

AMAZING

SCIENCE FICTION STORIES

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AUGUST 1960

Volume 34 Number 8

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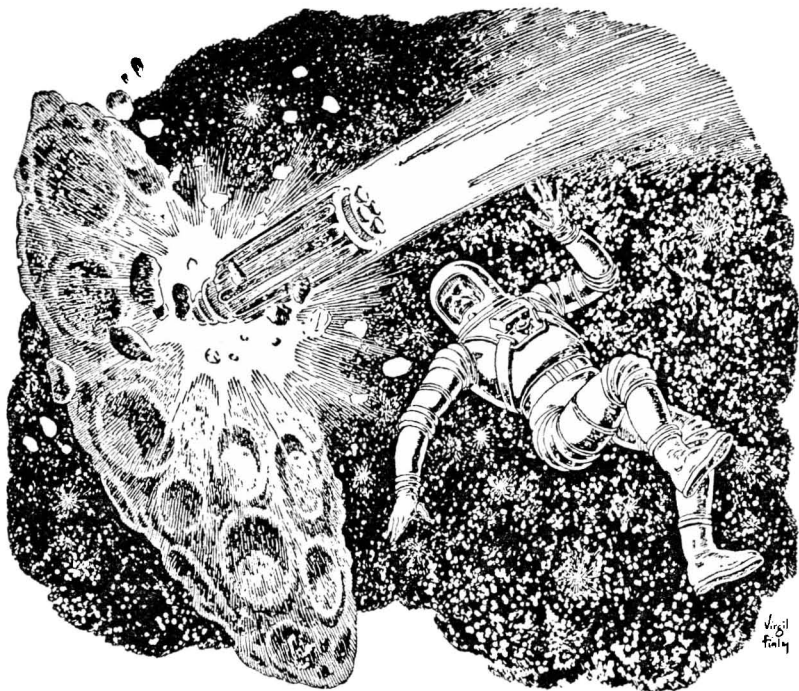
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Cover: LEO SUMMERS

ZIFF-DAVIS PUBLISHING COMPANY, One Park Avenue, New York 16, New York. William Ziff, President; W. Bradford Briggs, Executive Vice President; Michael Michaelson, Vice President and Circulation Director; H. B. Sarbin, Vice President; J. Leonard O'Donnell, Treasurer.





Jack Of No Trades

By CHARLES COTTRELL

First we discovered the Willy Maloon category. Then we discovered Willy himself. Then we data-researched, and postulated a theory. Everything was easy, until it came to the question of proof.

THIS thing really started before the time I had Willy Maloon under observation when he gunned the small runabout well past cruising speed in order to reach the little asteroid as soon as he could. At times like that he showed undue impatience. I was following at a discreet distance behind him, homing in on the rock, too. I had to find out what he was up to.

Archie Crosby, the obliging scoundrel, had "lent" Willy the homer unit out of supply. But, of course, he (Willy) had requested it in words to the effect that it was to replace a defective one in the cache. And Archie didn't doubt Willy for a moment, Willy being the kind of fellow he is.

Willy had worked a couple of hours on the homer unit, which is nothing more than a small radio transmitter. He tuned it to a frequency on the high side of the band used by the homer units in the cache. This was so no one would be likely to inadvertently tune the frequency and get curious. Tuning any of the vehicle receivers to that particular transmitter frequency was a simple matter. Then he had taken the transmitter out among the asteroids and hunted around until he had found one about two miles or thereabouts in diameter, only it couldn't be said to have a diameter because it was quite irregular in shape.

But to Willy it must have been as fascinating as a jewel. So he planted the homer on it so that he could find it again when he wanted to. Of course, he hadn't yet thought of a reason for wanting an asteroid, but he would. He usually found reasons for the strange things he did.

And he did. It must have been just after Ollie Hadaway lost control of his tug. It had been headed in the direction of a rather large asteroid. Ollie had tried to unjumble the steering jets, but he couldn't, so he bailed out and was picked up a little later. The tug went on and shattered on the surface of the asteroid. Then later, Willy, at my directions, investigated the accident, examined the tug, and wrote up an accident report on it. And the inspection part of it must have gone something like this:

When Willy arrived to examine the shattered tug on the surface of the asteroid, he must have been pleasantly surprised to note that the hull was a battered mess, but miraculously some of the innards were intact. He must have looked closer and saw that the drive unit had escaped destruction. The drive unit of a tug is a super-heavy duty workhorse of a unit chock full of more power than would ever be packed or needed in a conventional ship of

the same size. But as I said before, this was a propulsion unit from a tug, and tugs like ones we use need plenty of power.

And that must have been when Willy decided on a reason for having his own private asteroid. He would add the drive unit to it and make it mobile. He must have sparkled with the idea for the rest of the day. I recall his accident report saying the tug was a total loss. Of course, no one checked Willy's decision on that.

I also had Willy under observation the time he retrieved the drive unit and took it to his newly acquired privately owned (now) asteroid. The peculiar shape of the asteroid would lend itself to adaptation to mobility. So Willy blasted off the tip of the elongated end with some explosives he had diverted from some other project, drilled it out with some small charges, and fitted the drive unit in it, and anchored it down. It had taken quite a while to do all that, but Willy had interminable patience once he started a project. The entire procedure would seem impossible for one man, but bulk and weight were no problems in space. And Willy constantly worked miracles.

The question of what value a mobile asteroid would be among swarms of non-mobile asteroids way out in space where there was

no place to go never seemed to have entered Willy's mind:

(Now when I speak of "night" and "day," I speak of those periods of the twenty-four hour clock set forth as working and non-working periods. The working part was the "day" part of the twenty-four hours, during which we all engaged in our contracted occupations. The rest of the time until the twenty-four hour period ended was considered "night." Naturally, among the asteroids there was no rising and setting of the sun to help designate the passage of time. The reference to night and day is a habit which persists with space men no matter which part of the system they happen to be in.)

A few days after Willy had finished installing the drive unit in his asteroid, a small company speedster came to a near-halt at the outer fringes of our section of the asteroid belt. For the next eighty hours it felt its way by radar through the belt, dodging and going around the larger bodies, and slowing its speed whenever it became necessary to shoulder its way through masses of smaller debris and dust.

Finally it had our station in sight visually, and in a matter of hours later, it was edging its sleek sixty feet of length into a side gantry attached to the station.

Mr. Garfield Goil disembarked

from the speedster with a small retinue. He was greeted on the inside of the lock by Mr. Orrin, our station manager. As operations engineer-foreman, I was there with Orrin to greet Mr. Goil.

Mr. Goil's presence had been expected for the past several days, but not especially looked forward to. His status and stature with the Extraterrestrial Mining Company was well known to all of us, and certainly respected. His volatile temperament was well known also; it commanded our concern. And if ever Mr. Goil's temperament was to be put to a test, it was during one of his inspection visits. And that was what he had come for—his first to this station.

As I remember, there had always been conjecture on whether Mr. Goil's temperament was the result of his physical topography, or whether his physical topography had been altered by his temperament. In either case, Mr. Garfield Goil was representative of that only appellation inevitable to him because of his facial features and his name. And Mr. Goil was perpetually bitter and approached the world—any world—with a chip welded to his shoulder.

I tagged along as Orrin escorted Goil to his quarters and broke the seal on a bottle of bour-

bon he had been saving for this particular occasion.

It had been the wrong thing to do. Goil promptly informed Orrin that not only was he (Goil) a teetotaler, but also that he was opposed to drinking by anyone else, especially by company employees during duty hours, and in a place other than an authorized area such as the recreation room or the station bar. He told him further that he would not condone such practices while he was around; his immediate job was to inspect operations personally. His accompanying teams would dig deeply into other matters such as personnel, supplies, overall operations efficiency, and so on. Work would begin as soon as possible.

Goil then excused himself coldly and left for the VIP quarters.

Point number one for the opposition, I thought. Why hadn't someone warned us about the peculiarities of the man?

I hoped nothing would go wrong with the inspection. If things went well, Goil and his cohorts could get their business over with and get away from here that much faster. I was more than a little concerned about Willy and what he was doing.

Willy had spent two days, mostly off-duty time, visiting and working on the asteroid he had adopted, his two miles of ir-

regular monstrosity. In his spurt of activity to install the drive unit, he had over-calculated a charge of explosives and blown out too much of the end section of the asteroid. That caused him some concern for a little while. In a flash of what he probably considered to be pure genius, he solved that minor problem by deciding to fill in the hole by installing a sub-space energizer. This first flash of genius was apparently followed by another inspirational flash. He could, with both installations, and some additional work, send the thing back to Earth. He must have been proud of the thought, for private satellites around Earth were all the rage now; no one who was Anyone was without one. Besides that, it would make a wonderful birthday present for his wife. Her birthday was only a matter of days away.

Goil's first request was to observe a day's operation. I had made what few arrangements were necessary, and Goil and I started out early so we could get into position and see the operations from the start.

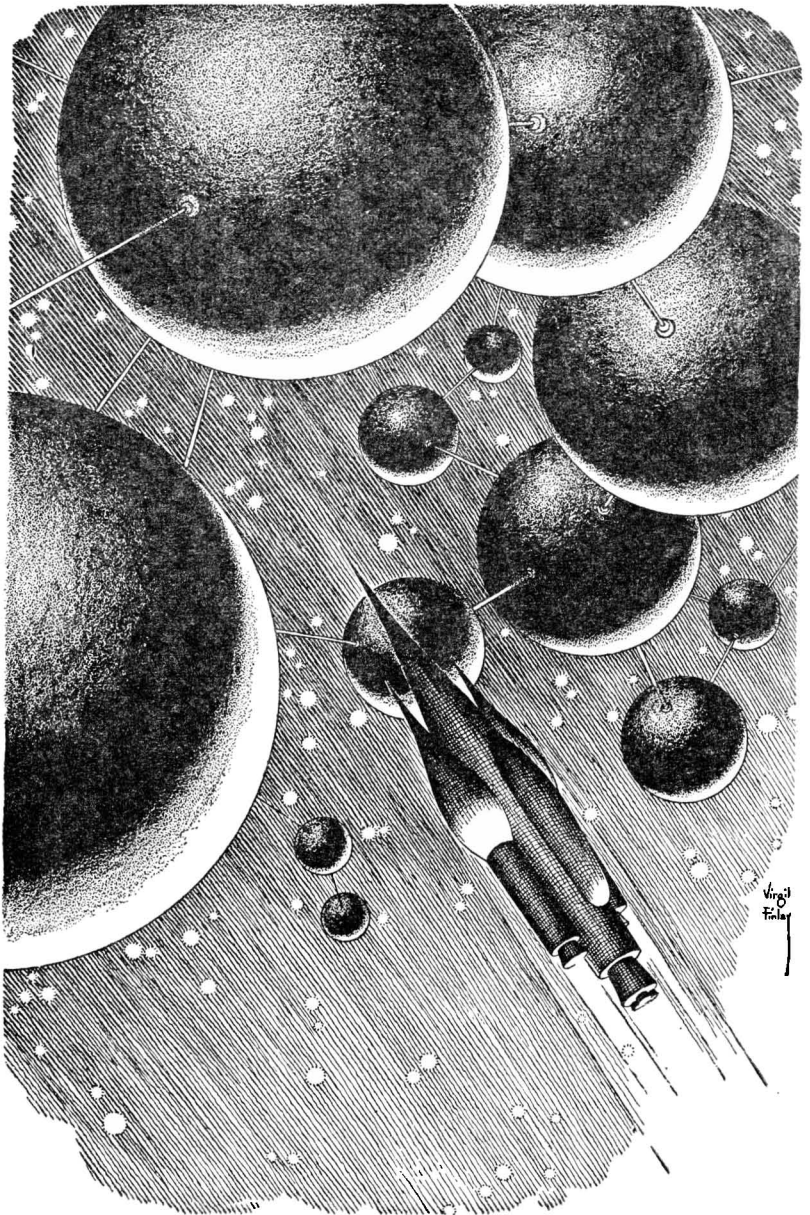
We had one of the observation flitters. I took it about twenty thousand miles out from the area of operations and parked with the forward port facing the area. I said:

"We'll watch from here, Mr.

Goil. You can see the debris floating down there." I pointed, and Goil looked at the little pin points of light reflecting from a great volume of dust, nebula-like in its dim luminosity. "When the crew starts actual operation, we will turn on the magnification screens and get some close-up views of the process."

"Please explain this to me," said Goil. "I've never seen an asteroid's operation before."

"Of course, Mr. Goil. I didn't know. This asteroid patch, or vein, as we like to call it, has a better than average content of metal ores and compounds. As you can see, we have swept the loose ends, so to speak, together. And there you see the result. In the center of that nebulous sort of mass is a large asteroid. There is at least one in almost every patch. We use that as the core, and by planting a large gravity generator on it and feeding it a great deal of power, it and the asteroid attracts most of the nearby debris. The gravity generator has been souped up tremendously. It burns out rather quickly, but it operates long enough for our purposes. There is a respectable layer of assorted sizes of asteroids hugging the core. And there are several miles of dust surrounding everything. After the gravity generator has burned out, the big attraction dies out, of course.



Virgil
Felix

But the proximity of the debris is still enough to hold them together for some time."

"What is that stray body off to one side?"

"That is the trigger asteroid," I answered.

A couple of minutes before triggering time, I reached over and punched the channel button on operations frequency. Immediately the usual operations chatter came rushing out at us from the speaker. Suddenly a voice blasted out saying, "Ready, Sam? Clear, everybody! Eyes off! Ten to go!" A count-down was started.

I had switched on four screens, each a different magnification. I pointed to a spheroid on one of the screens and said, "There's the trigger body. It's equipped with a sub-space energizer big enough to get it into sub-space and return it to normal. Then there is a small propulsor unit with just enough energy to send it to the center of that mess. Then it returns to normal space smack dab in the center of the core asteroid. And when the asteroid matter and the trigger body matter try to occupy the same space at the same time . . . Watch it go out."

It did. Just disappeared.

The debris-encrusted mass vaporized. It seemed to do it slowly, lazily. Much of the debris was flung out from the mass, but raw

energy of boiling vapors chased it, overtook it, and then it too was vapor. The light emitted from the vaporizing collection of bodies would have been optic nerve searing if Goil and I had not been looking at it through the screens. The vapor continued to expand and spread until it looked like a miniature nebula.

I said, "The triggering body is about half the size of the core body. The heat that results from the explosion vaporizes nearly a hundred per cent of the material. What little solid matter that escapes is of little consequence."

Goil watched in fascination. The spectrum of colors displayed were unbelievably, indescribably beautiful. The brilliant cloud masses that boiled and leaped around were like things alive trying to escape the terrible inner torment.

A long time passed, but the sight was so hypnotizing that Goil seemed to be unaware of just how long he had been watching. Finally I broke the silence.

"Watch the specks on the far left screen. They are the gravitor tugs. They are ready to move in."

I stepped up the magnification on the screen. Goil watched a number of great, ugly ships line abreast, head for the glowing clouds, enter, and disappear from sight.

"Those tugs are modifications of the scientific ships that sweep close to the sun to observe solar phenomena first hand. They are impervious to the relatively low heat of the vapor. They will do the fringes first. The center is still too turbulent. By the time they complete the fringes, the center will be calm enough to sweep. They work their way inward all the time."

"How long will it take to complete the operation?" Goil asked.

"With a cloud this size, about a week. It's best to get on it right away. The tougher metals come out sooner than the softer and lighter metals with lower vaporizing points. Recovery has to be made while the metals are in the vapor state or the gravitors won't work efficiently."

"Exactly how does it work?" asked Goil.

"Well, I guess you might remotely compare it to fractional distillation," I said. "Only we gather metals instead of fluids. The reason for vaporizing the solids is to make the ships accessible to the metals. It spreads the matter out thin. The gravitors work very well in the hot vapor. Behind each ship is towed a gravitor. Each gravitor is set to attract a particular metal, somewhat the way a magnet attracts iron, again loosely comparing. A magnet, as you know, attracts by magnetic force. The

gravitors are adjusted to attract a metal by selecting its gravitic attraction. As the gravitor ships pass through the vapor, the gravitors behind them attract the metal they are set for. When load size has been reached, they are taken to the cache near the station."

We watched the operation for three more hours. Goil wanted to see the first of the gravitor tugs emerge with its load. Finally a ship emerged from the cloud mass and headed for the station.

"What is it carrying?" Goil asked, looking at the tremendous mass of incandescent material being towed a mile behind the tug.

"Tungsten," I said. "Would you like to see our cache?"

I steered the little observation ship past the station. When we arrived at the cache area I eased the speed of the ship until it was barely moving around among tremendous masses of various metals. Goil recognized small spheroids of gold and silver. I pointed out other metals, some in greater quantities than others, all floating in space, with thick cables connecting them. I saw Goil looking at the cables curiously.

"Keeps them from drifting apart," I said.

For another twenty minutes we cruised around the cache.

Goil said only a word now and then. He was visibly impressed by the mountains of metal all around, all representing untold potential wealth. I think he better understood how such an expensive operation so far from Earth could be quite profitable.

"You may wonder," I said, "just how I located this cache. There are several little transmitters among the piles. I just home in on any one of them. Each metal cache has its own frequency. Gold, silver, tungsten, beryllium . . ."

Goil nodded. "Let's go back to the station."

Goil called for Orrin and me. We entered his temporary quarters.

"Sit down," he said. He suggestively waved smoke away from his face, and Orrin stubbed out his cigar.

"Mr. Orrin," Goil started, "you may have one of the top asteroid mining stations, but in spite of your fine production record, there seem to be some discrepancies we don't understand.

"For example, certain supply items are being used in greater quantities than the size of your operations require. This seems to have been going on for some time according to your records—and what your records do not show. Your expendable supplies items accounting seems to be

lax, if not outright careless. Furthermore, there seems to be some non-expendable items that can't be accounted for, a couple of major items among them. This doesn't make much sense out here in the middle of nowhere, unless careless loss is the answer. Such losses could hardly be attributed to theft. Needless to say, theft out here would serve a thief absolutely no purpose."

"What major items are not accounted for?" asked Orrin, with a puzzled look on his face, as if he didn't believe Goil.

"The only thing I can recall offhand," said Goil, "is a tug. And that's pretty major."

I gave an inner sigh of relief. "I can account for that," I said. "And Mr. Orrin can back me up. The tug lost steering control the other day and crashed into one of the larger asteroids. It was demolished. The accident report and destruction data are a little slow getting into the records section."

"That's right," said Orrin. "Willy Maloon made the inspection and I certified it. Total loss. The tug was going mighty fast when it hit."

"Where are the remains?" asked Goil.

"Whenever anything big enough is destroyed," I answered, "it is placed with the next batch of asteroids to be vapor-

ized. The metals are recovered that way, so the thing is not quite a total loss. That tug was vaporized during the operation we watched yesterday."

"I see," said Goil. "And this man, ah—Maloon—can he be trusted on such an inspection?"

"One of the best," I answered.

"Anyway," continued Goil, "there seems to be something peculiar going on here. I've instructed my teams to go into this as deeply as they can."

Orrin nodded. I nodded too, but I felt a bit apprehensive. This was an awkward time for Goil to have arrived. And it might prove even more awkward for him to take sudden interest in Willy.

The next day, Goil summoned Orrin and me to his quarters once again. It was about an hour after the end of a normal workday. Orrin and I were both available, and we met at the door of Goil's quarters at about the same time.

Goil had thunderclouds ready to burst hanging around his head. I could see that as soon as we entered the room. Orrin's spirits visibly dropped. So did mine.

The black cloud over Goil burst. For five minutes without letup he stormed. When Orrin and I recovered a little from the deluge, Goil was saying:

". . . complete indications of careless management. And management, Mr. Orrin, starts at the top." He looked hard at Orrin. Then he turned to me adding, "And goes on down. *How* can you account for a missing sub-space energizer, especially one as large and powerful as the ones we use? And one gravity generator?"

"Huh?" said Orrin, seeming to come out of a daze. "What's missing?"

Goil slowed down a bit. "One gravity generator and one sub-space energizer, Mr. Orrin. One each of these items is used for each vaporizing process. And you have one too few vaporizing projects on record. And one each gravity generator and energizer unsigned for, completely unaccounted for—so far."

"What do you mean, 'so far'?" I asked. "Have you any idea how we can account for these two items?"

"I have indeed," said Goil.

"I don't understand," said Orrin in a helpless tone. "How could anyone lose or misplace anything as big as those? It doesn't make sense."

I was glad Orrin had put the question that way.

"Precisely," said Goil. "I don't believe someone did misplace or lose those items. I believe someone took them for a purpose."

"That's ridiculous!" snapped

Orrin. "Out here in space? For what?"

"Maybe we'll learn soon," said Goil. "One William Maloon should be on his way here right now to do some explaining."

I turned cold all over. What had Willy done to expose himself so? I wondered. Aloud I said:

"What has Willy to do with this, Mr. Goil? Willy is one of our best men, completely trustworthy."

"A hard worker and really ambitious," added Orrin.

"No doubt," Goil said acidly. "Ambitious to his own ends. I've checked Mr. Maloon's personnel records and I found some interesting things. Mr. Maloon is not any sort of qualified engineer. Or even an expert technician. Why, he's not even a good journeyman of any trade. His only approach to some sort of claim to formal training is a single correspondence course!"

"He's a good hard-working technician!" defended Orrin.

"Sure," said Goil. "He learned the hard way. Through experience," he added sarcastically. "Can you tell me, Mr. Orrin, exactly what is Mr. Maloon's job here?"

"He's an engineer fill-in," said Orrin with a trace of doubt in his voice. "He's on call and handy for just about any job around here."

"In a limited capacity, no

doubt," Goil said dryly. "And he apparently does a lot of jobs around here he's not expected to do. A check of your tool cribs and equipment storage shows that Maloon has had his hands on just about everything you have available at one time or another since he has been here. Mr. Maloon is a very busy man during his off-duty hours, it seems."

"What has this to do with calling Willy in about the missing energizer and generator?" I ventured to ask.

"Part of a suspicion," Goil said. "Maloon's use of company tools and equipment increased just before the disappearance of those two pieces of equipment. It may be significant or it may not. What is significant is this: everybody having access to supply and equipment was out participating in one way or another in the operation the other day. It seems that everybody can be accounted for but Maloon. He could easily have had time to get unauthorized items out of supply."

"This is fantastic!" snorted Orrin.

They don't know the half of it! I thought to myself.

I didn't want Willy to have to face Goil. Willy was weak in some ways . . . Aloud I said:

"I know Willy quite well, Mr.

Goil. If you will let me talk to him . . ."

"I'm sure you do," said Goil icily. "You and he came here together. Even applied and were accepted for this job together," he added significantly.

There was a mild knock on the door. It opened slowly and Willy stood in the doorway, hesitating before entering, looking around the room. He said:

"You wanted to see me, Mr. Goil?"

Mr. Garfield Goil, in spite of his somewhat unstable temperament, had made rapid strides in his career to his present staff position. He was no nincompoop. He was well educated and trained, and had apparently learned to measure a man accurately and quickly. He so seemed to measure Willy at a glance, drawing, no doubt, also from his recent examination of Willy's records, and the personality profile he had gleaned from it. Willy (he probably reasoned) for all his foibles would be basically truthful, especially if confronted by Authority. And he apparently was timid and obviously worried. Therefore, he must have some cause to worry. Therefore, the impact of direct action should produce quick results. Mr. Goil asked:

"Willy, we'd like to know what happened to the gravity gener-

ator and the sub-space energizer."

Be it noted that it was a statement question and not an accusation. But Goil said it in such a tone and manner that it implied that Willy and only Willy could give an answer.

Willy felt and looked the impact of the words. He looked pleadingly at me, whose eyes sought interest in one of the empty chairs. Then he looked at Orrin for succor, but Orrin only stared back at Willy half-accusingly.

But my own spirits had given a little jump at Goil's use of Willy's given name. This had not happened before. And this was most uncharacteristic of Goil, particularly in a situation like this one.

Could it be, I thought, Willy's personable influence working on Goil?

Willy floundered for words, then stammered out with, "I—I don't know what you mean, Mr. Goil."

Goil, apparently confident that his attack was going well, said, "I'm sure you do, Willy. Think. Wasn't it Thursday that you removed that generator and the energizer from the stock room? These are very expensive and complicated items, Willy. If they can be recovered, so much the better. What could you possibly have done with them?"

"I—I didn't—" Willy started weakly.

Goil stood up from behind his desk, leaned forward, and his features twisted even more in sudden anger. He shouted, "Maloon, you were the only one who could have taken them! The only one who was not working in the vaporizing operation. Maloon, I'm going to find those things, and I'm going to prove you took them if I have to stay here for the next six months! And then I'm going to fire you and prosecute you. Maloon, what have you done with those things?"

Willy tried to sink right through the floor.

I felt utterly helpless and a little angry at Goil's bullying tactics.

Orrin, suddenly angry, shouted, "Mr. Goil, this isn't a court of law. No one is on trial here."

"This may not be a court of law, Mr. Orrin," Goil said, no less angry than Orrin, "but you can call it a court of inquiry. You seem to forget that your position might be at stake here. Your interfering with my investigation will be taken into consideration separately after this matter at hand has been resolved."

This remark, and the severity with which it was made, only angered Orrin more, but he held himself in check.

Willy had been fidgeting and

looking back and forth at Orrin and Goil with a guilty and despondent look on his face. He started to say:

"I don't want to cause any trouble, Mr. Orrin. Ah—just how serious—"

"Hold it, Willy!" I shouted. "You haven't been accused of anything yet. You don't have to say anything without counsel."

Goil turned baleful eyes on me, and I shut up suddenly. He said, "Mr. Weston, let me repeat: no formal accusations have been made—yet. I am trying to learn certain facts. One fact I have learned already is that you are exceedingly friendly with Willy. Furthermore, you as senior engineer-foreman should be aware of what is going on around here. Mr. Weston, you have not been absolved of this yet. Duty-wise, or personally," he added.

Willy was resigned to his own professional downfall. He looked and must have felt utterly miserable. He had done wrong and he knew it. And he was not one to let his friends get any blame for what he had done. He said:

"That's right, Mr. Goil. I did take the generator and the energizer."

My morale suddenly hit bottom and flattened. My mind went into overdrive in an effort to think of some way to extricate

Willy from his blundering admission. Poor Willy, who had the body of a wrestler, the temperament of a poet, and a boundless generosity wanted to confess all.

But what a sacrifice, I thought. My mind sought answers and words and found none.

Orrin stared at Willy, open-mouthed. He said unbelievably, "What?"

"Yes, sir. I got the energizer and the generator."

Goil sat back with a self-satisfied look on his face.

I shot Willy a scolding glance and said, "Willy, you don't have to say another thing—"

Before I could get out any more words, Goil snapped out, "Weston, one more word from you unless I ask for it, and you will find yourself under station arrest for insubordination—do you understand?"

I clamped my mouth shut. The more I defended Willy, the more Willy would talk in order to protect his uninvolved friends.

Goil said to me in a low, ominous voice, "I am invested with certain Company powers out here, and I intend to use them fully. I intend to continue with this investigation in spite of any opposition you give me. Pending on the outcome, Mr. Orrin and Mr. Weston, you are both relieved of your positions as of now—say for mismanagement of

personnel and company property.

"Mr. Maloon, I am placing you under station arrest by authority of my position, and because of your admission of theft. Pay and allowances for all of you are suspended as of today..

"That's all. Please leave."

Willy was the first to leave, with his head hanging low in shame. Orrin left next, with fury shining plainly from his eyes. I lingered until Willy had left. Then I closed the door and swung around to face Goil.

Goil was looking at me peculiarly. He said, "I told you to go, Weston."

"I will," I said. "But first I want to tell you something."

"When I want to hear your side of the story, I'll ask you for it," Goil said nastily.

"It won't wait," I said in a new voice that caused Goil to look at me closely. "I want to tell you now while we are alone."

Goil's eyes narrowed. "Weston, anything you have to say one way or the other I'll use against you later. Anything you want to say to save your own skin just won't do any good."

I became suddenly infuriated. I stepped forward and slammed my fist on the desk top and said in a low, poisonous voice, "Goil, you've shoved your prying nose into something you know very

little about. You're jumping to conclusions about something you know only part of. Now I'm forced to reveal certain facts which you shouldn't be knowing. And I'm going to tell you here and now whether you want to listen or not!"

Goil had reddened and risen from his chair. But I towered over him threateningly and he dropped back in his chair in quiet incense.

"That's better," I said, somewhat cooled off. "Now listen. What I have to say may seem incredible to you. Hear me out, then speak your piece. And I think I can prove what I say to your satisfaction. In any event, I hope I can trust your confidence on this. You'll understand what I mean by the time I'm finished.

"First, Willy did take the energizer and the generator. 'Steal,' if you wish to say so. I knew it. Orrin, nor anyone else knows it though. Second, those are not the only things he has taken. Third, his taking things like that has been happening all the time he has been here. It happened before he got here, wherever he was.

"He is not a kleptomaniac. He steals, not because he has a compulsion to do so, nor for economic gain, but for a more important reason."

Goil said, "Stop beating around the bush. If you think

you have something to say, go ahead and say it."

"I'm trying to," I said. "But it's not something easily explained.

"Willy is nothing but a great big rabbit's foot."

"What?"

"Mr. Goil, Willy is the exact opposite of an accident prone. Willy is a safety prone. No accidents involving personal injury ever happen when he is around. Not even minor ones."

Goil looked hostilely skeptical at me. "I seem to recall some accident reports you sent in. You signed them yourself, I believe, as safety officer."

"That's right," I said feeling foolish. "But they were falsified reports. And I've requisitioned medical supplies too, that were never needed."

"Now why would you want to do a thing like that?" asked Goil in a tone cold with obvious disbelief, and the tenor of humoring a madman.

"To keep reports and consumption statistics where they belong," I answered.

"I'm more than just an employee of the Company. I'm also a research psychologist. And I'm studying Willy. I'll admit that through influence and other ways I got Willy and me a job out here isolated with a relatively small group doing rather dan-

gerous work, normally. That was planned. It's easier to study him this way. I can prove this, of course."

"How do you know for certain Willy is a safety prone?"

"Through non-accident statistics where he has worked."

Goil removed a small pen knife from his pocket, opened the blade, and drew it across the back of his hand. The cut bled. He said, "Look. I'm injured."

I shook my head. "You are injured, but it's not the same thing. It was not an accident."

Goil stood up. "I've heard enough of your gibberish. Willy is a thief and you are a pathological liar. What you have just told me is pure fantasy, a yarn concocted to try to protect you and Willy. I have little doubt but what you really believe it yourself. Mr. Weston, you are a sick man."

"I told you it would sound incredible."

"Willy only steals or alters the normal sequence of events so that accidents involving human injury won't happen. Sometimes his behavior patterns are simple, sometimes complex. But always—always the synergism, syndrome, or whatever you want to call it, is the same. I have a file of tape recordings I can let you hear, and incident histories—"

"Which may very well be con-

sidered part of *your* syndrome," said Goil. "Mr. Weston, you are either the system's boldest liar, or you are sick. You can't really expect me to believe all that garbage, now can you?"

"With that unimaginative type mind you seem to have, Mr. Goil, no, I don't expect you to believe. But it was worth a try. Willy is up to something big right now, and if you interrupt it, there is no telling what will happen."

"We'll find out," Goil said, "for I expect to find out what this is all about. Now if you'll leave—"

I spun on my heel, angry at Goil's intolerant stupidity. I whipped open the door and slammed it shut behind me. Then I stormed to my quarters where I broke open a fresh bottle of Scotch. I downed a couple of quick shots then nursed a third, thinking about the time out near Jupiter when Willy had rigged up a still and brewed some powerful concoction. He had insisted that we all sample it, and everyone had, just to please Willy (they thought!) and had all gotten roaring drunk. And had safely passed through one of those plague areas that come up once in a century out of who knows where to decimate any population that happens to be in the way.

We had made an emergency

landing at another mining station. We had walked through the corridors and rooms looking for desperately needed parts and supplies, and had tried to count the dead until the task became too sickening, exposed in every possible way to the voracious microorganisms that had killed every being aboard. But none of us had gotten even a headache. We found our parts and took off again.

Willy never made any more of that brew.

I wondered often what could have been in that stuff to make it such a powerful antibiotic.

I had been early in the process of studying Willy then and had not had foresight enough to keep a sample of that brew. I had lost one chance right then to add materially to the medical knowledge of humanity. And now that stupid Gar Goil was on the point of interrupting all further research.

For the next ten minutes I considered ways I could get Goil near an airlock so I could shove him through, sans suit, and with enough velocity so that he would end up somewhere in the Coal-sack region. But I gave up the idea, conceding that it would be impossible; somewhere along the line Willy would prevent it.

I took one more Scotch and went to bed. All night long I

crossed and recrossed the threshold of sleep, my mind filled with methods of studying and analyzing the intricacies of Willy's behavior; trying to discover any common factors so that others of his genre could easily be discovered and put to work and their by-products salvaged.

The following day was dismal to me. I avoided everybody possible so I wouldn't take my troubles out on them. And I avoided Goil in particular, for another reason. I even ate late so I could eat alone.

Just about the time I finished, Artie's voice came over the system, saying:

"Attention, everyone. Flash news item just received. There is a freighter out of control enroute from Ganymede to Mars. Unless the freighter can be brought under control, it will have to be abandoned."

So what, I thought. It's happened before. So some company loses a freighter. They're insured.

Artie's voice went right on uninterrupted by my sour thoughts. "The present course of the ship is interception of Mars. Unless the course can be changed, the ship might plunge into Mars."

So what again? They're still insured. The crew can abandon ship in the lifeboats. So the ship makes a microscopic dent in

Mars. It's better than 99% wasteland.

"The exact point at which impact with Mars will be made is being computed right now. What makes the whole thing terrible is that the freighter is loaded with fissionable material exported from Ganymede. If the ship is not stopped or diverted before it reaches Mars, the impact will bring all the units of fissionable material into super critical proximity."

And that, I realized, will not be good for Mars because the thin atmosphere of the planet will let the ship get right through to the surface before the tough skin could get much more than cherry red. And the ship would bury itself in the soft red soil (how deep?) before the impact sandwiched the containers of fissionable material enough for detonation proximity.

Whew! My interest began to increase.

That was Artie Jones giving the news. He was like that, and it was not part of his regular job. He did it because he wanted to keep people up with the latest. He was Computers and Communications engineer.

He finished off by saying, "Long-range scopes are looking for the ship now. As soon as it is located and magnifiers thrown into the circuit, it will be 'vised.

I'll have the signals relayed to the rec room trideo.

"It is, by the way, one of our own company freighters."

Alarms clanged in my head. Yowee!

I raced for the rec room. Nearly everybody else was doing the same. Orrin was playing a half-hearted game of cribbage with Gus. Goil sat by himself in a corner reading. Willy was not there.

Randy and Manuel were already arguing about how much fissionable a freighter like that could carry. I settled the argument by telling them exactly how much. They both whistled and shook their heads. Randy said:

"If that ship buries itself deeply enough in the surface and explodes, it'll make a neat hole in Mars."

I looked askance at Goil and saw that he was not reading. I said, "Hole, hell! With the tonnage they have on that ship, it'll take a chunk out of the surface the size of Australia. If it goes deep enough, it might even crack the planet wide open. It couldn't be any worse."

I wasn't at all certain anything like cracking the planet would happen. Nobody could know just what sort of blast that tonnage could make. But I wanted it to sound really bad. I

sneaked a quick look at Goil. He was looking pretty worried.

Now, I knew our company had some real estate on Mars. A few mines, a number of atmosphere generator factories and several gravity generator plants. And just about this time I strongly suspected that Goil had some stock and other holdings in the Mars territory.

"That's only part of it," I said. "Think of what will happen to Mars' atmosphere if that much planet is scattered around."

"Yeah," said Manuel. "Dust. Red dust. And how about all that undetonated radioactive material?"

"Which will be dust also," I said, "thoroughly mixed in with all the rest of the dust."

Gus had finished his game of cribbage with Orrin and had come over. He said, "The dust will shut out what dim sunlight there is and the whole planet will be in for a deep freeze."

"What's the half-life of that stuff in the freighter?" I asked Orrin. I knew, but I wanted Goil to know too. Orrin told me.

The alarm that had clattered in my brain had settled down to a soothing purr. I began to add three and three hoping to get nine. Right now I needed a gestalt of something whose whole would be a lot greater than the sum of its parts. The parts I be-

lieve I had, and the sum I think was due to come up soon.

I went out and headed for the computer room. Artie was in there trying to listen to a dozen news reports at one time. He wouldn't miss any of them, for a flock of recorders were going all at once.

I grabbed him by a shoulder and spun him around and looked as hard and serious as I could.

"Artie," I said, "I know damned well you computed a course for Willy the other day, for an asteroid to orbit just outside Earth. I want you to give me the exact course, where and when. And I want it now. This is official business, Artie."

I must have looked extremely convincing, for Artie paled a little and did not try to deny anything.

"—I can't, Sam," he said. "I gave the original tapes and sheets to Willy. I threw away the duplicates."

"Dammit, Artie!" I shouted, now really mad. "Then you'd better start remembering pretty good, because you're going to sit right down here and I'm going to sit with you, and you are going to give me as nearly as you can the course of Willy's asteroid."

This was just about an impossible request. I knew it, and Artie knew it. But he sat down

at the console of the computer and said:

"I'll do the best I can, Sam."

I went to Willy's room and banged on the door then threw it open. He wasn't there. For sure then he would be someplace he wasn't supposed to be. So I headed for one likely place.

Willy was there all right. The chef shuffled around nervously, probably wondering if I'd just chew him for letting Willy in the galley, or tell Orrin. He offered me ham and eggs. I refused sharply.

"Elmer," I said, "blast off."

Elmer did.

As soon as Willy and I were alone, I said, "Willy, you got me and Mr. Orrin in a pack of trouble. Why don't you tell me where the generator and the converter are. If we can get them back to the stock room, nothing can be proved."

Willy couldn't look me in the face. He added three too many spoons of sugar to his coffee then stirred it so fast it spilled over the edge of the cup.

"Come on, Willy. Where?"

Willy spent the next minute trying to turn inside out. He finally squeaked. "I can't, Sam."

"Why not, Willy?"

It was my turn to be silent for a minute. It seemed a lot longer. I said, "I think you better tell me all about it, Willy."

He did.

I went back to the recreation room.

The trideo was on and some narrator's voice was explaining and showing the course of the ship on a chart, and just where it would go.

The ship was still unaccountably out of control. The plotted course showed that it would intercept Mars. And a map of Mars showed precisely where the ship would strike the surface.

Of all the barren areas on Mars where the ship could strike and do a little less surface damage, it was headed instead straight for the only densely populated, industrial area.

I looked at Goil and saw that his morale could be trod on. He probably already had computed his own monetary loss as well as the company losses. But he wasn't saying a word. He was keeping his misery to himself.

Let him stew until morning, I thought. By then he should be ripe for the little package I was planning to hand him.

By morning, the confidence that I had the night before had pretty much dissipated. Nevertheless, I followed Goil from the dining hall to his quarters, giving him only time to complete any personal necessities before knocking on his door.

Some of my confidence return-

ed when I entered the room. He looked as if he hadn't slept any at all. The impending doom of his Mars holdings had apparently dwelt with him most intimately the past night.

Goil said, "What's on your mind, Mr. Weston?"

"I had a talk with Willy last night. He wants to tell you everything."

Goil brightened slightly. "Fine," he said.

"I've taken the liberty of asking him to come here," I said.

Goil nodded.

This was a good chance for me to needle him a little more, so I said, "The news reports are not good this morning. That freighter will have to be abandoned sometime this evening if they don't get it off the course it's on now."

Goil dimmed again. He said, "I heard the news."

"There is no way they can jettison that cargo either. Strange, isn't it. Of all the other points in and around space, that ship has got to pick Mars to smack into, and the only densely populated part of Mars at that. Fate, I guess."

"Not so strange," said Goil. "It was enroute to Mars."

"Sure," I said, "but a course usually includes a series of corrections for a haul like that."

Goil said, "No navigator-computer combination is good

enough to plan a one-shot course like that. It's just an unfortunate coincidence that the industrial area is to be hit."

And those last words were just what I wanted to hear from him.

Willy knocked on the door and entered at Goil's request. Willy's face was long, and the few steps that carried him into the room seemed to draw on his last reserves of energy. He seemed a little grateful when Goil bade him be seated.

Goil said, "All right, Willy. Sam says you have something to tell me."

"Yes, sir," Willy said dolefully, shifting his gaze so that he did not have to look directly at Goil or me. He hesitated for moments, then when the silence was too thick, he continued.

"I—I took that generator and that energizer as I told you yesterday." Again he paused, patently dreading what more he had to say.

"What did you do with such monstrous, expensive pieces of equipment?" asked Goil. "Of what possible use could they be to you, especially out here in space?"

"Willy," I said, "why don't you start right at the beginning so Mr. Goil can get a complete picture?"

Willy looked behind and around me, gulped a couple of times, then started.

"OK. Well, Martha's birthday—Martha is my wife, Mr. Goil—her birthday is in a few days. And I missed her last birthday and she never forgave me for that. And I almost missed this one too, except I got an idea. And that was after reading about those private satellites a lot of the rich people have going around Earth.

"It was too late for me to send any sort of a birthday present to Martha; besides, what could I get her out here? Anyway, I got the idea that what a wonderful birthday present it would be if I could get Martha a private satellite. Not one of those prefabricated ones, but a natural, real one. The more I thought about it the better the idea sounded. Then I realized that I had everything here; a million asteroids to choose from, and I could slip one of the gravity generators in the middle of it. And I could hitch the drive from the smashed tug to it, and install a sub-space energizer. Except for an atmosphere generator it would be equipped enough for a start. I could finish equipping it later. So I got an asteroid and took a sub-space energizer and a gravity generator from supply—they are expendable—and got the drive off the wrecked tug. I installed them on the rock."

Willy ended his story abruptly.

Goil sat looking intently at Willy and drumming his fingers on the desk top. Finally he said:

"We can recover those major items. Maybe it'll go easier with you, Willy. If you can show us where this rock is—"

Willy hung his head again. And the silence became solid. Finally Willy squeaked out:

"I can't. I sent it off yesterday."

"Just how and when did you determine the rock should be sent?" asked Goil.

"I—I got a course tape," said Willy. I could almost feel his sense of guilt as he virtually implicated one more of his friends.

"Don't you know," said Goil in an all-too-quiet, ominous voice, "that a jury-rigged contraction like that could never get near Earth with only a one-time course like that plotted for it? That it takes precise computations to get something like that to a destination? *With* a human navigator? Just how did you figure you could do it? I'm curious."

"Well," said Willy warming up to the subject a little, "I rigged up a timing unit. When it left here, it was on the taped course for Earth. Then it went into sub-space. From the computations I got, I set another timer that will kick it back into normal

space at the right time, and in an orbit around Earth."

The room was silent for a time. Finally the silence exploded with:

"You damned fool! You dangerous idiot! You've got just enough knowledge to be able to do something like that, but not enough sense to know it is hopeless and idiotic! I've heard enough. Now, get out of here!"

Willy got out in a stumbling hurry.

I stayed. Goil tried to glare me out of the room, but I would have none of it. I was now ready to go into action. I was by no means certain I would be right, but already deep in this mess, what more could I lose by plunging?

With a lot more bravado than I really felt, I plunked down on Goil's desk top a stack of sheets, a chart, and tapes. Then I put both palms down on his desk and leaned over until I looked him squarely in the face. I said:

"Do you know what is going to happen to that rock of Willy's, Mr. Goil? It's going to come out of sub-space right smack in the path of that freighter. It's going to knock that freighter right off course."

Of course, it sounded like a fantasy, and if I had been in Goil's place, I would have thought it so. But Goil had been

worrying over the impending loss of his interests, and even the fantastic was something to clutch at for the moment.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

I nodded to the stuff I had tossed on his desk. "Look at those. The chart particularly. I got the course plotted by Artie Jones. I checked the path and timing of both Willy's asteroid and the freighter. Willy's asteroid is due to come out of sub-space in about six hours at this point."—I pointed to an X I had marked on the chart—"And the freighter will be at the same point at the same time."

Goil said nothing, but examined the chart and the computation figures, and finally the tapes. He shook his head a number of times as if he didn't want to believe but did not dare not to. Finally, he looked up at me and said:

"The course and figures seem to check both ways. But I don't believe it. That the rock and the freighter should meet in the same place at the same time would be more than a coincidence. It would be a miracle."

"More so than the 'coincidence' of the freighter headed straight for Mars' only industrial area?" I asked.

Goil thought it over for a while. Then he said, "Yes. More than I can imagine. We have the

rock and the freighter, two moving bodies, meeting in space by pure chance. Space is too vast for that sort of thing. It can't happen."

"Mars and the freighter are two moving bodies in space that are going to meet," I pointed out.

"Yes, but the ship was originally headed on a course to Mars. And Mars is much bigger."

"True," I conceded. "But the asteroid is also on an interception course with the freighter. And it is a lot bigger than the freighter."

Goil sat silent and thoughtful for quite a while. Finally, he said:

"I'm not gullible, Mr. Weston. Nor am I a fool. I have enough interest in Mars to want a miracle to happen, aside from a natural desire to see disaster averted. But what about you; what are you after? What are you trying to prove?"

That was what I had been waiting for.

I told him about the Research Institute of Human Influences, for which I was a field psychologist, and how they located accident prone and safety prone, among other types of odd personalities, and how we observers gathered data in efforts to learn ways to nullify the accident prone's influence, and to learn

the whys and hows of the safety prone, as well as ways to expand their fields of influence.

Goil just sat there, his face indicating neither belief nor disbelief.

"Willy has no idea he does what he does, nor why. He's completely unaware of his influence. I can't imagine how his mind works to rationalize for his behavior. I'd do just about anything, Mr. Goil, to keep Willy from learning all I've told you. It would make him aware, and that might sour things, probably even nullify his influence."

Goil said, "I'm not at all convinced that this is not some sort of lunatic hoax. But as long as there is nothing I nor you can do for the time being, I'm going to hold any further action in abeyance. Let's see what happens. Even if by some miraculous coincidence the rock and the ship should meet, that's not proof that your yarn is true."

"No," I said. "But other things have happened before. Nothing this big, though. But always, there is this synergism of Willy's; a compulsion to do some crazy thing, or to build some silly gadget, even if he has to steal to do it. And the inevitable end that sometimes quite obviously prevents injury, and other times leaving the results a mystery. Once the purpose has been accomplished, Willy loses all

interest. I have histories, documented cases of Willy's influence. Files of tape recordings of his synergisms in action. And these files all show a definite pattern."

"Let's hear some of your recordings, and read some of your documents," said Goil.

And that was how we spent the next four hours.

Of course, I had juggled the computations I had shown Goil a little bit. And made the course of the asteroid look like it would coincide with that of the freighter. If I hadn't, Goil would never have given me the time I needed.

Art Jones had kept the news of the freighter coming in all day. It was still on course for Mars. About a half-hour before the freighter crew was due to leave the ship, the rec room was crowded with men waiting to watch the escape of the crew.

There hadn't been time enough to get a ship in the area that could blast the freighter off course. And there hadn't been any ship even on Mars equipped for such action, not even an old slightly serviceable derelict that could be placed in the runaway ship's path for deflection.

The long-range scope still had the runaway ship in focus. It looked like a little painted miniature in the trideo, with a very slowly moving spangled

background. A faint superimposed image of Mars appeared. The announcer was talking about forces, vectors, and other navigational terminology, plus nonsensical chatter of probability factors. The picture faded and was replaced with an artist's animated conception of the impending tragedy. It showed the present location of the ship, the calculated course and trajectory of the ship through the atmosphere to the point of impact—right in the center of the industrial area. It ended with a big question mark before the image of the ship returned.

During the sequence of the collision course, I was trying in my mind to figure out just how far off Willy's asteroid would be. I could figure it roughly in my head, remembering the original figures I'd gotten from Artie. The asteroid would be no fewer than a million and a half miles from the runaway ship, at its nearest point. Besides, it wouldn't emerge from sub-space until it was near Earth, a good seventy million miles from Mars at that time.

It had taken some belligerent persuasion to get Artie to conjure up the figures and tapes I gave Goil.

I felt a tap on my shoulder and glanced up. Simon, one of the tug pilots, was pointing toward the back of the room. I

looked back. Artie was there with a worried look on his face looking at me. His eyes moved quickly toward where Goil sat, and then back at me. His head gave a little backwards jerk.

Feeling real unhappy all of a sudden as premonition nudged my mind, I got up quietly and went back.

Artie had stepped outside in the hall. When he saw me step out of the rec room doorway, he motioned me down the hall farther. Gloom was all over his face, even in his motions. He said:

"Sam, I don't know what's going on around here between Willy, Goil, and you. But I thought you'd like to know Goil was in to see me a little while ago. Before I had much of a chance to think about it, I gave him the figures and tapes for that course I plotted for Willy. I don't know how Goil knew about them, but he asked for them directly."

"Which figures, Art?" I asked anxiously.

"Why, the ones I made for you. Is there something wrong, Sam?"

My alarm must have shown in my face. I said, "No, Art. I thought maybe you might have given him that other course I asked you to plot."

"You mean that false course? Hell, Sam. I didn't know—"

"It's all right, Art. You didn't know." And I left him standing there puzzled. I went back to the rec room.

I wasn't feeling so good by the time I got back. My seat had been taken, so I wriggled myself a place against the back wall.

Goil knew all about the fictitious course I gave him. Right there he had me cold. But he was too worried to want to do anything about it then.

The time seemed to stand still. The crew still had some fifteen minutes before they were due to abandon ship, so I left the rec room to sneak out to the galley for a cup of coffee. When I entered, there was Artie and Elmer already having coffee.

Artie said, "Sit down, Sam, and have a cup."

Elmer poured, and I gulped half the cupful down gratefully, then said, "Aren't you two going to watch the runaway crack into Mars?"

"Sure," said Artie. "I've got a small monitor screen in the com room. Want to join us?"

I did and said so. We all drank another cup of coffee and then went to the communications room. The three of us could sit and comfortably watch the small monitor.

A series of montages suddenly snapped off the screen to be replaced by the lonesome ship. This time there was Mars in the

near background. I never could understand how the long-range scope mechanisms managed to bend their energies so that they could literally see behind something directly in front of them, but they could. That was how they could get Mars in the background.

The excited announcer was saying that the crew would abandon ship in four minutes since all hope of a course change was gone. And in another three hours the runaway would enter atmosphere.

"Sure," Elmer said, "the crew will abandon ship. But where can they go after they do? Mars, that's where."

"I guess all you can say about it is that they are going right out of the fire into the frying pan," Artie said morbidly.

"Yeah," Elmer said. "They sure are. About all they can do is land on Mars with the short range of the lifeboats."

"Oh, they got enough range, all right," Artie said. "Only they don't have enough food and water for all the crew to reach some other planet. They have no choice but to try Mars."

"That'll get them there a little while after the crash," Elmer said. "In time to get in on the marsquakes and the dust storms."

"Yeah," said Artie, "if they make it through the atmosphere

while it's still being churned."

"Why don't you guys stow the chatter," I said brusquely. "Let us hear what's going on."

The announcer was saying, ". . . in ninety seconds. All hope of regaining control of the ship is past. The entire crew is now in the four lifeboats ready to leave." Then he started a long countdown, a full sixty seconds.

The scope magnified the ship more.

I found myself holding my breath. The countdown neared an end—ended.

And two lifeboats sprang from each side of the freighter.

The scope lost them for a moment, then picked up one pair. They were almost invisible specks in the background.

In another five minutes they had joined the other pair of lifeboats, and all four were now headed slowly toward Mars, apparently well behind the mother ship.

The scope shifted back to the abandoned ship. The announcer was saying:

"And now take a long last look at this—this compounded missile that in a few hours may very well destroy a world unless a miracle—"

The scene, the words could not have been more perfectly timed even in a class B trideo space thriller. The racing derelict was framed against a back-

ground of ruddy Mars, then the next instant the area completely around it seemed to blacken out. Then it started glowing, increasing in intensity, expanding, throwing fiery arms wildly outward. It became a nova of fury. The scope had it centered beautifully. Even the coolest molten blobs could be seen being pushed from the mass until the inner hell caught up with them and turned them into vapor.

A quick-thinking engineer must have thrown a filter somewhere in the scope's innards, for the scene became sort of an X-ray one in which the glare of the light no longer impeded vision. The heart of the fury could easily be seen as it expanded itself, feeding and growing on the solid matter within its reach. The central fury overtook the lagging perimeter forces, engulfed them, then blossomed out, thinned, and became a diaphanous curtain rippling and shimmering in an uncertainty of direction. It waned, leaving a residual flicker that might have been only a product of imagination.

The entire magnificent show lasted ten minutes. For each second of each minute of that time, I'll swear I held my breath! And everyone else in the station at that time would say the same about himself. It was that striking, that breath-taking.

Some seconds after the spectacle was over, there was a near-silence. Then cheers broke loose. Such a confined din I hope never to hear again. The dramatic suspense had been so effectively communicated for so many hours, the miraculous sudden release seemed to demand an over-compensating effect. Everyone seemed suddenly to believe it an excellent reason to celebrate—and they certainly did!

Speculation as to what caused the explosion ran riot. But to me it was plainly Willy's influence reaching out to a company ship's crew and Mars personnel. It might seem that I had gambled a little too much on Willy's influence, but not really. I had observed and recorded that particular synergism and had every confidence in the results. Willy's Rube Goldberg had a combination of built-in errors which produced a series of compensating course alterations that made the asteroid de-energize and materialize right smack in normal space where the freighter was—after the crew escaped.

The blackness that had been noticeable for an instant was, of course, the asteroid coming out of sub-space. And with the runaway trying to co-exist right in the middle of the asteroid, naturally everything vaporized. Mars was saved.

So was Willy.

So was I.

Goil? Well, I nailed him right away; confessed my duplicity in the course figures and tapes, and explained that I needed the time to let things happen the way Willy's influence makes them happen. I don't think Goil was totally convinced. But he must have been partly, at least, for with all the system's experts arguing about just exactly what made the ship explode, and with no two experts agreeing on an explanation, he might have given some benefit of the doubt to Willy. Anyway, he was so relieved that his interests in Mars were saved that he smiled for the next three days, dismissed me as an incurable visionary or some other sort of nut, and chewed Willy out for two hours, then seemed to forget the matter.

Me? An appropriate length of time before the ship was abandoned, I radioed to a stock broker friend of mine on Earth and put every dime plus that I had into the mightily fallen stocks on Mars. Goil and I are now both big holders in the company.

Willy? He never suspected his part in the episode. Last time I heard, he was working on some fabulous government project as fifteenth assistant engineer. I guess the government had heard about him somehow. It seems that the fabulous project has working for it an egghead whose brainpower is such a necessity that he is hired even though he is a notorious accident prone. Willy, of course, neutralizes him so work can progress at normal rate.

THE END