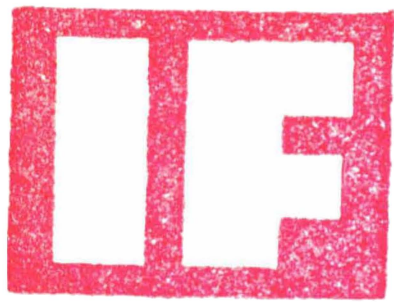


**WORLDS OF**



# **SCIENCE FICTION**

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**ALL NEW  
STORIES**

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# MACK

BY R. J. BUTLER

ILLUSTRATED BY MORROW

**Against the invaders from  
space man had a secret ally  
— from the ocean's depths!**

**M**ack maintained later he had merely assessed the situation and acted accordingly—something *any* dolphin could have done.

The Admiral was just plain impressed—and proved it—and, for his part, Gabriel Anaka was overwhelmingly satisfied in having proved one point.

The only ones who had no comment at all were the Tegels and the manta ray.

First, there had been the spotting of the Tegel ship, a feat made easier (if not pleasanter) by its monstrous size.

While the earth fleet circled it warily, the best minds available were

put to work in an effort to establish communications and find out what the intentions were.

The Tegels obliged, in their own time, and when the response to the beamed math-logic was received, the message didn't take long to decipher.

It said in effect: "Your oceans interesting. Investigating." The signature symbols were roughly equivalent to "Tegels."

While military minds pondered what was meant by "investigating," the Tegels provided the answer. They plopped down into the Gulf of Mexico a few miles off the Alabama coast.

"Starship Falls Off Alabama,"

one responsible southern daily informed its readers. The Admiral, with considerably less humor, dispatched a submarine to the scene.

This move resulted in a long silence followed by a curt communication requesting "the absence of disturbances in our vicinity."

There was no overt threat, but, as the Admiral pointed out, there was something ominous about the way "our" was used.

Afro-Asian Commander Hoghenza recommended treaty talks.

Soviet Commander Tushkin urged immediate attack.

Indian Commander Bihar advocated neutrality for the Gulf of Mexico.

The Admiral went in circles with them.

Finally he got them to agree—to investigate.

And the best way to investigate, the Admiral concluded, was with Mack and Anaka. It was a conclusion arrived at with more than a few reservations.

Mack was one of the ablest dolphins serving with Earth Fleet, but, to the Admiral's way of thinking, the eight-foot cetacean was a little too "unmilitary" in his attitude.

Too independent, bluntly.

He thought the same of Anaka, but there was no way of getting around it. A man-dolphin team was the best way to keep tabs on the Tegels, and Mack and the tall Polynesian had demonstrated their ability to get along.

Demonstrated it *too* well in some cases, the Admiral thought.

Item: On Venus, Anaka and Mack

arrested on charge of trying to procure a gilled Venusian for immoral purposes. Case dismissed—but widely reported—after Mack argued it would have been impossible for either of them to be immoral with a lizard even if they had been sober.

Item: Off Ganymede, Anaka and Mack demoted for polluting hydroponics tank in experiment to ferment algae alcohol.

And so on.

The Admiral sighed and summoned the two to Fleet Headquarters.

Anaka stood stiffly at attention, eyes fixed on a crack in the wall.

"Furthermore," the Admiral continued sternly, "I want to impress on you the fact that the Tegels may be technologically equal—or even superior—to us."

"Yes, Admiral."

The Admiral picked up a model space cruiser and eyed it thoughtfully.

"As for you, Mack," he said, turning toward the circular tank, "I don't think I need stress the importance of discipline in this matter."

"Admiral . . . right. Not . . . needing . . . stress . . . point." The words came booming out of the amplifying unit surgically implanted by Mack's "mouth"—the blowhole on top of his head.

The Admiral's face turned red. He considered a lecture on what could happen—what *might* happen—if the Tegels turned out to be both militarily able and hostile at the same time.

But he changed his mind and stalked out of the room.



The last thing he saw before he slammed the door was Anaka looking at Mack in admiration as the dolphin did a neat figure-eight on his back.

“Possibly . . . dull . . . as . . . mullet . . . head,” Mack commented later as he towed Anaka around the Tegel ship in a wide circle for the fiftieth time.

“Yeah,” Anaka agreed disgustedly, hitting the stud to the small outside mask speaker with his chin.

He loosened his grip on the plastic reins trailing from the halter around the dolphin’s body.

“Guess I’d better file a report.” It was understood Mack wouldn’t have to do it unless an emergency came up. It took him too long to form the difficult human words by vibrating the blowhole which served as his nostril.

Anaka kicked his feet and headed for the surface, where the buoy with the tele-beam bobbed monotonously.

The Admiral had demanded complete, concise reports. Anaka complied.

“No activity around the ship,” he advised. “And no sign of a Tegel yet.”

He signed off and went under again. When he reached the big dolphin, he hit him on the head playfully with a meaty fist.

“Chow?”

“Thinking . . . good . . . splendid . . . damfine . . . ideas.”

Anaka pulled a tube of “frogman’s crud” from his belt and sucked on the tasteless combination of mushy fruit and protein.

“You . . . enjoy?”

“Sure.”

“Then . . . hoping . . . swallow . . . whole . . . thing,” Mack rumbled, thwacking Anaka on the back cheerfully with his tail. Anaka choked, messing up the inside of his mask.

“Overgrown sardine!” he shouted.

Mack whistled a dolphin laugh and swam for shallower waters, where he overtook a school of speckled trout. He managed to gulp down three small ones before the rest of the school escaped.

Anaka flipped off the glaring Hensen light and finished his meal in darkness, mulling over things to do to Mack.

“So,” First Garn bubbled happily, “this is found in plentitudes?”

With two tentacles he brought to his mouth the delightful new food creature they had discovered. He took a small bite, munching in pleasure.

“There is much of it,” Second Garn affirmed, watching the small spade fish disappear.

“Such an offering,” First Garn gurgled piously, “calls for gratitude.” His small red eyes glowed meaningfully.

“Indeed,” Second Garn said, bringing out the metal-leaf Dutiful.

He handed it to First Garn, as was proper, and First Garn began the intonation:

“Prime Garn, power; Prime Garn, obedience; Prime Garn, laws . . .”

The Tegel crew extended its myriad listening tentacles in obedient reverence.

When it was over, the Tegel ship opened its suction locks to bring in more food samples to see if this new planet was worth while. It wasn't really necessary, however.

First Garn had already decided.

**T**he manta ray was big. It also was irritable.

The irritation started with the churning motor of the fourteen-foot boat.

And it reached its peak when the three men aboard started casting alongside the bat-like ray for the lemon fish that swam under it, feeding on offal.

The ray went down in a power-dive. When it came up, the boat made another run on it for more casting.

With an angry flip, the three thousand pound ray hurled itself over the boat. One man screamed and went over the side.

The other two ducked and closed their eyes.

Mack heard the distant crack as the ray hit the water, and, seconds later, pinpointed it with his natural sonar.

"Unholy . . . king . . . mackerel!"

"Huh? What in hell?" Anaka had been catching a nap, strapped to Mack's back with the reins.

"Ray."

"So what? There's lots of rays around here." The Polynesian unstrapped himself.

"Lots . . . maybe," Mack thundered, pointing his beak toward the Tegel ship, "but . . . not . . . going . . . that . . . direction!"

"Uh, oh!" Anaka had caught the

ray in the Hensen light. "That's the biggest one I ever saw."

"Maybe . . . trouble."

Anaka thought a moment. "If it kicks up any fuss around their ship, no telling how they'll react."

"Good . . . idea . . . getting . . . you . . . better . . . position . . . if . . . need . . . call . . . help." Mack swished his tail for emphasis.

"Okay. I'm going up a hundred feet."

"Going . . . further!" The Tegel ship was in fairly shallow water—about three hundred feet—but Mack knew any violence in the water could rip Anaka's skin-thin pressure suit.

Anaka knew it, too, but he didn't like the idea of leaving Mack alone.

"Listen, dammit, you aren't giving me orders!"

"Not . . . arguing . . . now!" Mack got under Anaka and pushed him up.

By the time Anaka could make out the buoy by natural light, he was grinning behind his mask. Mack always looked after him.

"Be careful, Daddy!"

"Suggest . . . you . . . idiot!" Mack prodded Anaka in the rear with his beak and swam back down alone.

**F**irst Garn wiggled his tentacles exuberantly. Second Garn turned brown in vicarious pleasure.

"There is," First Garn said, "absolutely no reason why we should not clear the way for colonization. No reason whatsoever."

He took another bite out of the small white trout.

"In fact," he continued, "Tokh himself could not dissuade me from

taking over these splendid feeding grounds now."

He tossed the remnants of the fish to Second Garn, who turned orange in appreciation.

First Garn turned to take another sample from the specimen container.

"Alarm, First Garn!" the watch crew signaled in unison before he could grab another small fish.

"Alarm? Specify the nature."

"It is a monster, First Garn," the watch crew replied. "It is coming toward our vessel!"

First Garn swam to the observation scope and activated a scan beam. It took only a second to lock in on the approaching ray.

"By Tokh, it is a monster!"

Second Garn sneaked a glimpse and turned purple in apprehension.

"Prepare to blast!" First Garn ordered.

All three hundred of the blast crew readied the weapon.

"Destroy!"

The ray shuddered as the electron pellet struck, sending pain surging down every nerve path. Tail lashing in agony, it moved closer to the Tegel ship.

First Garn turned blue. "Use primary weapon!"

A thousand tentacles worked the fire-control panel. A slim projectile streaked toward the ray.

**M**ack rolled over when the shock wave hit him. After he regained his even keel, he quickly probed the water with his sonar. He spotted only pieces of the big ray.

Mack turned away from the Tegel ship and sped up to Anaka.

The Polynesian had been fast enough from the explosion to avoid injury, but was waving his arms frantically as Mack approached.

"Hell, I didn't catch any of it. What happened?"

"Tegels . . . destroy . . . ray."

"They spot you?"

"Don't . . . think. Being . . . still . . . and . . . not . . . too . . . near."

"What kind of weapons?"

"Unknowing . . . first . . . tried . . . but . . . didn't . . . seem . . . advanced."

"And?"

"Second . . . probably . . . high . . . explosives."

"High explosives?" There was a trace of incredulity in Anaka's voice. "With a ship like that, you'd think they'd have some fission stuff."

"Possible . . . probable . . . but . . . only . . . damfool . . . use . . . fission . . . in . . . water . . . close . . . range."

"That figures. We better get to base personally with this." He grabbed the halter and let the reins out.

Mack was thinking all the way back.

"**N**ot only is it stupid," the Admiral barked, "it's also suicidal—for us."

Anaka, not wholly convinced the Admiral was wrong, kept his silence.

Mack didn't. It seemed perfectly logical to him.

"Urge . . . reconsider . . . Admiral. Hard . . . for . . . me . . . express . . . your . . . language . . . but . . . positive . . . will . . . work."

"You have no guarantee, dammit. And we can't take chances!"

"Suggest . . . Admiral . . . knows . . . less . . . these . . . matters . . . than . . . dolphin."

The storm signals were evident on the Admiral's face.

"Don't be insubordinate, Mack," the Admiral growled.

"Will . . . leave . . . then."

Mack had him dead to rights. Although the dolphins were nominally under Fleet advisories, the Treaty of 1998 gave them absolute freedom from human interference. Their service was voluntary.

The Admiral glared down at Mack in the tank. "Get the hell out, in that case. No one's stopping you."

Mack didn't reply. He glanced at Anaka once, then swam through the tank tunnel into the open sea.

The Admiral turned to Anaka. "You think he was right?"

"Well, I just don't know, sir."

"As long as you have any doubt about it," the Admiral snapped, "you're confined to quarters."

First Garn considered the ray's destruction proof that any dangerous life forms could be handled.

"And isn't it true," he asked Second Garn, "that we have seen no other threatening forms?"

"Yes, First Garn."

"And that we have seen no intelligent opposition to our rightful presence here?"

"Yes, First Garn."

"Then we may assume that the intelligent life forms are inferior and fear us. Prepare the summons."

Broken down to its simplest semantic elements, the summons said: "Food good. Come."

Mack took the lead and, in age-old respect for the joy of life and its expression in graceful swimming, slapped the water hard with his tail every minute.

The others waited patiently, and finally Mack spoke in the rapid whistling, clicking, grunting dolphin language.

"I think we are obligated to act for them."

"That might be," the dolphin behind him said, "but can you offer a truly valid reason?"

"They are our friends."

"You have told us of this Admiral."

"But he is at a disadvantage. He does not understand the ways of the waters."

"And you think these Tegels can be regarded in that light?"

"There is every reason to believe so."

"We will get no thanks for it, in all probability."

"We have had our thanks." The meaning was clear, and several of the dolphins further back whistled their agreement.

"Think," Mack said, "of all they gave us. A symbolic language. The ability to develop our own culture. Even a chance to explore space with them."

The dolphin behind Mack could not argue.

Before Homo sapiens discovered that dolphins had brains as fully developed as man's, the dolphins were an intelligent, but cultureless, species. They played, fed and bred with only a primitive language of a few basic meanings. Man had made something



more of them, and Mack wanted a chance to prove it.

"Will you follow me?" he asked.

"Yes," the dolphin behind him said.

Mack listened.

"Yes," the others whistled.

Mack led the way.

Anaka had disobeyed orders. Being confined to quarters had been bad enough, but the Admiral's indignation had increased instead of mellowing.

He had told Anaka he wouldn't be working with dolphins any more—Mack or any others.

Anaka thought about it for a while in his room.

"The hell with it," he said. He put on his pressure suit and walked to the beach.

The water felt good as it covered him. Almost like his natural element.

Mack picked the Polynesian up on his sonar about a mile from the Tegel ship.

"What . . . doing . . . here?" he asked, nuzzling Anaka's mask gently.

"Coming to watch after you, stupid." Anaka felt a little like crying.

"Suggesting . . . trouble . . . with . . . Admiral?"

"A little." Anaka tried to sound casual.

"We . . . fix . . . that . . . trouble," Mack predicted.

Anaka felt suspicion forming in the back of his mind.

"How's that?"

"You . . . watch."

Anaka swung the Hensen light around. He picked out two dolphins coming in. Then more. And more.

"What in hell?"

Mack whistled rapidly, and the dolphins formed a long line behind him.

"Oh, no!" Anaka moaned as it dawned on him. "You can't be serious."

"Very . . . serious."

"They'll make mincemeat out of you, Mack. You dolphins have no weapons!"

"We . . . thinking . . . Tegels . . . stupid," Mack asserted affably.

"Stupid enough for spaceflight?"

"Special . . . kind . . . stupid."

"I can't talk you out of it?"

"No."

"In that case," Anaka said firmly, "I might as well watch the slaughter. And you're not going to talk me out of it." He took the underwater rocket-gun from its sheath.

Mack gave the equivalent of a shrug with his tail and let Anaka hang on to his back.

First Garn floated complacently as the technical crew prepared to send the rocket bobbing to the surface, from whence it would blast into orbit and transmit.

"This is a moment of historic note," he told Second Garn, who turned a deep crimson in agreement.

"Soon," First Garn predicted, "all of our people will offer us thanks."

He waved his tentacles majestically.

"Let the rocket go!"

He followed it with a scan beam. It rose almost two hundred feet before an alert dolphin saw it, butted it to the bottom, hammered it into the mud and "sat" on it.

“Prepare all weapons!” First Garn raged.

Mack whistled urgently. The dolphins withdrew rapidly and set up a cross-pattern of false sonar echoes.

“Destroy!” First Garn screamed. The electron pellets and projectiles went off on a wild tack, misled by the fake sonar.

“Out of ship for attack!” First Garn screeched. The Tegels swam out after the dolphins, pulling portable assault weapons.

Mack led the dolphins toward the Tegels.

“Bring weapons to bear!” First Garn felt victory nearing. At close range, it could not be otherwise.

The thousand-tenacled fire-control team brought the weapons to bear, carefully and accurately as the dolphins slowly came closer.

So carefully was it done that by the time they were ready Mack had led the dolphins in a burst of speed behind them.

“We have been outwitted!” First Garn shrieked. Several hundred Tegels swung around, noted First Garn was correct and awaited his command.

It never came.

Mack swallowed him with ease, and split seconds later the other dolphins were similarly occupied.

Anaka remembered later, with some regret, that he had not fired a single shot.

“In that case,” the Admiral laughed, slapping Anaka on the back, “I guess we’ll have to credit the dolphins with the whole thing.”

“Yes, sir.”

The Admiral squatted down by the tank.

“Mack, I disagreed with you when you told me what you wanted to do. I still think the risk was too great and, by all rights, both of you should be busted again.”

He paused smilingly. “That is if you’ll let yourself be busted *voluntarily*—again.”

“Think . . . dolphins,” Mack said from the tank, “still . . . know . . . more . . . those . . . things . . .”

The Admiral looked at Mack affectionately “Let me in on it?”

Mack spouted a tall column of water, taking a deep breath.

“Had . . . hunch . . . Tegels . . . have . . . fish . . . way . . . thinking.”

“Huh? Anaka beat the Admiral to the punch.

“Had . . . feeling . . . would . . . follow . . . leader . . . blindly.”

“But, dammit,” the Admiral broke in, “they were capable of space flight, so they must have been smarter than fish.”

“Smart . . . some . . . ways . . . stupid . . . others.”

“I think I get a part of it, Admiral,” Anaka offered “He’s trying to tell us they had a blind spot in their behavior—so far as the dolphins were concerned. In other words, without leadership they were absolutely helpless, incapable of independent action.”

The Admiral frowned. “How in hell could you count on getting them outside?”

“Was . . . thinking . . . if . . . made . . . mad . . . enough . . . would . . . come . . . after . . . us.”

"You didn't know that for sure, though," Anaka insisted.

"No . . . but . . . knew . . . if . . . like . . . fish . . . in . . . thought . . . might . . . attack . . . in . . . group . . . like . . ."

"Like a school of fish?" The Admiral's mouth was open.

"Hoped . . . so."

Anaka put his hand on the dolphin's head. "Were you sure you could foul up their weapons effectively?"

"Not . . . sure . . . anything. Had . . . good . . . hunch . . . and . . . felt . . . our . . . duty."

"Well, I'll be damned," the Admiral said reverently.

"Probably," Anaka agreed. The Admiral didn't even hear him. He was thinking of another assignment for Mack and Anaka.

The President, reading from the official report, told the cheering crowds the dolphins took the chance because they felt they had better odds underwater than might have been had in an open space battle with the Tegels.

And, he added somberly, teams going over the Tegel ship had indeed proved they were right.

There was silence when he informed them of the summons that had been recovered and translated.

Mack was not listening. He was tired from the lengthy questioning of the last few days. And he was thinking of a smaller, slimmer dolphin he had not seen for a long time. So he was reasonably surprised when Anaka, standing next to the President grabbed him around the middle and half lifted him out of the tank.

He was even more surprised when the President taped the medal to his broad flanks.

But the real moment of pride came later when the new space cruiser blasted out of its berth for its maiden trip Out.

Mack was swimming in the spacious control tank—Captain Mack of *The Dolphin*. Anaka was there in the No. 2 spot, helping the crew get used to Mack.

It didn't take long.

Before they passed the Martian orbit, they had dropped the formal "sir" and just called him Captain Mack.

Mack liked it. So did the smaller dolphin who swam in the extra-large tank in Mack's quarters. They called *her* Mrs. Mack. **END**