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"LET CYMBALS RING!"



By M. Schere

An exponent of the One-Man-Band tangles with a man from the future who came back to our age for a spree!

YOUR Honor, I had been practicing hard with my one-man band on "The Stars and Stripes Forever," with variations. It is true that people do complain when I start going to town, but you would think that when a retired man is invited to his married daughter's farm he could take along his one-man band and practice. But my grandchildren bawled and the cows started mooing their heads off and wouldn't give milk as long as I played, so my son-in-law, Fred, said why didn't I take my flivver and go down and play to Lizzie the Witch?

"Old Liz was living in Ghost Hollow when my granddad was a boy," Fred told me. "She was ancient then. All we know about her is that she's harmless as long as you don't try to get into her house, and she likes queer noises. She'll like your music, all right."

Your Honor, if it were not for my faith in the one-man band as the musical wonder of our posterity, I would not have gone. And I would not be here in court explaining in my own words—as you said I should—why I have not murdered anybody.

Fred told me that Ghost Hollow was haunted and no one would go into it twice. Didn't bother me. I drove down a lot of back roads, deep into the hills, and after a lot of looking found Ghost Hollow.

It is a steep-sided sort of pocket in the mountains. And it is haunted. Or was. Or . . . no, Your Honor, I do not intend to insult the intelligence of the court. But after Mr. Forty-Four got through with me, I . . . what? Oh, yes, I really should explain one thing at a time. Comes from when I had a milk route, Your Honor, and had to figure out the notes people leave in bottles.

Well, sir, when I got to Ghost Hollow, I saw Lizzie the Witch. She stood before a low house of ancient, moss-covered stones. Her rusty, long black dress fluttered on her skinniness. She was so skinny it just—got you. Her hair was greenish gray and it fell over her face nearly to the ground, with a withered beak of a nose sticking through.

She giggles: "Heh-heh-heh-heh! Welcome to ye, Sir Knight!" She hobbles over and raps her knobby knuckles on the flivver's radiator. "An' ye rid yon valley of its ogreish spell, Merlin himself will do ye reverence."

She grins at me. There was one snaggy tooth.

"I've come to play you some music," I said in a hurry.

"Music!" She got all excited. "Welcome, welcome! Ah, once a knight came riding to his Lady Lisbeth as I languished in the tower of Garth the Terrible! He slew not with the shining sword, but with the thunderbolt! Oh, where is Sir Futureman!"

SHE MUMBLED and grumbled to herself about Sir Futureman while I took the stuff out of the car. Well, between you and me, Your Honor, when I had my milk route plenty of women would tell me their troubles, and I wasn't listening. Also, I was feeling the haunt. I was setting up my pieces under a tree when that vibration began to get me. There was something in the air getting under your skin, getting into your nerves, making your hair twitch on your scalp and the gooseflesh crawl on your thighs and spine. It was almost a sound, but not quite. It was pretty awful.

But I wasn't going to go back and admit to Fred that I was scared to play there.

Lizzie sighs, "Oh, many and many a

time, with recorder and drum and trumpet, I have striven for the sound."

"What sound, Lizzie?" I was fixing the triple-action treadle to my graduated drums, getting the elbow lock in place to manage the violin bow, setting up the cymbals and bells for my other foot, fixing the right-hand assembly so I could switch to fife, guitar, ocarina, saxophone, bugle and harmonica and getting myself generally entangled in machinery, the way you have to be in a one-man band.

"The sound of Sir Futureman!" she says, shivering.

If she meant the haunt, I didn't like Sir Futureman. Which was a premonition, Your Honor, since the haunt and Mr. Forty-Four . . . well, yes, Your Honor, my premonitions are not fit for the record. Howsomer, I went through a chorus of "The Stars and Stripes Forever," and Lizzie nodded and kept time—though every time she grinned I hit a discord. Then I started to go to town with the variations—the ones that made Fred's cows dry up—and she got excited.

"High and shrill!" she yelled. "Higher!"

So I zinged in and out with the cymbals and laid it in the groove for my best effect. It is to get my small cymbal hot and zinging high—reverberating—then sort of catch the echo and bring her up on the fife and thin on the violin together—*tweetle, tweetle, tweetle, tweetle, fwweeee!*—till the sound passes through your-teeth and dances on your backbone. I held her high and sour, enjoying it.

Till suddenly Lizzie shrieked, pointing, and that haunting vibration got in behind my music and gripped me in the guts . . . abdomen, yes, Your Honor.

Lizzie was pointing at a shimmering, wavering thing—almost like heat waves. But it was in a column twice the height and about the shape of a man, and it

poured out the vibration concentrated and terrible.

"It is Sir Futureman!" she shrieks. "It is my beloved!"

The vibration stopped just before it killed me, and I saw the ghost as he grew solid. He was a tall man clothed in a gray coverall without a seam, button or zipper. Only a ghost could have gotten into it. He took a staggering step forward and said, "At last!"

Lizzie the Witch ran for him. "Sir Futureman! Sir Futureman!" she sobs, embraces his legs and goes hysterical.

THE GHOST gazes around wildly. He takes a good look at Lizzie and goes pale . . . no, indeed, Your Honor, I do not wish to try the patience of this court. Not being contemptuous at all. Your Honor, when I was working my milk route I used to use a quarter's worth of salve a week, during the winter, to keep my face from becoming so red that my wife would be ashamed of me. I mean, I am a conservative man. So I assure Your Honor, the District Attorney and the gentlemen of the jury that the ghost was there in the flesh and he grew pale.

"Oh, kiss your Lisbeth!" Lizzie gurgles.

He makes a jump. He is shaking. "Later, Lisbeth! Later!" he says hoarsely.

I was sitting there, Your Honor, with the fife still stuck in my mouth, too scared to be scared, if you know what I mean. He strides over powerfully, pulls away the fife and breaks it in two.

"Here, you!" I shout. "That's my special fife with the super-pitch mouth-piece!" For I am inventive, Your Honor.

"Super-pitch?" says he in his gloomy voice. "Of course." But he didn't talk quite that way. His words were sort of cut in half and he went on something like this, "Ot els may at soun?"

"My little cymbal. I filed and filed it

to get that note."

Which did not, Your Honor, impress him in the least. He kicks my whole cymbal assembly down and whangs the hell—begging the court's pardon—whangs the stuffing out of my little cymbal.

"Nev again may at soun!" he says sternly, his big eyes glowing and his high forehead flushed. . . . Very well, Your Honor, I will not repeat any more gibberish. Fact is, when he got oriented he used plain English. Seems that his talk was a sort of time-saving lingo they are going to use in the future . . . just a moment, just a moment, Your Honor, and you will see what I mean . . . but really, I'm not contemptuous of the court. But I tell you, I did not like that ghost chap.

"You will be useful to me," he says. He picked me up—he has the strength of ten men—and shoved me through the rotting door of Lizzie's house.

First thing I saw was that the house was just a cover for a deep excavation which was divided into rooms and levels, lighted mysteriously from nowhere. Lizzie following him like a dog, he hauled me downstairs and opened a big room with a steel door two inches thick.

He tells me, "I built this place hundreds of years before the discovery of America by Europeans." . . . Yes, Mr. District Attorney, that is what the ghost said. No, I did not believe it either.

The room was full of books, maps, newspapers, and much machinery. The whole place kind of stank—begging the court's pardon—stunk—but he said it was a preserving gas. He asked me what I was doing there and I told him.

"Unattached man?" says he. "Good. I can use a servant."

"What's all this about?" I jittered.

HE LEANED back and laughed. Your Honor, he has the meanest laugh I ever heard. "This is my triumph! Deprive me of the privileges of the

Forty-Fourth, would they! Afraid of strain in the control dimension if I time-traveled, were they? Well—let it strain, say I! By one chance in a trillion, I have materialized in the Epoch of Major Personal Satisfaction. I have over a hundred years to go before the rise of the sterile thinkers changes this materialistic, individualistic civilization. By that time, however, my presence in the past will have caused such slippage of the axis of simultaneity that life on the Earth will end in chaos."

Your Honor—and you, too, Mr. District Attorney and Mr. Briggs. Howya doin', Mr. Briggs? It was tough on you, all right, having the court appoint you as my attorney. Well, all of you can imagine how much that meant to me. My eyes must have been as glazed as—as Your Honor's . . . but, sir, I only meant . . . yes, sir, yes—

Well, everybody, the ghost said more! He said: "By then, however, I will have traveled ahead to a time when the major axis of simultaneity will have re-established itself in equilibrium. I will enjoy a new civilization—till I ruin that one. I am a buccaneer!" he shouts, drawing himself up. "Destruction! Destruction! And then I will build anew, and there will be none to challenge me—the fools," he snarls.

He had a grudge, all right.

Lizzie began to paw him and mutter, "Sir Futureman!" but he pushed her away and went to something like a huge adding machine that he started whirring. "Ah!" he said later, "it will require a stay of one hundred and four days, eight hours, twenty-seven minutes, two and two tenths seconds to establish my abnormal time line irrevocably in this epoch, beyond the possible effect of accident. Of course," he sneers to himself, "I can stay for one hundred and four days!"

Which, Your Honor, I want to point out to the court. That it was then the 29th of September and today is January 10th. I mean, a hundred and two

days have passed and Mr. Forty-Four is still at large. I mean, if he isn't caught and set down with me and a one-man band to get made into a ghost again, something awful is going to happen. Which is what I was trying to tell them all the time I was in the psychopathic ward. Your . . . all right, Your Honor, I know the court is not interested in fairy tales, but . . . yes, sir, I know, but I'm telling you that if that fellow is let run loose . . . oh, no, sir! No contempt intended!

I tried to keep calm and asked him his name. He drew himself up and said: "Lex Pando, Space-Time Forty-Four! The Council demoted me to Thirty-Seven for disobedience, but what care I for the Council now! Now and forever I am of the Forty-Fourth, supreme in science!"

Lizzie couldn't contain herself. "Oh, Sir Futureman! Sir Futureman, my knight!" she jiggled. "Oh, an' ye can, make me young once more for your knightly love!"

He laughed. I hoped Lizzie didn't see his expression as clearly as I did. "We shall see," he sniggered, pushed her ahead of him and went out, locking me in.

WELL, YOUR HONOR, that was a pretty kettle of fish. I just wandered around that tight-shut room, examining things.

I came to a shelf full of almanacs which started with 1882. I looked along the shelf, seeing how the books became more modern in printing and binding—till suddenly I realized I was looking at an almanac for 1942. Which, considering that it is only 1939, you might call strange, Your Honor. And the almanacs ran up to the year 2018, by which time they were made of paper-thin metal!

Your Honor, I was just afraid to look at them. Only I saw the one for 1940, and that one, I figured, would tell

about what happens during 1939, so I took a chance and opened it to Review Of The Year. Now, I would like to tell Your Honor what I saw there, provided Your Honor will not punish me for contempt of court. For it was something very, *very* contemptuous of the court . . . yes, there has been enough contempt of the court in my whole damn story, but . . . if I might whisper it to Your Honor, then? . . . Sorry. But would, Your Honor please remember that I saw *something* contemptuous of the court in that 1940 almanac?

Well, I poked around and saw that Mr. Forty-Four had long lists of prices of stocks and bonds, also running to eighty or ninety years from now. And he had results of the World Series, Kentucky Derby and all sorts of sporting events prophesied 'way up to the year 2000 and beyond, along with thousands of results of ordinary horse races. Also results of elections. Your Honor, about that third term; Mr. Roosevelt decided . . . Oh, no, I don't think I'm capable of running the country and I don't know anything about it, no, sir.

The air in the room was getting pretty foul when Mr. Forty-Four came back, and hanging to his arm was a plump, fair-skinned, golden-haired girl of about twenty; a perfect stranger.

Then she said, "Oh, make me truly young, Sir Futureman!"

Even the new teeth stuck in her mouth couldn't hide that croak. It was Lizzie the Witch! And as she walked into the room she still hobbled like a woman a hundred years old.

"Synthetic flesh," growls Mr. Forty-Four. "Pulverize me if it doesn't take more than flesh to make a woman."

Which was so—in an awful way. There poor Lizzie stood, tears coming to her new china-blue eyes, and you could just sense the brittle old bones under that whatever-it-was he had grafted onto her:

"I'll make you young when I have

the necessary chemicals," he says—and behind her back he sneers.

Then he had me write down a long list of things—lots of chemicals, wires, radio tubes and such. He gave me a thousand dollars out of a sort of filing system where he had money sorted out in various periods . . . s'fact, Your Honor!

He told me to take the flivver and buy the stuff in Newtown. He didn't have to tell me twice to go out. But he also said, very quietly, "Swear you will tell no one of what has happened here."

"Sure!"

I DROVE out of Ghost Hollow and scrambled down the State road. When I saw a State trooper standing by his motorcycle I stopped, jumped out and almost kissed him. I told him the whole story and he looked pretty grim.

"Tall, thin, big-headed fellow?" says he. "The cleverest crook out of jail, and he is known to have an old woman as confederate!"

"Just what I thought! He made me say I'd be quiet, but there's no harm in breaking your promise to a crook."

The State trooper grinned at me. This trooper was a swarthy man with a broken nose and cauliflower ears. Tough-looking.

"But there is a great deal of harm in breaking your word to Lex Pando, Space-Time Forty-Four!" he says softly.

Your Honor, that was Mr. Forty-Four! And while I stood there petrified he wiped his face off his face. He . . . Your Honor, it is what I saw, and . . . well, what is the District Attorney objecting for? I tell you that. . . . well, maybe I should have said that he wiped the false face off his face. It was this here synthetic flesh, even with a stubble of beard in it.

"Now go!" Forty-Four snarls. "You see how easy it is to deceive me!"

I got to Newtown and bought everything, but I sure was shaky. Had to

get out of it somehow! I was driving down Main Street when I saw my daughter.

"Mabel!" I yelled.

She came over, smiling and looking beyond me a little, as though someone was in the back seat of the flivver. Which wasn't so odd, Your Honor, since Mr. Forty-Four was there . . . yes, Your Honor, it is damn tomfoolery, but there he was, wearing an old sweater and a felt hat with trout flies stuck in it.

All I needed was one look from his black brooding eyes. "Mabel," I gulped, "this is Mr.—er—Lucius Pando, who used to have the next milk route to mine. We're—er—going camping. Might be a couple of weeks."

I made up a whole story and Forty-Four spoke as nice as you please. But when Mabel left and I turned to speak to him, he was gone.

Which is why I did just as he asked and got into trouble with the law. He had me, Your Honor, coming and going. I kept quiet, and so would Your Honor . . . but I really didn't mean to be contemptuous! The only contemptuous thing I know about this court is what I saw in the 1940 almanac, and if Your Honor will only let me tell . . . all right . . . but . . . very well.

Your Honor, I stayed in Ghost Hollow for three days while Mr. Forty-Four did a lot of reading and figuring and Lizzie mooned around in her new skin looking pretty mournful.

NOW, I WANT to tell you what Forty-Four said about simultaneity, because it may help to catch him. "Do you realize that simultaneity depends on the axis of view?" he demands of me one day. (I had had to sleep on a lot of old sacks, and my lumbago was hurting.) Says he: "Suppose you wanted to plot the positions of ten men who start walking from one point and go in different directions at varying speeds. You want to show where each of them

is for every five minutes during an hour. You take twelve plates of glass, and after five minutes you mark ten dots on the first plate, representing, in scale, where each man is at that instant. After another five minutes, you take the second plate and mark ten more dots, moving each dot to correspond with the movements of the men. And so on for twelve plates. Do you follow me, lame-brain?" he snaps.

He looks scornfully at poor Liz, who does not follow very well. "We will suppose the men to have been walking on level ground, so that their motion took place in only two dimensions. No up or down, numskull. Suppose we pile our plates atop one another, in order, and fuse them into a solid glass block. We shall be able to see the dots through the glass, going from top to bottom. We can imagine curves drawn from dot to dot—a curve for each man—till we have ten curves going down through the block, each representing the motion of one man in length, breadth and time." Does Your Honor see? . . . Oh, I meant no insolence at all, at all!

So he drools on: "Suppose we wanted to see where those men were after half an hour. We might slice through our block halfway between top and bottom, at a plane parallel to each. We would then expose a bit of each curve showing, simultaneously, the position of the ten men. Right?"

"Now, half-wit!" he sneers. I tell you, Your Honor, I was getting not to like him! "If we cut a section through the block that was *not* parallel to top and bottom, would the sections of curves exposed show simultaneity?"

"No, sir!" I tell him, very chipper. "If you slanted your cut you'd expose bits of curves representing motions of different men at different times, instead of simultaneously."

He sniggers: "Wrong! That is,

wrong from a cosmic point of view. We of the forty-ninth century know that the plane of simultaneity may be valid at any angle to the major axis, or the axis itself may shift. Man One's position at starting," says he triumphantly, "may be simultaneous with that of Man Ten at the end of the hour. Surprised?" he grins—and he has a mean grin, Your Honor. And he is mean. If Your Honor would give me permission for just one minute to be contemptuous of the court . . . yes, but I saw it in next year's almanac . . . no, I do not want to go back to the psychopathic ward . . . well, that's what he said.

He goes on: "The axis of time is four-dimensional and may therefore be shifted through our three-dimensional world. By shifting with it, I travel in time. I have—for my own existence—made this epoch coincident with the year 4821, when, through controlled audible and sub-audible vibrations, I achieved my first disintegration."

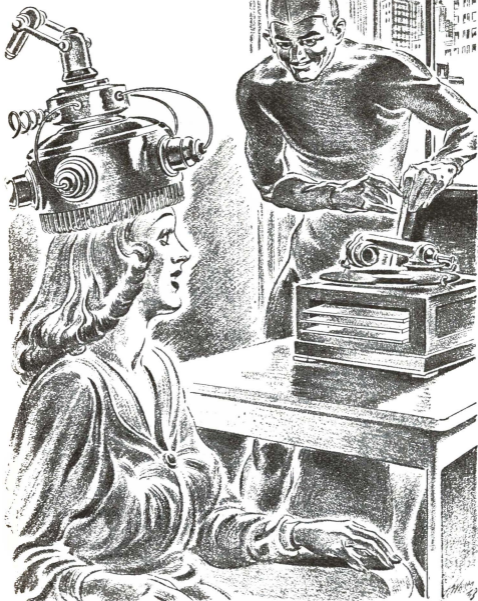
HE LEANED back and his deep, hard eyes grew dreamy. "Out of romantic curiosity, I went to England and to the time of King Arthur—"

Lizzie jabbars: "Sire, my knight! Sir Futureman!"

"Yes," he grins devilishly, "it was amusing to clothe myself in armor of impermeable lightweight alloy and tilt against noble louts carrying a hundred pounds or more of poorly tempered steel. And to puncture them neatly with a lance that drove a diamond-hard needle from its point as it made contact! Ha, ha! Well, it was amusing to rescue Lisbeth from the local baron—or bandit. When young, she made a good—er—companion. Then we came to this undiscovered land to perfect my apparatus, for I was—and still am—at the mercy of an accident.

"I had subjected Lisbeth to a partial semi-immortality treatment when the accident happened. Upon establishing this

"Futureman—Mr. Forty-Four, that is—was feedin' that music into old Lizzie and her synthetic flesh stuff. 'My bones are humming!' she says."



place I had eliminated an Indian village. One day I was working outdoors on certain large reverberatory apparatus when an Indian shot an arrow at me. I do not have to be careful about defense—as nothing short of complete dismemberment can kill me—but the arrow struck my apparatus and sounded a high, piercing chord. It was the fundamental note of the complex vibrations which govern my materialization. That was the last thing I heard for a thousand years. It made me a tenuous mass of disassociated molecules, the state I must assume for time-travel. But I had not set the apparatus to sound the note again and reestablish my solidity. I was vibrations, filling this valley, helpless.

"Then you with your—er—one-man band"—Your Honor, I did not like the way he said it—"sounded that unpleasant note again. My molecules coalesced and I materialized—by the merest chance—in the era I desired. I found Lisbeth, undying, grown horribly old—"

Lizzie moons up at him and croaks: "I guarded your treasure! Ay, the years were long!"

"And you shall have your reward," he says snakily. "Now, I must make myself immune to chance vibrations. It may take years of work. But there is no hurry," he says, leering. Your Honor, could that fellow leer! "Remember that after I stay in this epoch a hundred and four days, my existence will cause confiction of different axes of simultaneity, and within a century chaos should begin. A world in which each creature will cause its own time-warp; in which a man may, while he butters his morning toast, observe his smiling young wife change to a long-dead, moldering skeleton! The cat you put out at night may before morning become a saber-toothed tiger, lairing on your doorstep!" And, Your Honor, he laughs and tells me that pretty soon everything will be all mixed up and dead

for a thousand years or so. When things are normal again he'll be around to bust them up. For meanwhile he'll be time-traveling, and it will be just like tomorrow morning to him. Get it?

So then, Your Honor, we went to the racetrack . . . eh? Damn nonsensical, idiotic tomfoolery? Sir, I have sworn that my name is Herman Doakes and that I will tell the whole and nothing but, and after all, I was there and you weren't . . . oh, no, no contempt! But if you knew what was in that awfully contemptuous almanac . . . all right, all right, I'll get on to the end of the tommyrot, but I wish the District Attorney would stop drawing those pictures of a gallows on his pad.

SO WE WENT to the racetrack. Of course, he won. Sportsman? He knew the result of every race before it was run! He . . . well, Mr. District Attorney, I'll bet you wish that you . . . yes, sir. Mr. Forty-Four bet the limit and raked it in, and the bookies watched him goggle-eyed.

Then we went to a stockbroker and he bought a pile of stocks on margin. Which skyrocketed, of course. He just had to look at his advance lists. And just to be funny, I suppose, we went to a gambling joint and he lost a thousand bucks playing roulette.

"Just imagine!" he tells me disgustingly—though he wasn't disgusted about losing. "Chance-taking is going to be bred out of the human race by scientific puritans!"

Which you can think what you like about, Your Honor, but I gathered later that he was sort of having a fling. That this time of ours is just a real old red-hot burlesque compared with what's to come, and he liked it. Era of Major Personal Satisfaction—get the idea, Mr. Briggs? Your Honor, Mr. Briggs is asleep. The Forty-Four fellow acted like a pirate on a spree, all right.

Then he got me and poor, terrified Lizzie into a plane and we went to New York and got an apartment in a big hotel, where I had to be his valet. Then he started tearing around—mostly without Lizzie. No trouble having the company of women, the way he spent money. He bought himself a wicked low foreign car that he drove a hundred miles an hour over Long Island. When a cop would catch up to him he'd just disappear—and me in the rumble seat, Your Honor!

When he got to like liquor, it was pretty bad. He'd fixed up a laboratory and he'd come out of it with some devilish instrument shooting rays which might turn Lizzie or me freezing cold, or paralyze us and float us out the window . . . yes, Your Honor, in the air! Just like a big kid, he was—but, boy, you could see he was just relaxing, not being as dangerous as he was going to be when he got around to being dangerous!

He sure did like to disguise himself. Or does, I should say, for he's still at large. Give him that synthetic flesh and a few of his rays and he'd be 'most anything.

Once he paralyzed the elevator boy and ran the elevator himself. He was very polite—said "Floor, please?" 'n' everything—only he had a dragon's head and was breathing fire . . . yes, I thought the foreman of the jury would remember that riot in the Circle House. Aren't you the fellow who came in drunk and swore off when you . . . s'cuse me, Your Honor. I think I'm worrying about what I saw in that almanac. You know, that contemptuous . . . all, right, all right.

And then he . . . eh? Well—if I may answer the District Attorney—it is pretty ridiculous to say that a scientist would stoop to such nonsense. But Mr. Forty-Four was just relaxing, just getting his Major Personal Satisfaction.

Now, I should like to say that he was toying with the idea of getting aboard a battleship and starting a war—and he still may do it. Or piling up a lot of money—billions—and hiding it, just to see how world economy would react. He's won over a million in bets I had to place for him myself. Yes, and . . . now, wait a minute. What about the law Congress passed last week? The law forbidding persons under six months of age to work in diamond mines, that they're yelling now they don't remember, but it's on the books? Ha? That was Forty-Four's mass hypnosis! And what about the speech made by that visiting diplomat, announcing that for the cause of world peace his country's army would be equipped only with putty blowers—till all of a sudden he yelled that someone had been talking through his mouth? Forty-Four! Just wait till he gets serious!

I tried to sneak out one night. But an invisible force lifted me back to bed. That was all.

Your Honor, please, may I tell you just once that contemptuous thing it said in the 1940 almanac . . . well, but honestly, after what happened at the concert, I . . . oh, that's what you've been waiting to hear all this time? O. K., Judge!

WELL, FORTY-FOUR got started on his anti-accident-to-himself research. Get it? Ha, ha! We took everything from the mountains and he wiped Lizzie's old house level with the ground. He set up a lot of stuff and soaked Liz full of music. He said when her body was attuned to the right vibrations, she'd be truly young—which sure made her happy though she still was ashamed to show her legs. He got an ordinary phonograph and a record of some operatic music I'd heard before and played it into a cap full of wires that set on Lizzie's poor head. But I did not trust him, Your Honor. He smirks and

sneers. He leers.

Sure enough, Lizzie seemed sort of electrified. "My bones are humming," she says dazedly.

Does he leer! He got a lot of small, complicated apparatus into a little box that he strapped under his pants. "The processes of justice and law in this era are rather intriguing," he tells me. "I think I shall use you to test them under certain peculiar circumstances."

And I have that hanging over me when we arrive at the concert . . . why, yes, the concert given by Maestro Maganini, the same fellow who'd recorded the song Forty-Four had vibrated Lizzie with. It was the same orchestra, too. We got toggled out like swells and got a box right over the stage. The hall was crowded and the concert was being broadcast. Wagner music, it was.

Well, as soon as Lizzie started to peel that way, I . . . eh? Oh, I'm thinking of that almanac again. Well, they start rolling home with "The Ride of the Valkyries." Valkyries are kind of witches, Your Honor . . . s'cuse me. This is music with weird, shivery trills, and I recognized it as the music Mr. Forty-Four has been feeding into Lizzie.

And, after a minute, Liz stood up and let out an awful shriek.

Then, as everyone turned to look, I had a knife in my hand and I was jabbing at her. Which was as surprising to me, Your Honor, as it was to Maestro Maganini, because Mr. Forty-Four had put that knife in my hand and was vibrating me like I worked on strings. But I was not hitting the real Lizzie! I was jabbing that synthetic skin lightly, hacking it right off her!

Say, she shrieked like a steam callopie, but she hardly noticed me. She quivered like a leaf and the skin started to slough off by itself.

"Futureman!" she shrieks. "The sound! The sound! Oh—" she moans, and she drops.

I LEAPED out of the box, down to the stage—helplessly. "Stop that murderer!" Forty-Four howled after me. I yelled back—he made me do it—"Sic semper tyrannis!" Making ten-foot hops. I smashed through the orchestra, grabbed a bass viol and slapped it down on Maestro Maganini's head, which damaged the viol considerably. I ran to the microphone, my throat paralyzed, and Forty-Four made me yell: "Down with the government! Down with everything!"

I was attacked at that moment by the maestro, with the same bass viol, and most of the orchestra. Then police and people were rushing onto the stage and collared me. Your Honor may or may not believe it, but the first cop to reach me was Mr. Forty-Four. He sniggered in my ear and said: "Well done! Now, let us watch the wheels of justice."

I'm afraid that is about all I can tell you. I can't explain the death of—how'd it go?—the old woman who died of shock induced by cutting into a putrifying compound with which she had been plastered. You can see that I had no intention of shouting anarchistic mottos into the radio without license to broadcast, nor of assault and battery. Nor am I crazy, as my lawyer insists, nor a dangerous criminal, as the District Attorney insists. It is my notion that Mr. Forty-Four fixed up Liz with that "Ride of the Valkyries" till it took just one more shivery trill to kill her. Poor Lizzie, she's better off.

Forty-Four is the fellow you want. And you want to get him soon, or I will not be responsible for your simultaneity. Your Honor may have to eat dinosaur eggs . . . no, no, no contempt intended! But if I only might, please, tell you what that contemptuous almanac said . . . yes, it would constitute contempt of court, and there is no reason why the court should give anyone permission to calumniate it.

But I have a hunch that Mr. Forty-Four is in this courtroom . . . ridiculous? But he said he was going to watch the wheels of justice, and, Your Honor, I have a plan. I . . . very well, Your Honor, I will explain my ridiculous theories to whoever wants to listen, while you go back to get one of your law books . . . all right, all right, Mr. District Attorney, it's irregular, but His Honor runs this court, doesn't he? So long; I hope you find the right law to get me out of this, Your Honor.

NOW, Mr. District Attorney and gentlemen of the jury, did you ever hear of occupational therapy? I never did either, till they found in the psychopathic ward that I like music, and they let me play around to get my mind normal, or something. They let me fix up a fife with my super-pitch mouthpiece, and a cymbal and one violin string. Will someone poke Mr. Briggs, there? Poor Mr. Briggs, he didn't like keeping all this truck in his suitcase. Well, here it is, and I'll clamp it up to the chair, so.

You see, with this fife, cymbal and string I have part of a one-man band, and I can make that sound that brought Mr. Forty-Four around in the first place. The harmonic vibration of his molecules, remember? Now, he never

seemed to perfect his apparatus for making himself immune to that sound, so if he's nearby when I play it, he will be disintegrated again and our simultaneity will be saved for our posterity. You'd be surprised how I had to file this cymbal and adjust things till I got the right note, which I know by the way it jars my fillings.

Well, if Mr. Forty-Four is hiding in this courtroom, he is going to be sorry! Here I go, zinging up the cymbal!

Stop? What for, Your Honor? No, sir, I am going to play that chord once and here goes! *Tweetle, tweetle, tweetle, tweetle, fweeeeeee!*

Hey!

What . . . where's . . . where's the judge? He was here a second ago! He . . . he came in the front door and started to rush down the aisle, waving a book . . . and . . . he's disappeared!

Say . . . he must be—

Wh-what's that vibration! It's getting under my skin! It's getting into my bones—and everybody's bones! Oh . . . *the judge was Mr. Forty-Four!*

Look! That book he dropped! It's the almanac for 1940! It's the one with the contemptuous statement about the court—that they had to build a new courthouse because this one is haunted!