

STARTLING STORIES

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A THRILLING PUBLICATION

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An Amazing Complete Novel



The Laws of Chance

By MURRAY LEINSTER

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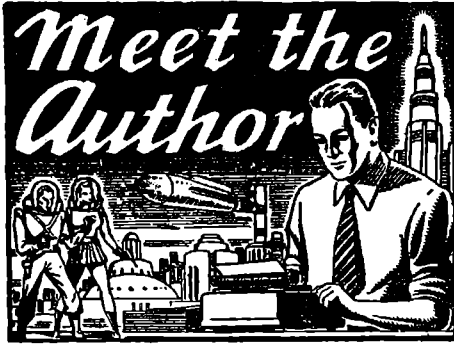
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Introducing Margaret St. Clair

It is not customary to enlarge upon the lives of the authors of short stories in this department (don't ask us why, but there it is). However, Margaret St. Clair, author of **THE SOMA RACKS**, is a brand-new author to the STF field and one whose work you will see frequently in future issues of this magazine.

Furthermore, she introduces a new, different and highly sophisticated note into what has all-too-often been a "Gee whiz!" and "Blast 'em with a ray-gun" chamber of modern fiction. Her subtle, oblique style with its deceptive appearance of simplicity moves along in a well-mannered fashion that approaches naivete until—whammy!—the hidden charge within it detonates.

At this point, the reader is apt to grab the edge of his chair with both hands and hang on tightly. Not since the writing days of the late H. H. Munro (Saki) has anyone produced quite this effect.

But let's leave discussion of Margaret St. Clair to Margaret St. Clair. She speaks of herself as follows:

I've been reading science-fiction, off and on, since I was a very young sprout indeed, but the bunch of mss. I sent you was my first attempt at writing it. The immediate cause of my outburst was that I was smarting under too many rejections of my detective and other stories, and thought it would be a pleasant change to be rejected by a different bunch of people.

Then, when the first story proved to be so much fun to write, I went ahead with others. Certainly I had little hope of selling them. I should say that the reason why so few women write science-fiction is the one which restrained me hithertofore, i.e., a feeling that they cannot compete successfully in it.

About myself, I was born in Kansas, went to school there and in California and have a degree from the University of California. At one time after my marriage I propagated the carnations and other plants for our nursery and played foster mother to litter after litter of puppies, but at present I am doing little beside writing and my own low quality brand of housekeeping. I live on a hill across the bay from San Francisco with my husband and my two dachshunds, Ninel v. Wälsungen-Haus and Teckelheim Prinz Call Boy. They have fleas just like ordinary dogs though.

My husband, by the way, thought THE SOMA RACKS was very amusing. Some people can't seem to realize when a shoe fits. . . . Just at present I'm working on another mystery yarn, but when I've suffered through it to the end, I'll probably try some more science fiction slanted your way.
