

ORBIT

THE BEST IN

Science Fiction

Volume 1, No. 4

MORRIS S. LATZEN
Publisher

JULES SALTMAN, Editor

BERNARD GORDON, Art Director

ORBIT is published bi-monthly by Hanro Corp. Office of publication: 441 Lexington Ave., New York 17, N. Y. Application for second-class entry pending at post office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. Additional entry at Silver Spring, Md. Copyright 1954 by Hanro Corp. Volume 1, Number 4. Sept.-Oct., 1954. 35¢ per copy. Subscriptions: \$2.00 per year. Canada \$2.50, foreign \$3.00. Not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts. Printed in the U. S. A. Nationally distributed by the American News Company.

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A STERLING PUBLICATION

Me Feel Good

by Max Dancey

SPACE SHIP MEN good. Smart. Eat. Gurgle. Make smoke. Say much word.

Me no smart. No man learn me smart, eat, gurgle, make smoke, say much word.

"But how was this man able to keep alive on that asteroid?" Captain Sir say. "Nothing to eat, no water, no air. Almost absolute zero. Just cold, and bare rock, and a smashed ship."

Navigator say: "The others kept alive for a while on the ship . . . Still, this guy was a baby when they crashed." He look me. Make sick face. "It's a lucky thing for you we came along, boy . . . But God knows how you're going to make out on Earth."

"Hey, Captain," Mate say, "he's hot!"

Me no hot. Me no cold. Me me.

Mate hand box. "Hotter'n a blast tube," Mate say. "Look at that neon! Wait a minute, I'll turn on the audio count."

Mate click box. Box make beep beep beep. Quick beep. Man look me. Me feel funny. No hot. Funny.

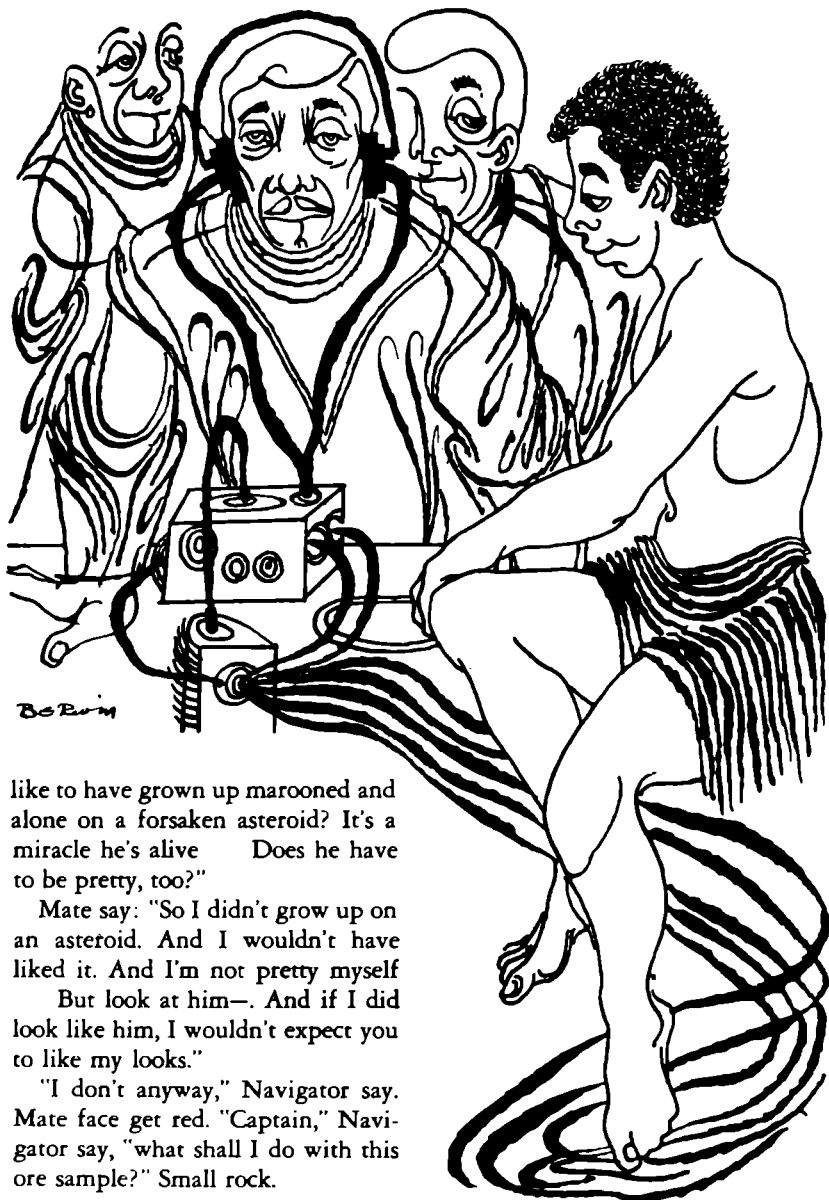
Captain Sir say me: "When did the others die?"

What me say? When? *When?* *Die?* Some go. Some stop. Mamma say: "I wish I'd never been born." She go. Daddy say: "I guess the danger isn't you, son. It's in the rest of us, in all of Man. But I wish I were dead." He stop. Me tell Captain Sir? No.

Mate say: "He doesn't understand most of what we say. But look at his face when we talk. Looks like he's storing away every word . . . I don't like the ugly little monkey."

Navigator say: "How would you

**THIS FELLOW DIDN'T KNOW HIS OWN STRENGTH,
WHICH WAS LUCKY FOR THOSE WHO HAD THE LITTLE JOB OF
GETTING HIM SAFELY DOWN TO EARTH, SO TO SPEAK.**



like to have grown up marooned and alone on a forsaken asteroid? It's a miracle he's alive Does he have to be pretty, too?"

Mate say: "So I didn't grow up on an asteroid. And I wouldn't have liked it. And I'm not pretty myself

But look at him—. And if I did look like him, I wouldn't expect you to like my looks."

"I don't anyway," Navigator say. Mate face get red. "Captain," Navigator say, "what shall I do with this ore sample?" Small rock.

Captain Sir no say. Mate say. No nice say. Small rock go. Poof. Me feel good. Navigator say: "Eeeee!" Navigator say Mate: "You—" No nice. "I wish I had you in a ring with some gloves on!"

Mate gone. Poof. Navigator gone. Poof. Me feel good.

Captain Sir say: "Hunnh?" Look me. "Did you see them vanish? Just like that?" Captain Sir look. Jump. Look. Go locker. "Just like that!" Captain Sir hot? "I need a drink . . . Gone, by God! Just like that!" Captain Sir gurgle bottle. "Navigator and Mate gone. Damn funny!" Gurgle bottle. Push wall, make big beep.

Man come. Man come. Man come.

Captain Sir say: "The Mate and the Navigator are gone, gentlemen . . . Gone."

Much say.

Captain Sir say: "The Navigator and the Mate had a little argument. The Navigator said he wanted to face the Mate in a boxing ring. They both vanished. You figure it."

Man say: "Hah! . . . I'd like to see that fight." Man gone. Poof. Me feel good.

Captain Sir say: "That's what happened, men. I don't have to try to convince you now."

Much say.

"I think," Captain Sir say, "that this—. This—." He look me. "This man we picked up on the asteroid—. Or maybe the asteroid—." Captain Sir gurgle bottle. Man gurgle. Man gurgle.

"Three of us left," Captain Sir say. "But the Navigator cut the tape, and the Mate had it rigged in. We'll get to Earth all right on the autos."

"Maybe so," Man say. "But I wish I were safe on Earth now." Man go. Poof. Me feel good.

Captain Sir gurgle bottle. Man gurgle. Look me. Me no gurgle.

Man look me. Say: "I wish I'd signed on the Martian Queen, I know that." Man gone. Poof. Me feel good.

Captain Sir say: "I'm not going to drink any more. Not now. Not ever. I'm sober. I'm God-fearing." Captain Sir shut eye. Captain Sir open eye. Captain Sir look me.

Me feel funny. Me no learn. Man say go, man go. Me say go, me no go. Me no learn. Man say go, me feel good.

Captain Sir say: "How do you do it?" Captain Sir mad. "How?" Captain Sir mad.

Me no say. Me no learn. Mate say me stupid. Me stupid.

Captain Sir hit head. "I don't know why I'm worrying. You like to make people get their wishes, eh? How about me? I wish I had a million dollars."

Dollars? Green come. Hit Captain Sir. He fall . . . He no mad. Captain Sir funny. Ha-ha. "I got it! A million bucks!" Captain Sir say: "You go to Earth, boy, and make everyone happy. I wish I was home with this money." Captain Sir gone. Poof. Me feel good.

Me go Earth. Feel big good. * * *