

# fantastic

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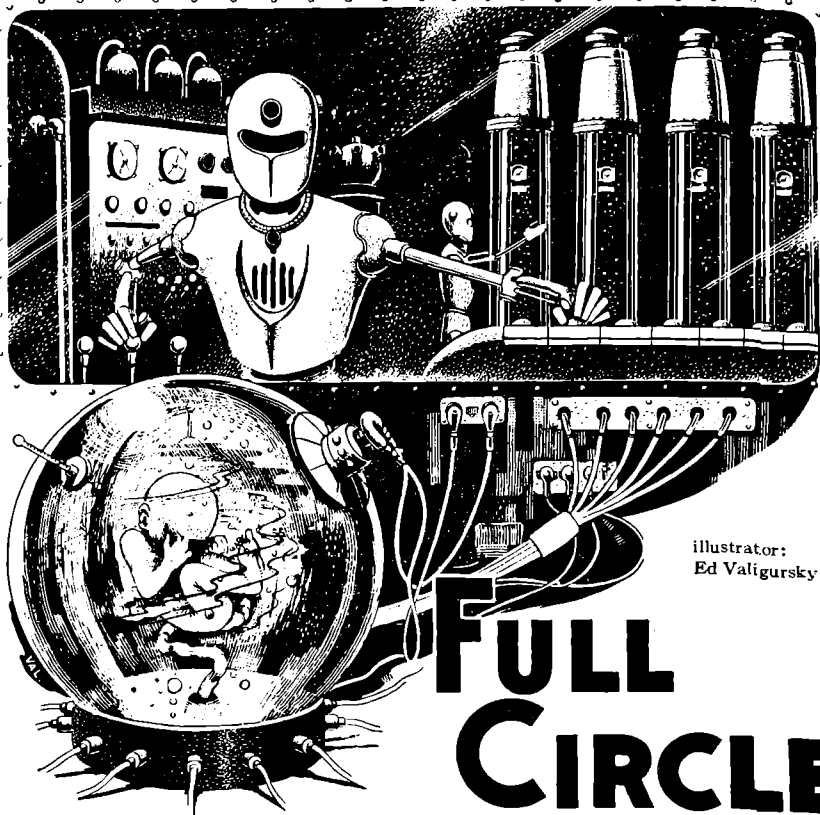
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# FULL CIRCLE

By H. B. Hickey

*The ultimate consequence of man's fascination with better and more complicated machines is postulated in this sardonic short-short by one of the more talented and ingenious writers of science-fiction.*

*Like so many authors, Mr. Hickey turned to writing after a good many false starts in other directions. He sold haberdashery and music lessons, sewing machines and cigars, photographs and radio scripts, before he finally got around to selling editors. He now lives in California with his wife and two sons, where he turns out western-, detective-, and science-fiction with equal facility — and all excellent.*

"ATTENTION!"

From a thousand speakers, strategically placed, the voice came like a crash of thunder.

"Attention! Stop work!"

With a sound like earthquakes rumbling and mountains falling and the sweep of tidal waves, the machines ground to a halt. The vats ceased their bubbling and the tubes went dark.

In all the immensity of the factory, mile upon mile of sunlit vastness, there was no sound. A hundred feet high and a thousand feet long, machines reared up, waiting. In the vats, a million gallons to each, the liquids lay in flawless crimson sheets.

"An important announcement!" the voice thundered. "Final tests on the '63 model have been completed!"

Still silence, but now a waiting, wondering silence.

"Success!" the voice said. "Our fondest hopes have been exceeded!"

Pandemonium. Metal ringing on metal, multiplied a thousand, a million, a million million times, ringing and clashing and echoing until at last the echoes faded away.

"Yes," the voice said, and somewhat hushed now. "Success. In the year 20,362 we have achieved it.

"Without fear of exaggeration we may say that not since the dawn of time, not since that legendary and unrecorded day when

we ourselves were created, has there been anything like the '63 model.

"You will soon have the complete story, but for the moment these few facts will suffice: the '63 model will require no servicing! It will run efficiently on almost any fuel available! It is self-repairing! It will adjust automatically to an unbelievable range of temperature changes!"

Again pandemonium. And finally the voice again, rising above all other sounds.

"It is hardly necessary to add that production is high enough so that the '63 model will be available to all.

"And now — everything is ready, blueprints and materials are being fed to the machines. Back to work!"

In the factory the crimson liquids bubbled in the vats and surged through the pipes and were pierced by lightning bolts from the great vacuum tubes. Through the machines and the presses the solids flowed and were rolled and beaten and powdered. And there were all the gases necessary.

Oxygen and hydrogen and chlorine and cobalt and copper and iron and calcium and phosphorus and sodium and potassium; they combined and united and divided and were shattered and remade by million of volts of artificial lightning.

*(Continued on page 161)*

## *Full Circle*

(Continued from page 63)

And the machines roared and thundered and rumbled, and the sound was like the day of Creation.

And in Control there was no noise but equal activity. Here a green light indicated what, a worker could not see, that Press X-B was rolling the surfacing too thin by a molecule layer. There an orange glow indicated a drop of a millionth of a degree in the temperature of Vat Q-9.

The words went out from Control. "Worker RR-7, up a millionth. Worker V-2, pressure up a micro-volt."

For nothing must go wrong. The '63 model must be perfection.

And in Distribution there was the clatter of smaller machines and the sound of words and words and words. The news must go out. Through all possible channels the news of the '63 model must be distributed.

Everyone must know so that everyone might be prepared.

**AT LAST! MODEL '63!**

**SEE IT! HEAR IT! TEST IT!**

**NO HOME COMPLETE  
WITHOUT ONE!**

So the news went out. For the first time, within the reach of all! Perfection.

The '63 model. Perfection. The ultimate. Able to do anything and everything better than it had ever

been done before. Perfection.

Self-servicing, self-fueling, self-directing!

Unbelievable, but true! No machine, no robot even, could do what the '63 model could do.

Out of the thunder of Production and the precision of Control and the Channels of Distribution the '63 model came. By the hundreds, the thousands, the millions, they poured out and were tested and lined up and carted away.

And to the showrooms of the world the robots came, in the year 20,362, to stand alone and in groups with their great metal bodies gleaming and their metallic voices hushed, to see the product of the Factory, the '63 model.

Unbelievable that skin so thin and soft could be so durable, that eyes so weak and watery could see so well, that a brain of such inferior materials could function.

But there it was, the '63 model, the Humanoid, and it postured and walked and talked, was truly everything it was claimed to be.

And the signs told the most unbelievable thing of all: that the '63 model could reproduce itself!

By the millions the robots came and saw and marveled at this thing that Robot had made. By the millions they took away with them the '63 model and wondered afresh at the genius of Robot.

But a few, seeing what Robot had created, felt a touch of fear.