life that Earth now knew. Before he left, he sprinkled the spot with as much water as he could spare. It was a futile gesture, but one which made him feel happier.

The search was now nearly completed. Trevindor had long ago given up all hope, but his indomitable spirit still drove him on across the face of the world. He could not rest until he had proved what as yet he only feared. And thus it was that he came at last to the Master's tomb as it lay gleaming dully in the sunlight from which it had been banished so unthinkably long.

THE MASTER'S mind awoke before his body. As he lay powerless, unable even to lift his eyelids, memory came flooding back. The hundred years were safely behind him. His gamble, the most desperate that any man had ever made, had succeeded! An immense weariness came over him and for a while consciousness faded once more.

Presently the mists cleared again and he felt stronger, though still too weak to move. He lay in the darkness gathering his strength together. What sort of a world, he wondered, would he find when he stepped forth from the mountainside into the light of day? Would he be able to put his plans into—? What was that? A spasm of sheer terror shook the very foundations of his mind. Something was moving beside him, here in the tomb where nothing should be stirring but himself.

Then, calm and clear, a thought rang through his mind and quelled in an in-

stant the fears that had threatened to overturn it.

"Do not be alarmed. I have come to help you. You are safe, and everything will be well."

The Master was too stunned to make any reply, but his subconscious must have formulated some sort of answer, for the thought came again.

"That is good. I am Trevindor, like yourself an exile in this world. Do not move, but tell me how you came here and what is your race, for I have seen none like it."

And now fear and caution were creeping back into the Master's mind. What manner of creature was this that could read his thoughts, and what was it doing in his secret sphere? Again that clear, cold thought echoed through his brain like the tolling of a bell.

"Once more I tell you that you have nothing to fear. Why are you alarmed because I can see into your mind? Surely there is nothing strange in that."

"Nothing strange!" cried the Master. "Who are you—what are you, for God's sake?"

"A man like yourself. But your race

must be primitive indeed if the reading of thoughts is foreign to you."

A terrible suspicion began to dawn in the Master's brain. The answer came even before he consciously framed the question.

"You have slept infinitely longer than a hundred years. The world you knew has ceased to be for longer than you can imagine."

The Master heard no more. Once again the darkness swept over him and he sank down into unconsciousness.

IN SILENCE Trevindor stood by the couch on which the Master lay. He was filled with an elation which for the moment outweighed any disappointment he might feel. At least, he would no longer have to face the future alone. All the terror of the Earth's loneliness, that was weighing so heavily upon his soul, had vanished in a moment. *No longer alone. . . . no longer alone!*

The Master was beginning to stir once more, and into Trevindor's mind crept broken fragments of thought. Pictures of the world the Master had known began to form. At first Trevindor could make

nothing of them; then, suddenly, the jumbled shards fell into place. A wave of horror swept over him at the appalling vista of nation battling against nation, of cities flaming to destruction. What kind of world was this? Could man have sunk so low from the peaceful age Trevindor had known? There had been legends of such things, from times incredibly remote, but man had left them with his childhood. Surely they could never have returned!

The broken thoughts were more vivid now, and even more horrible. It was truly a nightmare age from which this other exile had come—no wonder that he had fled from it!

Suddenly the truth began to dawn in the mind of Trevindor as, sick at heart, he watched the ghastly patterns passing through the Master's brain. This was no exile seeking refuge from an age of horror. This was the very creator of that horror, who had embarked on the river of time with one purpose alone—to spread contagion down to later years.

Passions that Trevindor had never imagined began to parade themselves before his eyes: ambition, the lust for power, cruelty, intolerance, hatred. He tried to close his mind, but found he had lost the power to do so. With a cry of anguish, Trevindor rushed out into the silent desert.

It was night, and very still, for the Earth was now too weary ever for winds to blow. The darkness hid everything, but Trevindor knew that it could not hide the thoughts of that other mind with which he now must share the world. Once he had been alone, and he had imagined nothing more dreadful. But now he knew that there were things more fearful even than solitude.

The stillness of the night, and the glory of the stars that had once been his friends, brought calm to the soul of Trevindor. Slowly he turned and retraced his foot-

steps, walking heavily, for he was about to perform a deed that no man of his kind had ever done before.

THE Master was erect when Trevindor re-entered the sphere. Perhaps some hint of the other's purpose dawned upon his mind, for he was very pale. Steadfastly, Trevindor forced himself to look once more into the Master's brain. His mind recoiled at the chaos of conflicting emotions, now shot through with sickening flashes of fear. Out of the maelstrom one coherent thought came timidly quavering.

"What are you going to do? Why do you look at me like that?"

Trevindor made no reply, holding his mind aloof from contamination while he marshaled his resolution and all his strength.

The tumult in the Master's mind was rising to crescendo. For a moment his mounting terror brought something akin to pity to the gentle spirit of Trevindor, and his will faltered. But then there came again the picture of those ruined and burning cities.

With all the power of his intellect, backed by thousands of centuries of mental evolution, he struck at the man before him. Into the Master's mind, obliterating all else, flooded the single thought of—death.

For a moment the Master stood motionless, his eyes staring wildly. His breath froze as his lungs ceased their work; in his veins the pulsing blood, which had been stilled for so long, now congealed forever.

Without a sound, the Master toppled and lay still.

Very slowly Trevindor turned and walked out into the night. Like a shroud the silence and loneliness of the world descended upon him. The sand, thwarted so long, began to drift through the open portals of the Master's tomb.