

MADNESS FROM MARS By CLIFFORD SIMAK

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**EANDO**

**BINDER**

**MEN MUST DIE**

A Novelet of the Spaceways

By **WARD HAWKINS**

A THRILLING  
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# THRILLING WONDER STORIES



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● ON THE COVER

Artist Brown has depicted a scene from the novelet, MEN MUST DIE, by Ward Hawkins, which appears in this issue.

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Manuscripts must be accompanied by self-addressed, stamped envelopes, and are submitted at the author's risk.

# MEN MUST DIE

A Novelet of the  
Spaceways

By

**WARD HAWKINS**

*Author of "A Million in Green," etc.*

## CHAPTER I

### *The Seabrook Unit*

**I**T STARTED in the spring of 2038. I had a job hacking an air-cab in the Sixth Quadrant of Greater New York, and that's how I came to know Martin Seabrook. He always called me when he needed transportation.

For some reason he took a shine to me. There's no explaining why, unless it was because I was big. But one day he offered me a job piloting his private craft and I took it. A year or so later he made me a sort of a bodyguard.

He was a little bit of a man, Seabrook was. He always looked shabby. His clothes were never pressed, nor his white hair combed. But his eyes were bright and brown and they had a way of looking deep inside of you. No one doubted that he had the best scientific mind of the age.

One day he called me into his office, and I found him sitting at his desk staring out across East River. He looked a century old. His face was thin and tired and his eyes were bloodshot from the hurt he had inside him. You see, he had cancer—the doctors had given



*"This monstrosity"—he indicated the Jovian—*

him only a month or so to live.

"Mike," he said softly. "I want to ask a favor of you."

He waited a moment, looking at me. But I couldn't answer. Things were too balled up in my throat. Seeing him there taking the pain that ate his guts, because dope to ease it, would dull his brain did something to me. I just couldn't see him like that and not want to cry.

He must have known how I felt, for he went on without my answer. "You're

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## Seabrook's Body Was Dead—But His

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*"is a typical specimen of the enemy"*

not educated, Mike. To most people that means everything. But to me there's more—you're a man who can be trusted. You see, I'm undergoing an experiment tonight that may well mean the end for me. And, well—I want to know that you'll look after Mary—"

That finished me. He was asking me, a lot of a kid he'd practically picked out of the gutter, to watch after his daughter Mary—the girl who was to me a sort of a dream.

Sweet, she was, with chestnut hair and deep brown eyes that were good and kind and understanding. The one

girl in her circle who accepted me as an equal. But that was her way, and I loved her for it—the way a man would love an angel.

If it had been hard to answer him before, it was impossible then. But he didn't need it. He stood up and held out his hand. "I know you'll look after her, Mike," he said huskily. "This is, perhaps, goodbye. The best of luck to you, son—"

I held his hand for a moment, then turned and ran from the room. It is hard to put into words the things I felt—I was so young and things hurt

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## Brain Wove the Fate of Two Planets!

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so much. All that night I spent walking and thinking. Morning found me waiting in the office.

There was the closed door to the laboratory; the huge window beneath which the city was just stirring. I tramped back and forth between the two, desperate to know whether the old man lived or had died. I hadn't the faintest idea what the experiment was about, but I could imagine plenty.

**F**INALLY, Seabrook's young assistant, Allen Gilbert, poked his head through the door. His young, good-looking face was twisted and strained.

"It'll be an hour or two yet, Mike," he said.

Seeing Gilbert's face didn't help my nerves any, nor did it help to pass the time. Usually, he was quiet and capable, so I knew if the thing could upset him like that, it had to be pretty bad. That "hour or two" stretched to four before Gilbert showed again. He nodded to me, whispered,

"All right. You may see him for a moment."

The first thing I saw in the laboratory was the operating table. On it was the sheet-covered figure of Seabrook. And there was no mistaking the stillness of that figure—it would never move again.

I must have stopped abruptly, for Gilbert bumped me. I must have sobbed a curse, for Gilbert caught my arm. But I don't remember any of it — I was thinking that Seabrook was dead.

"Get hold of yourself," Gilbert hissed. "Here, drink this. You've got a shock coming."

With the drink to warm my stomach, I found that I could follow Gilbert toward a screened corner. Gilbert moved the screen and revealed a huge mound of apparatus covered with a black cloth.

Something under the cloth hissed and sighed as though breathing, and there was the steady sound that might have been the beating of a heart. Gilbert lifted one corner of the cloth, steadied me with his hand, whispered,

"Quiet, now. He's sleeping."

The apparatus was of glass and filled with a pale yellow liquid that circulated from a maze of tubing into a central chamber. My stunned senses reeled.

In that central chamber was a human brain!

Gilbert dropped the cloth and led me away. In the office he said, "That was the brain of Dr. Seabrook. His body was doomed by cancer, and transplanting his brain was all that could save his life. He trained me for this during the past five years."

"But—but," I asked dazedly, "how can he live? He can't be alive! He must be dead—you're just not telling me."

"No, he lives. That pump will keep him alive indefinitely. You see, over a century ago the beginning of this instrument was invented by two men, Dr. Alexis Carrel of Rockefeller Institute and Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh."

"In principle, the perfusion pump—that is, a pump which is able to keep the brain suffused or permeated with a nourishing liquid—is Dr. Seabrook's body. Instead of blood, we use a fluid which fulfills the same purpose—that of bringing food and removing secretions. The fluid is created, not by oxygen as in our bodies, but by a serum containing hemocyanin. We hope it will be even more efficient than blood."

"But what good is he? He might as well be dead."

**G**ILBERT shook his head patiently. "He can think, now, without pain. Furthermore, he will speak, see and hear. Doctor Seabrook always contended that the nerve impulse that actuates the muscular movement is a form of electrical energy. By elaboration of this theory, he devised a means of connecting his brain to a photo-electric cell that functions as his eyes; and to microphones that enable him to speak and hear. Now, you'd better get some rest. He will sleep for at least twenty-four hours."

I left, too stunned to think. I didn't realize, then, that I had been privileged to see the first successfully transplanted brain.

The following day, Allen Gilbert and I broke the news to Mary Seabrook. Her courage in the face of it was fine and beautiful. Think of the shock it must have been to her, to suddenly find that her flesh and blood father was now only a brain in a network of tubing.

The three of us went into the laboratory. Gilbert and I on each side of her, ready to help her if the need arose. Gilbert moved the screen.

A quick gasp leaped to Mary's lips; her small body stiffened, but that was all. There was no hysteria, no tears. She just stood there trembling and almost afraid to look at the brain.

I saw that two microphones and a photo-electric cell had been added to the pump.

"Mary—" one of the microphones said softly, and the voice was strangely like that of Martin Seabrook. "Mary, girl, it's all right—"

It was a long moment before Mary spoke, and then only with a great effort. "Father—your pain, do you still feel it?"

"No, child. Nothing but a sense of well-being. I had forgotten what it was to be without pain. The lack of it amounts to almost pleasure. So you must be glad for me, not sorry."

"I am glad," Mary said. "Do you think clearly? Can you continue your work?"

Seabrook's answer seemed almost exultant. "Yes, fortunately, things have worked out beyond my fondest dreams. My brain is infinitely more efficient than before. There are several reasons for that. First, the pain I suffered made it extremely difficult to think; and without it, I am exhilarated tremendously. Then the fluid that is my substitute for blood, seems to be a hundred percent more efficient in removing waste and bringing nourishment. It has the effect of a powerful mental stimulant. Problems once beyond my power seem childishly simple now."

His voice died away and the room was silent for a long moment. Each of us was held in silent awe at the things we were seeing and hearing. Then, briskly, he spoke again.

"With this discovery comes the problem of using the new power to the greatest advantage. I have decided, finally, on space-travel. That science has been at a standstill since the Romaine expedition to the moon.

**IT** TOOK those men five years to complete the round-trip and they returned hopelessly insane. Space-fever

had caused their insanity—they had been cooped up too long alone.

"Their slowness was caused, not by the lack of power, but by the lack of a metal capable of withstanding the terrific heat of the rocket exhausts. It was go slowly, or not at all. But I think I have found the metal that will do the work.

"Tungsten, as you know, is the most heat-resistant, having a melting point of 3,370°C. But this is not enough for our purpose. Tungsten is prepared from the trioxide by reduction with carbon or hydrogen, or from chloride. In the past year I have been experimenting in a process involving the principle of electrolysis to increase the metal's heat-resisting qualities, without success. Today, in the hour before you came, the correct method became clear to me.

"Here is the task ahead of us. We will build a space craft using this new alloy, and we will travel to one of the more distant planets to prove beyond doubt that space-travel can be an everyday reality. . . ."

Again his voice died out, but not to silence. Gilbert was muttering, "Splendid! Splendid!" and his face was lighted with a glow of fierce exultation. Mary, too, was trembling with excitement. I—I must confess it—felt misgivings.

However, I held my stupid tongue, possibly through fright, and Seabrook went on.

"We four must work together. Without complete cooperation the thing is not possible. Allen will be my closest assistant. He is fully capable of working out the problems of design under my direction.

"You, Mike, will be in charge of the construction. You are capable of handling men—no, don't interrupt. Possibly, you have some doubts of your ability, but I have none. The thing is settled, you will work under the direction of both Allen and myself.

"Mary, your task is to keep these two men fed properly and to see to their rest. They are fools enough to neglect themselves in the heat of the work—I know that, for I would do the same. Now, here are your orders—"

He went on, then, to outline a pro-

gram of work that was tremendous in its scope. He talked for hours on details of plans, construction methods and materials. I was amazed that one brain could conceive so much in so short a time.

When we left that room, I, at least, was staggering under the terrific load of facts and details with which he had weighted us. And I was frightened, afraid that I would not come up to the standard Seabrook had set for me in his plans.

Remember, I had little education, I was young to the point of adolescence. But I did have a good working knowledge of mechanics picked up while hacking the air-cab. And I was big enough to back any bluff I cared to make.

**W**ITH these two things I set out to supervise the construction of the space ship. These two and one far greater—the confidence Seabrook had in me. I take no credit for the success I had. Seabrook had inspired me to a point infinitely beyond my own ability. And, too, he was constantly foreseeing my problems and directing me to the right path.

The ship was completed on the twenty-first day of September in the year 2038, provisioned and ready for flight. There had been no publicity. Seabrook had wanted none.

Gilbert had constructed a portable unit for Seabrook, and I had built a special compartment for it on the ship. The rest of us, Gilbert, Mary and I, walked aboard with only the clothes on our backs. The air-lock was sealed, a few farewells, and all was ready for the experiment.

What few misgivings I felt as I slid under the controls were lost in a choking sense of pride—pride that I, Mike Harrigan, had been allowed the privilege of piloting this ship. Whether it was to be to my death or to my everlasting fame was somehow unimportant.

I lifted the ship slowly, thrilling to the perfect ease with which the controls responded, sent it at a gradually increasing speed outward toward the void—toward the infinitely distant planet of Jupiter. . . .

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## CHAPTER II

### *The Lubians*

---

**Y**ES, Jupiter. Nothing less would satisfy Seabrook. He had insisted on it as the test to which he would put the ship. But more precisely, our destination was the Red Spot of Jupiter.

This spot had first been discovered in the year 1878. There seemed to be no explanation for it, and the mystery of its presence had intrigued Seabrook for years. Long ago he had determined that he would be the first to discover its cause.

About the journey—I hesitate to give you our impressions. But visualize, if you can, an attempt to penetrate the complete unknown.

The dangers were real. Few of the asteroids had been charted, many of our calculations were problematical. No one had ever gone this way before.

The first days were filled with excitement. But as the days faded into weeks and the weeks into months our senses became dulled to the danger. We were awed by the tremendous distances around us, by the utter aloneness of space.

Earth had dwindled rapidly to a fading green star very little different from the millions of other stars behind it. Jupiter had grown to an amazing brilliance there before us.

All my waking hours were spent at the controls. Mary and Gilbert stood watch while I slept. Seabrook devoted his time to the solution of problems of sustaining our lives on the planet ahead.

Too much credit cannot be given him for the development of the space suits he built during our Journey, or rather which Gilbert built under his direction. The suits were equipped with anti-gravitational units capable of neutralizing a force many times greater than we expected to find on Jupiter. Also, they provided a constant temperature and atmospheric pressure.

But perhaps the greatest accomplishment was the development of the "Thought-Interceptor." Seabrook had elaborated on the known theory that thought-waves are electrical. He had

developed a device that would intercept these impulses, translate them into vibrations similar to sound, and with bone-conduction, pass them through our auditory system to the brain. With this, we would at least know what the inhabitants of Jupiter were thinking.

As we drew near the planet, it became apparent that the red spot was some sort of gas. The atmosphere extended something like ten thousand miles from the surface of the planet. The gas reached this limit and extended horizontally beyond the limits of our vision.

Here, then, was the answer to our astronomer's question. Just why the gas was confined to this area alone was beyond our knowledge at the time. Samples were taken during our slow descent, and Gilbert discovered the gas to approximate  $N_2O_4$ , or Nitrogen Tetroxide.

Our first impression of the surface of the planet was the incredible height of the vegetation. Towering what seemed to be thousands of feet above the surface, were great trees of some unknown species. Beneath the trees, the ground was obscured by a smaller, more dense foliage.

**WE** CRUISED along above the tips of the trees on an eastward course for several hours, looking for some sign of moving life, either human or animal. Finally, we broke over a tremendous mountain range and dipped into a valley. Here we discovered an open plain of perhaps a thousand square miles. And on this plain was a great city—but a city of incredibly small buildings!

It was not beautiful — the houses were too small, too squat and square. From some of the larger buildings great quantities of the gas poured upward. That seemed to indicate that through some strange working of nature, the gas was the atmosphere these people breathed!

Near the center of the metropolis was an airport. There were ships there that rose in a cloud to meet us. It was impossible to know what sort of creatures guided them, we were much too high to discern anything that approximated human form.

The ships, less than a fifth the size of ours, seemed friendly enough, though they fairly bristled with weapons—even as we neared the landing field there was no sign of violence.

Just before landing, Mary, who had been at a starboard port, called our attention to something on the eastern horizon. At first, we saw an odd blue light flashing intermittently, later we made out great domes that might have been part of some gigantic city. But there was not time then to investigate.

I was the one who made the discovery that the city below was unmistakably in a state of war. The city was walled, and along the ramparts of this wall were cannon-like weapons out of which spurts of blue flame flashed from time to time. There was no sign of the enemy other than the domes we had seen in the distance.

Before grounding the ship, Seabrook ordered us all into the space-suits—his own unit being similarly equipped. I, for one, never let my hand stray from the Niter-gun at my belt.

Amazingly, the airport became crowded with strange people in a matter of seconds. Strange, because we had expected a people built more in the proportions of their planet—giants—but not one of these we saw was over three feet tall!

Their heads, in proportion to the rest of their bodies, were tremendous however, encompassing half their weight. Of the features, the most prominent was the great, obsidian disks that were their eyes. Lidless, expressionless and staring, one became conscious of a sense of evilness, of something ominous and forbidding behind their inscrutable depths. From between their eyes projected a sharp beak of a nose, and the mouth was small and round and lipless.

Their bodies were considerably broader than they were tall, supported by spindly legs and supporting equally spindly arms. Their clothing was of some shiny black material, metallic in its smoothness. About their waists was a belt from which was suspended a glittering array of strange weapons.

We were looking at them, when suddenly the ship rocked beneath our feet.



**T**HE motion was gentle at first, tentative. Then the ship tilted sideward as though subjected to a tremendous force against the hull near the entrance port.

"Mike!" Mary cried suddenly. "They're breaking in!"

That entrance port, built of the finest, toughest metal Seabrook's intelligence could devise, was bulging inward, cracking!

A sudden cold hand of fear twisted deep around my heart. In a sort of wild desperation I drew my Niter-gun and prepared to blast whatever showed in that port into eternity. Seabrook's quiet voice stopped me.

"No, Mike. Hold your fire. I think it would only make matters worse—"

A moment later the port crashed to the deck. Instead of the tremendous machine I thought would be necessary to break that port, there were only two of these strange people staring at us. They had broken the port with their own strength!

Such strength in bodies of that size was incredible. But I had forgotten that they lived on Jupiter—a planet with a force of gravity many times that of our own. To exist, they had to be of greater mass and of immensely greater strength.

In spite of my fuddled wits, I managed to put myself between the port and Mary. Gilbert stood watching the creatures, apparently lost in their scientific aspects. Suddenly he turned and ducked into the control room. I understood why, for one of the creatures had caught the edge of the port and was climbing in. The ship rocked violently beneath his weight—a weight that must have been tons!

The heavy steel of the deck bent as he threw a knee over the edge and pulled himself up. But at that moment, Gilbert threw in the ship's anti-gravitational field, preventing the stranger from breaking through the deck. This field, the same as the one incorporated in our space suits, was another of Seabrook's developments.

Seabrook had discovered the force of gravitation to be a form of electro-magnetism. By identifying the force in its true electrical nature, it had been comparatively simple for him to create a

field of force about the ship that repelled with the same force by which the ship was attracted—as like poles of a magnet—in that way nullifying the force of gravitation.

Feeling the loss of weight, the creature looked around owlishly, his mouth splitting in what must have been a grin. Suddenly, our Thought-Interceptors began working.

"I am Ikor," the thought-stream said, "Ra of the First Company of the Luvian Expeditionary Forces. You are my prisoners!"

Prisoners! Expeditionary forces! Then I had been right. This city was in a state of war.\* But there was not time for further thought. Ikor was walking ponderously toward Seabrook's unit.

I had seen the port broken by the strength of these people and I understood what would happen if he so much as touched the Unit. He raised his hand—and then I shot him.

**T**HE effect was amazing. Suddenly his face disappeared behind a mask of flame. The Niter guns were automatic pistols of a very small caliber that fired a shell loaded with an explosive similar to nitroglycerin. The effect on a human head would have been to destroy it utterly. But upon him it had little effect at all.

He rocked backward a bit from the force of the blast. Queer sounds came from his open mouth. I moved quickly so there would be no danger of Seabrook's unit being damaged by the explosion and fired again. Still he did not fall.

But I kept firing. As he stepped back, I followed him with the gun, keeping a constant play of explosives against his face. The cabin roared with the sound of the explosions, solid blasts of air knocked me back. Nothing could stand up under that continued force. Not even he. His head split, suddenly, flew into a hundred pieces, and he fell heavily to the deck.

Pieces of his head ricocheted around the cabin causing unbelievable damage — they might have been great chunks of steel. One of them caught me on the leg and knocked me sprawling. Before I could regain my feet,

another of the creatures had gained entrance, and his thought-stream roared in my ears.

"Hold your fire—no harm will come to you!"

Then, more quietly: "Ikor deserved destruction—he was too stupid to exist. A *grovonan* would know that our touch would destroy the materials of you people of lesser mass."

Seabrook's thought-stream answered: "We want peace. The killing of one of you was unfortunate, but since you know why, there should be no cause for further trouble."

The creature bobbed his ugly head in agreement.

"Excellent. My name is Loogo, and I have been instructed to escort you to the commandants. Will you come?"

At Seabrook's order, I adjusted the anti-gravitational field of his unit to zero and guided it to my shoulders. We followed Loogo from the ship. The crowd split in an aisle to let us through to a carrier that was similar to a truck of our time. The driver sent it rocketing through streets lined with these queer houses, few of which reached above my head.

After perhaps ten minutes of driving we drew to a stop in front of a building that was easily five times larger than any of the others. We were ushered into a room of considerable size, apparently an audience chamber.

At one end was a raised dais on which three men were sitting. Their clothing was a yellow material, contrasting to the black the bulk of the Lubians wore and indicating a very high rank.

Somehow, the thought-stream that came through my microphone from one of the men on the dais was pompous and at the same time sly.

"You are welcome," the thought-stream said, "to the headquarters of the Lubian Expeditionary Forces. We, the High Command, extend to you our meager hospitality and hope that we are able to make your stay pleasant."

"**D**RIVEL!" I thought unconsciously, forgetting that it was as clear to them as the spoken word. "You sound like a lying politician. You're after something, or I'm a monkey's uncle. . . ."

"Mike!" Seabrook's thoughts whispered at me. "Be careful!"

The sudden concentration of the commandant's eyes on me, made me realize what I'd done—I had a lot to learn in the art of telepathic conversation.

"You doubt us," the Lubian almost purred. "Please understand that we mean you no harm. Our interest in you is purely scientific. Will you step forward and place that queer object—ah, yes, you call it Seabrook—on the floor so that we may inspect it?"

Seabrook told me to do as they said. I did, though as I stepped back I held my hand close to the Niter-gun. The three Lubian Commanders waddled down from the dais and crowded around the unit.

My thought-interceptor was silent during their close scrutiny of the unit. Seabrook began a voluntary explanation of himself, told them his body had been a victim of cancer and how the transfer had been made.

"Very clever," the Lubian said. "You must be very efficient—you have accomplished so much in space-travel."

"Quite efficient," Seabrook agreed calmly. "So efficient, in fact, that I understand *all* your thoughts. Even those you suppose are hidden from us—"

The three commandants fell back chattering in amazement at Seabrook's announcement. Loogo and several of his men moved close behind me, before the Lubian leader spoke again.

"There is no need, then, for further pretense," he snapped angrily. "You are prisoners of war. If you conduct yourselves properly we will assure you a quick end, but, unfortunately, we cannot free you. You are a strange people and it is necessary that we discover the workings of your bodies on our dissecting tables—"

Dissection! For a moment I was too stunned to think. Then, as the full impact seeped through my brain, I went suddenly berserk. I clawed frantically for my gun, grasped it, drew it—but Loogo had intercepted my thoughts.

His hand descended on mine, knocked the gun spinning from my hand. The blow could not have been more than a tap in proportion to his strength, but I felt a numbing shock. Instantly my right arm hung useless—I could not

lift it, nor move my fingers. The arm was broken, I knew it. And with that knowledge, what little remaining sanity I had vanished in a red wave of fury. I turned to Loogo, drove my left hand with all my weight into those staring eyes.

**V**AGUELY, I heard Mary's scream above my thundering anger, and Seabrook's frantic order for me to stop. But they were lost in the shock of the blow, in the numbing flame of pain that shot up my arm. Loogo had made no effort to avoid the blow. Instead, he had leaned into it. When my fist struck his face it felt as if I had struck a block of iron.

He did not move afterward, though the blow would have knocked a human the full length of the room. He stared at me, amused by my astonishment and pain, then pushed me gently.

I say gently, but it drove me crashing into the wall. My head struck the back of my space-helmet with a stunning force—and that was all I remembered. . . .

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### CHAPTER III

#### *The Noble Jovian*

---

**W**HEN I returned to consciousness, it was to find Mary watching me with a deep concern in her eyes.

"Steady, Mike," I heard Gilbert say. "You're all right now. . . ."

A sudden memory of all that had happened hit me. I pushed myself to a sitting position. Gilbert forced me back, but I had seen enough. We were in a cell of some sort, a small, barren room without windows or doors. Then I became conscious of the ache in my right arm, the bulky bandage that was around it, and I was glad to lie still.

Gilbert said: "You've been out a long time. After Loogo knocked you kicking, Mary and I took you back to the ship and set your arm. You've got a couple of ribs cracked beside two knuckles on your left hand—"

"Where's Seabrook?" I asked.

"They took him somewhere," said Mary, who answered, and in spite of

her courage there was a tremor of panic in her voice. "They promised not to hurt him—but what are we going to do?"

They both looked at me. Gilbert was a scientist; fighting was not in his line. Mary was a woman. So the two of them looked to me for the answer to her question—and I had just shown how much good I was against these people.

For the lack of something better, I said, "What's the dope on this war? Who are they fighting and why?"

"These Lubians are from the first satellite of Jupiter—the biggest," Gilbert said. "The true Jovians live in that domed city we saw just before we landed. The Lubians decided to conquer this planet. They started out in our nineteenth century, trans-shipped all their people here and started fighting. They haven't been able to do much, though the Jovians don't seem to fight back. . . ."

He let his voice fade out, because a section of the wall slid back and one of the Lubians, a guard it seemed, motioned us to follow him.

He led us to a room that was even larger than the audience chamber we had first seen. It had to be, to house the tremendous creature that was lying on the floor. A true Jovian!

He was at least a hundred feet long, or tall, if he had been standing, and built more in the same proportions as ourselves. The most striking feature about him was his great, luminous eyes—kindly eyes. You had but to see them to know that. The rest of his features were ascetic: a high, clear forehead, a thin nose and a sensitive mouth.

Some sort of breathing tube had been cut into his throat, and led to a filter arrangement that stood close by. That seemed to indicate that the nitrogen tetroxide which the Lubians breathed was not the Jovians normal atmosphere.

Two of the Lubians had mounted the Jovian giant and were walking on his chest. They were like gnats on a mastodon.

The yellow-uniformed commandant, who was standing on a platform near which I could see Seabrook's unit, broke the silence.

**“WE** brought you here to secure the cooperation of the one you call Gilbert,” his thought stream said. “Seabrook has agreed to build the weapon that will win our conquest. He needs Gilbert to accomplish the actual construction.

“This monstrosity”—he indicated the Jovian—“is a typical specimen of the enemy—an inferior race with no ability other than stubbornness. Luckily for them, they foresaw our invasion and constructed their cities into impregnable forts.

“If you will assist us, we will let you live until the weapon is completed—though we must hold you for our laboratories afterward. But if you will not, the female will be subjected to. . . .”

Seabrook’s calm thought-stream broke in. “Give your consent, Allen. They intend to torture Mary, if you don’t.”

It was a long time before Gilbert answered. There was a deep courage in the man as well as a splendid mind. Had they threatened him he would have told them to rot in hell first. But torture of Mary was a different matter.

“Just as you say,” he answered quietly.

“Excellent!” the commandant said. “We will leave you this specimen for experimental purposes. You will find their reaction to pain most amusing. Loogo will instruct you in the use of the appliances—”

Without waiting for our agreement, Loogo moved to a queer set of headphones near the Jovian’s head. He applied them to the helpless creature’s ears, then stepped back and threw a switch. A high-pitched drone filled the room. The Jovian’s eyes closed and his facial muscles writhed in unholy pain. The sound was exquisite torture to him!

It might be compared to the torture a person would suffer who is particularly sensitive to a high frequency tone—such as a fingernail scratching on glass—if he were subjected to the tone amplified a thousand times. A terrestrial, under the same conditions, would lose his sanity almost at once.

The commandant was watching the twisting face of the Jovian with evident pleasure. His thoughts were

speculative. “It’s too bad we could not contrive a weapon to use that tone—the effect is so pleasing. However, you have a month in which to accomplish your task—a month of your time. Let me suggest that you succeed, for if you don’t, you will have the privilege of watching the female dissected—”

The devils! They knew—probably from my mind—how much she meant to us, and the limits we would go to protect her. They seemed to take an unholy delight in our mental torture.

They left us, all of them, trooping out in single file. Gilbert leaped to the switch and cut the power. The scratching sound died away; and there was an infinite gratitude in the Jovian’s eyes when they slowly opened.

His thoughts came to us dimly—dimness caused by pain.

“I am grateful, Earthmen—sometimes I think that tone will become more than I can stand. These Lubians are ingenious in their way.”

**I** GAPPED at him open mouthed—there had not been a single note of bitterness in the Jovian’s tired thoughts! How long he had been a prisoner was hard to guess. How long he had suffered torture was beyond imagination. And still he had not the slightest desire for vengeance!

“It must seem strange to you,” he said in answer to my unspoken question, “—our lack of animosity toward these invaders. But the reason is simple. We are the oldest race of the Solar System—older than your race by millions of years. Long ago we realized the futility and the ultimate disaster of fighting. All thought of it has been bred out of our minds.

“We have accomplished much in the plane of pure thought. Telepathically, we can project ourselves anywhere in the universe, and in that manner have watched your civilization grow with a great deal of interest. We have solved the problems of life, the beginning and the end. The future and the past are as plain to us as the present.

“So far have we advanced from the primitive, that the particular phase of our minds that was once devoted to combative reasoning has long been atrophied. We are helpless to do more

than protect ourselves. We cannot think of a single weapon to destroy life—even though our own lives are the price of our inability. A pitiful, an unbelievable condition, I grant you. We could but wait your coming in hope that you would save us. . . .”

His thoughts faded out in pure exhaustion. He might have fallen asleep. An utter silence gripped us—the three terrestrials whom he had asked to help him.

There was absurdity in the Jovian's predicament. But you can't laugh at a thing so infinitely beautiful and fine that it hurts your throat to think about it. If all the peoples of all the worlds were like this Jovian, this universe would be a paradise. They represented all the good of which a race could ever be capable—the ultimate toward which any race could strive.

“I think we can help,” Seabrook said softly. “I pray to God that we can. But now Allen, Mary and Mike, we have much to do. First, remember this. Choose a scene to visualize, so that you may conceal your thoughts from the Lubians. You will find, that with practice, you will be able to think behind the scene you transmit.

“Allen, come, we have so little time. Mary, you and Mike must remain here. They insisted on it as a guarantee against our escape. You will be permitted to come to the space ship one at a time every day or so to replenish your space suits. For the moment, then, goodby—have faith in me. . . .”

**GILBERT** shouldered the unit after clasping my hand and Mary's and they left us. Mary stood looking after them for a long moment, her thought-stream suddenly a confusion of emotion. What I was thinking must have reached her, for she turned to me, her eyes bright with moisture and her mouth trying to smile.

“Good, Mike,” she said. “I'm proud that you think that of me—I'll do my best to deserve it.” And suddenly she was crying against my shoulder.

I held her clumsily, feeling all the exquisite embarrassment caused by knowing she had intercepted my thoughts. I would no more have told her that I loved her than I would have

spat upon an altar. But unconsciously I had thought it and she had understood. . . .

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## CHAPTER IV

### *Behind the Ol' Swimming Hole*

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**T**HOSE first three weeks, for Mary and me, were spent almost alone. Time hung with the weight of centuries upon our hands. It was my self-appointed task to keep her thoughts occupied, for around us was always that certain knowledge that very soon we would die.

We found some amusement in following Seabrook's orders about the mental picture to occupy our minds. For mine I had chosen a swimming hole I had known as a boy. In time, it became so real that I could see every detail. The trees, the mud, the water, the sun on my bare hide, the chaw-beef and the lickings—they were all there.

Mary told me her thought was of shopping in New York. She said she would go into store after store buying endless new gowns that she would not wear more than once before discarding. She said she spent thousands and filled wardrobe after wardrobe, a thing I think every woman would like to do.

We saw little of Seabrook and Gilbert, and then only on our occasional visits to the ship.

Gilbert had become horribly thin and worn in three weeks. Overwork must have caused the most of it—though something else bothered him too. Afterward, when I found out what it was, I was amazed that he could work at all.

The weapon they were building was beyond my layman mind. To me it was simply a mass of electrical machinery, tremendous in size. Seabrook told me that it was a disintegrating ray, capable of destroying the Jovian cities.

Knowing that we were to die inevitably, I could not understand Seabrook's willingness to destroy the Jovians simply to give us a few more hours of life.



"Why," I asked bitterly, "can't we turn the Niter-guns on ourselves and put an end to it now?"

Seabrook answered me tiredly and patiently. "That's like you, Mike. But be patient—and please have faith in me."

Yes, there were times when I doubted him. I was too stupid to notice that the ship had been repaired and was ready for flight at a moment's notice.

Mary and I were allowed a certain amount of freedom during those last few weeks. We spent them wandering about the city. Millions of Lubians were pouring in from outlying districts, bringing with them all manner of strange weapons.

They had come to be in on the great conquest!

Soon the death-ray Seabrook was building would disintegrate those huge domed cities of the Jovians, which had thus far withstood every form of weapon the Lubians had been able to devise. And the Jovians would fall under the ray, letting in the Nitrogen Tetroxide gas and the hordes of Lubians who would slaughter them like sheep.

And when they died, we, too, would follow!

**T**HE morning before the time set for the completion of the weapon, Mary and I were summoned to the audience chamber. The three commandants were there, as well as Seabrook and Gilbert and a dozen or more of the Lubian lesser officers.

Gilbert's face was horrible to see. It had grown whiter and thinner with the weeks until now it was little more than a skull. Some desperate knowledge was eating at his brain. But in spite of the thin paleness there was a cold desperation in his eyes, a firm resolve.

Seabrook's thought-stream said, "The weapon is completed—or rather, it lacks but a few moment's work before it will function. The attack is scheduled in three hours."

The weapon completed! Then this was the end.

Mary said, "Father, you can't! You can't kill the Jovians—there's no reason to. We four will die anyway. The least we could do would be save the

Jovians—"

"Ah, but your father is more clever than you think." It was the commandant, sly and purring. "He has forced us to agree to let Gilbert, Mike and yourself go free before he will complete the weapon. We have agreed, rather than waste time making him change his mind—"

"No!" Mary cried. "Father, you can't! Let them torture us—it is only we three against the whole Jovian civilization."

I felt a little sick. Here, then, was the reason Seabrook had agreed to destroy the Jovians—so that we three could live!

I said: "Nothing doing. We don't go—that ray will rot before it ever fires—"

"Please. Please," Seabrook cut in. "This is my wish—you three must go back to the earth. The profit of our coming here will be lost if you don't return—"

"Enough of this!" the commandant roared. "The thing is settled. You three have no choice—go to your ship at once!"

The Lubian officers closed in around Mary, Gilbert and myself in a tight circle. Gilbert stopped them suddenly. "Wait!" he cried. "These two may go, but not I. You'll never get that weapon to fire without me—I have attended to that!"

"What do you mean?"

"I fixed it so it wouldn't fire. Even Seabrook doesn't know what I have done."

The room was suddenly silent. The Lubians were trying to probe Gilbert's brain to intercept his thoughts. But every moment in which he was not speaking, his brain was filled with a monotonous confusion of scientific formulae, visualized by him to prevent them reading his mind and gleaning his secret.

Suddenly, the commandant exploded. "The female! Take her, show these Earthmen we will not stand for trifling!"

Gilbert choked. "I'll never tell you, if you touch her!"

Hell might have erupted in another moment, had not Seabrook cut in with his steady thought-stream.

"GIVE me a moment with Mike. I'll guarantee these three will leave and the weapon will fire. Three minutes is all I ask. Torture would take hours—"

The Lubians hesitated, looked to the commandant for orders. He was undecided for a long moment. Finally, he snapped, "Three minutes, then. No longer!"

The Lubians split into an aisle from me to Seabrook. I went to him wondering what he could want of me. He ordered me to lift him and carry him into a small ante-room. The panel slid shut behind us, and then we were alone.

Seabrook's thoughts came to me softly, for he was infinitely tired. "Mike, I have only a few things to say. You're the one who can save Gilbert and Mary. You must take them with you by force. Do you understand?"

"But the Jovians—you can't, you mustn't kill them. . . ."

"Mike, I've asked you to believe me. I'm doing what I think best. You promised me to take care of Mary—remember that day in my office? I said I could trust you, and I know I can. You cannot fail me now."

He was right, I had promised. And I remembered how much that promise had meant to me when I gave it. But I hadn't known, then, it would be so hard.

I lifted the unit and carried it back to the audience chamber.

"Well?" the commandant demanded impatiently. "What is your decision? Will Gilbert stay?"

"Let me talk to him," I said.

They shoved Gilbert toward me, and I moved close to him thinking hard about the swimming hole so he would not know my plan.

There was a question in his eyes, a sudden suspicion. But before he could draw away, I drove my left fist hard against his stomach. The space-suit absorbed most of the blow, but it was enough to bend him over.

Then I brought my fist down on the back of his neck, snapping his head against the back of his helmet. He dropped without a sound.

Mary's frightened scream pounded my brain. "Mike! Stop!"

She dropped beside Gilbert, her face white and twisting. When she looked at me there was a strange, vivid anger flaming in her eyes.

"You beast!" she choked. "Why? Why?"

Seabrook spoke to the commandant. "The machine will fire—Gilbert lied. Let them go."

I caught Mary's shoulder and lifted her up. "We're going to the ship, Mary. Come on."

Suddenly she was transformed into a fighting fury. She leaped up and pounded me with her small fists. "We're not! I won't go—I'd rather die a hundred times—!"

There was nothing to do but take her by force. And I did, holding her kicking and squirming under my arm, sick because I had to act against the will of this girl who was sacred to me.

IT did not occur to me that it was strange the Lubian who carried Gilbert and escorted us to our ship was not Loogo, who had been detailed to watch us during our stay. I should have noticed, for I had grown to hate that ugly face and staring eyes with a burning intensity. But my mind was filled with too many things just then.

I forced Mary down on one of the bunks in the control room and tied her there—never, for even a moment, had she stopped fighting. I put Gilbert's unconscious form on another. The Lubians had not entered the ship, but had remained outside, holding their guns on us so I could do nothing but take off.

I slammed the port in their faces, then went to the control room. There was a long moment that I sat at the controls, still undecided, still hating desperately to leave Seabrook.

He must have been following me in all my movements, for I heard his thought-stream urging me on.

"Take off quickly, Mike. You must hurry, or everything I have planned will come to nothing. Goodby, lad—and remember your promise—good luck to all of you. . . ."

There was a swimming haze in front of my eyes. A horrible lump blocked my throat, drew it taut and aching. I cut in the degravitator and started the

engines unconsciously. Then I jammed down on the engine feed, not caring if the rocket blast burned half of the Lubian population, and sent the ship roaring into the sky.

There was one thought I could not shake. Seabrook had sacrificed himself and the Jovians that we three might live!

The more I thought of it, the more difficult it became to hold the ship on its course. But I think I would have made it, had it not been for Mary's voice, low and shaky, cutting with the intensity of its passion.

"You coward!" she said. "You filthy, rotten coward. You're leaving them all to die, so you can live. Mike Harrigan, you're not fit to live—"

## CHAPTER V

### *Thunder Over Jupiter*

**I** COULDN'T go on after that—not after Mary, who meant so much, had called me that. I stopped the ship and let it hang weightless on the degravitators.

Suddenly, a course was clear to me—I could fulfill my promise to Seabrook and still save the Jovians. I would bomb the death ray!

I say, I thought this—and that all but finished me.

The ship rocked suddenly with the movement of a great weight. A new thought-stream paralyzed me.

"You will not bomb that weapon—turn around and you'll understand why!"

I spun to see the squat figure of Loogo standing in the doorway to the after cabins! Behind him was his lieutenant!

Both of them were holding deadly handguns trained on my head.

I gaped at them, voiceless and thoughtless in astonishment. Loogo spoke again.

"Continue the flight. We must remain aloft until Seabrook shows my countrymen how to fire the weapon. Obey me, or die. I am perfectly capable of operating this ship."

I turned numbly back to the con-

trols, trying desperately to think, and started the ship upward again. Loogo seemed to enjoy the situation, he could not help bragging.

"You must think we are fools, if you believed we would let you go free. Your world is the next we will conquer. With this ship as a pattern and the death ray as a weapon we will be invincible. We will rule the universe."

What little intelligence I might have had, seeped back to me as his voice rattled on. I had sense enough to visualize the swimming hole to hide my thoughts as a plan took form in my mind. A wild, crazy plan that left us but one chance in ten of living—but it was worth a try.

First, you must understand that our field of gravitation was independent of that of Jupiter. The anti-gravitational field in the hull neutralized the planet's pull. The ship's own gravitational field, working through the deck plates, gave us our normal weight, to which we were accustomed, but it had to be quite the contrary in the case of the Lubians—they were *not* accustomed to it.

There was my answer—I cut both fields of gravitation!

It had the same effect as if I had *instantly* tipped the ship. The two Lubians spilled backward through the door into the stern of the ship!

The danger lay in the tremendous weight of the Lubians suddenly crashing the full length of the ship. Would they break through the hull? Would they damage the engines beyond repair, to leave us at the mercy of Jupiter's tremendous pull?

They struck the after bulkheads with a staggering force. The ship lurched to a stop, hung there, her beams fairly screaming with the terrific strain.

The engines stopped and suddenly we were pitching downward!

I jerked the Niter sub-rifle from its boot beside the controls, spun in my bucket seat, hanging in the safety straps. The Lubians were moving sluggishly—but they were moving, pointing their guns at me.

**I** PRESSED the trigger of the sub-rifle. It quivered, sending a stream of highly explosive shells into the Lubians. And none too soon.

A flash of blue light came from the center of their twisting arms and legs. Something exploded against the side of my space suit with tremendous force.

Blackness began closing around my eyes. But the sub-rifle kept spitting even after the strength had left my fingers, blasting those two Lubians into a hundred pieces.

After the gun fell from my hands, I forced myself to turn and cut in again the anti-gravitational field of the ship's hull.

That lever seemed to need the strength of three men to pull—I fought it through sweating eternities, while the ship plummeted toward the rapidly nearing surface.

Finally, it gave and we were free of that terrible sucking force that would have killed us in another moment.

But there was still the tremendous speed. It would carry us on with its own momentum, unless I could bring the ship to a plane horizontal to the planet's surface.

Somehow, I managed it—though I shall never know how. But I did, for when I regained consciousness some time later, it was to see Gilbert at the controls sending the ship upward again.

He saw that I had come too, said, "Good work, Mike," and his voice was utterly weary. "You got us out of a bad mess."

I realized, then, that I was lying on a bunk. He had taken my space suit off and had bandaged my side. That he had repaired the damage done to the stern was evident by the fact that I could hear the motors roaring.

"Yes," he said. "The damage wasn't too bad. I fixed it and dumped your two friends through the air-lock. Now you take it easy. I owe you and Doctor Seabrook an apology for not obeying orders—I deserved the slugging you gave me. Knowing from the beginning what Seabrook intended, drove me nearly insane. You see, I thought so very much of him—"

The thought of Seabrook brought me back to my senses. It meant the death-ray would soon be working—that the Jovians would soon be dying like flies!

"Stop!" I roared, pushing myself to my feet. "We've got to go back—we've got to bomb that death-ray!"

"No," Gilbert answered tightly.

Something inside of me snapped. "Damn you!" I cursed him. "Get away from those controls. If you haven't the guts to do it, I have—"

But he paid no attention to me as I crawled toward him. He was intent on the instrument board, watching the moving dials.

In a few moments I would reach him. I would drag him from those controls, if I had to kill him to do it. I hitched myself across the deck, literally roaring curses at his hunched shoulders.

**J**UST before my hands touched him, he moved the controls and brought the ship to a course that was parallel to the planet's surface. He spun to me, standing up, and his face was a stiff, white mask.

"We're clear of the atmosphere," he said hoarsely. "Now come to the screen and watch."

Something in his voice made me obey him—something in the utterly tragic cast of his face. The visa-screen came to life as he brought out the image of the death-ray in the city so far below us.

The hordes of Lubians were gathered around it in teeming activity. Obviously, they were about to fire. Near the gun, I could see Seabrook's unit.

And then the Lubians fell back, leaving a cleared space around the weapon. Only the yellow-uniformed commandant stood near it; his face smug in the strange, red light of the nitrogen tetroxide atmosphere.

"Gilbert," I pleaded. "We've got to smash that thing. We can't let them kill the Jovians—we can't—"

The abrupt pressure of his fingers on my arm stopped me. "Wait," he said fiercely. "Watch!"

The commandant of the Lubians waddled over to the great switch, paused there for a moment, evidently enjoying these last few moments before they would launch the attack that would mean victory.

Then his hand dropped—dragged down the switch!

The huge weapon came suddenly to

life. As it gathered power, a confusion of strange lights flashed back and forth through its intricate workings, growing brighter every second.

A blinding flash leaped along the barrel. Suddenly, our screen was nothing but a cloud-obscured chaos!

"God!" I stammered. "It—it blew up!"

Gilbert did not answer until he had snapped the switch that cut out the screen and turned away. His face, then, was strangely quiet—as though a great burden had been lifted from his shoulders.

He walked to the bunk on the far side of the control room, to Mary Seabrook's side. Her shoulders were shaking with stifled sobs. Gilbert touched her tenderly.

"It's all over, Mary," he breathed. "Just as he planned. He went out swiftly, cleanly. The way he wanted to go. God will be kind to him, I know—"

Mary turned to him, put her head to his shoulder and sobbed. In that moment, I understood that these two had been destined for each other from the beginning of time. I had been a blind fool not to have seen it before.

He led her away, back to her cabin. But not before she had turned to me and said, "I'm sorry, Mike—those things I said. I know you did what was right—what father told you to do. Try and forgive me—"

**GILBERT** came back in a few moments and put his hand on my shoulder. "Yes," he said tiredly. "He

fixed it so it would explode. But he did more than that—he destroyed the entire Lubian population. . . ."

"Not all of them," I corrected. "He couldn't have killed them all. Just a few—those around the machine—"

"No. He killed them all. That weapon was never built to disintegrate—Seabrook let them think that so they would allow him to build it. Rather, it performed exactly the opposite function. That of a reducing ray.

"You see, the atmosphere of the Lubians was nitrogen tetroxide. And that gas is what we call 'unstable.' By that I mean that the atoms of nitrogen and oxygen in each molecule of the gas are not closely united. The same condition exists in such explosives as gunpowder and gasoline vapor.

"The reducing ray created an electrical field that split two of the loosely united atoms of oxygen away from each molecule of the gas. The molecular change was instantaneous, causing a terrific explosion of all the gas. And this change is the same in principal as the one that takes place in the explosion of gunpowder and gasoline vapors. Simply put, he exploded the atmosphere of the Lubians—not a single one of them could be left alive by any quirk of fate.

"The Jovians were not harmed, for they did not breathe the gas and were protected from the explosion in their domed cities. Seabrook saved them, saved us, and probably the universe from the scourge of the Lubians—and he was more than willing to give his life to do it. . . ."



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# THE STORY BEHIND THE STORY

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**T**ODAY'S headlines serve as the most potential source of inspiration for the science fiction writers of tomorrow! And we can prove it.

For example, it was the glamour associated with "Bring 'Em Back Alive" Frank Buck that inspired the Gerry Carlyle series by Arthur K. Barnes. Mr. Barnes thought it would be intriguing to write about the various strange forms of life existing on distant planets. And he was right—Gerry Carlyle, the female huntress who roams the nine worlds collecting alien creatures for the London Interplanetary Zoo, proved a big hit with our readers.

A few months later Henry Kuttner decided to chronicle the exciting experiences of the movie-makers of tomorrow. Thus the Hollywood-on-the-Moon series was born.

You've probably followed the rollicking exploits of the Judge Hardy family in the films. Wait a few issues and one of our popular authors will introduce you to the Abbott family of the future. You'll be fascinated by the story of one man's family and the experiences encountered in a novel spaceship-trailer. Watch for the first of this series in an early issue.

And so it goes. Science fiction writers have but to saturate themselves with the world around us and they will be able to write of imaginary worlds.

## THE STORY BEHIND THE STORY

### THE LINDBERGH PUMP

**MEN MUST DIE**, by Ward Hawkins, introduces a writer new to the pages of **THRILLING WONDER STORIES**. Mr. Hawkins is well known for his adventure and mystery tales in numerous other magazines, and we are certain that in science fiction he is due for equal popularity.

The laboratory experiments of Dr. Alexis Carrel in collaboration with Col. Charles A. Lindbergh have been widely reported everywhere. We've been waiting for someone to use the Lindbergh perfusion pump as the basis for a pseudo-scientific tale, and here's a case where a writer brand-new in the field has put one over on the old-timers. We thought you'd like to have the lowdown on Mr. Hawkins' biography as well as on the plot, so here's the info:

A letter from an editor requesting a "short biographical sketch" never fails to put me in a perfect dither. The truth is, I have so darned little to write about—no achievements, no great adventures. Up to this point, I have usually managed to make it sound good by distorting the facts a wee bit, and padding out with amusing incident an otherwise fleshless skeleton. But it seems that some of my little, shall we say extravagances, have kicked back on me—from this point on I fictionalize only my work.

Born the son of a Civil Engineer, it was only natural that when I was big enough to say I was old enough I followed the engineering game. But after a few years of dragging a chain over most of the Northwest it occurred to me that my destiny should be something more than looking through a transit, and college was the next step.

My intentions were the best, though I think there are certain Deans of Men who think otherwise. At least we didn't see eye to eye on several issues. As it turned out, the colleges (there were two of them) weren't big enough to hold both the Deans and myself,

and rather than establish a precedent, I left. Thence back to engineering, and thence to writing.

Perhaps the one thing that remained solid from the beginning is an ardent love of science fiction. So then it's only natural that I should take a swing at it. The story **MEN MUST DIE** is my first effort in that direction—and if anyone finds something they want to fight about, I'll be as hard to find as a wholly new story about Jupiter. . . .