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EDITORS

RAY PALMER

BEA MAHAFFEY

ART DIRECTOR

ALFRED BERNARD

*Cover painting by Mel Hunter and Malcolm H. Smith, illustrating
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*Illustrations by Donald Mills, Lawrence, John Grossman, Joseph R.
Eberle, Edd Cartier, Virgil Finlay*

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NOT IN THE BOOKS

By Gene L. Henderson

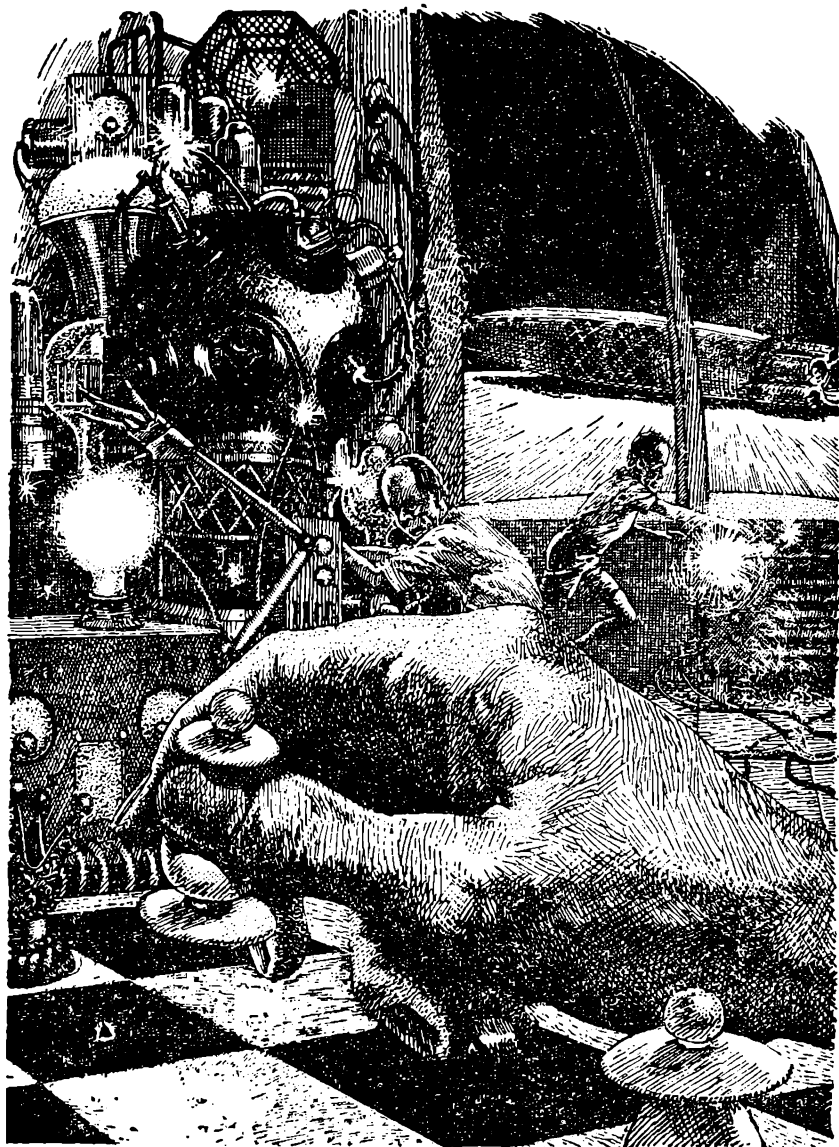
Illustrated by Lawrence

War has become a science. No longer can man fight with his muscles. It is brain, today, that counts entirely in the conduct of war. The products of that brainwork have reached such a high degree of mechanization and mathematical precision, that "tactics" are no longer a matter of individual military genius, but of mechanical perfection. The guesswork has been removed. The ultimate is perfect stalemate. Victory has become synonymous with impossibility. How, then, can a war be won? What would you do if you were the general staff facing the problem of bringing the conflict to an end?

AT THE sound of the buzzer, there was a momentary lull in conversation and high brass allowed a look of irritation to show on their faces that battle reports were still allowed to interrupt checkers, chess, and other games of amusement. An enterprising spider had successfully passed all safeguards to the World Council Planning Room several days previously and had spun his

webs over tactical textbooks, intelligence reports on enemy forces, and drafting instruments.

An orderly appeared with a slip of paper in his hand and shifted uneasily from foot to foot as he was ignored. Finally Chet Webley, a sudden grin lighting up his freckled and youthful face, left President Simpson and went to the man, scarcely younger than him. The orderly reported, eyes



He reached a hand for the pawn that would take the machine's queen.

straying fascinated to the star on Chet's collar. "Final report on the Mars battle, sir."

A five-star Admiral had just called "Checkmate" to his opponent and shoved back triumphantly. He called out, "How badly did they get whipped this time, Webley?"

"Almost one-hundred percent, Admiral. The Sector Commander reports a final attempt at defense is being set up close to Pluto. He wants a new battle plan."

"Where did our last one come from?" someone asked with an attempt at interest.

"Mendez, a sheepherder from Montana," said Chet promptly.

"Any suggestions as to whom should dash off our next battle plan?" asked the President.

Chet thought for a moment. "Well, I've just read Senator Gluber's recommendation on how each state should be taxed for the total amount of sunshine they receive during the year. I recommend him."

An elderly General snorted contemptuously. "Isn't he that banjo-playing hillbilly that was just elected? He couldn't tell a spaceship from a cigarettelighter."

"Good," said the President, receiving a confirming nod from Chet. "I believe we're all agreed then, that he's our man."

He waited for sounds of protest or opposition but most of the Staff had either fallen asleep or

were nodding drowsily.

* * * *

The two figures were only darker shadows in the already dark room. One of them groped from side to side on the wall, looking for the door.

"Just two feet further to your right," a mocking voice called out.

Both men stiffened, not making a move or sound. A short laugh finally broke the silence, followed by a soft but blinding light that flooded the room. Chet blinked rapidly and saw a lone figure seated before a plain desk. His companion, Sid, checked a gasp of amazement too late as both of them recognized Tenno leader, Borj.

"The door," said Borj, motioning behind them. "Were you looking for it?"

"Let's quit stalling," retorted Chet roughly, shifting slightly to better feel the comforting pressure of the blaster at his hip. "Obviously you were expecting us."

"No, not you especially," protested the leather-skinned Borj with a smile. "Someone, yes. And naturally this would be your path."

Chet's brain had completely recovered and he scanned the room without appearing to do so. As far as he could determine, there were no peeholes or slots for weapons, the two doors in the underground room being the only means of access.

Careful as Chet had been, the alien noted his search. "We're the only ones here, either seen or unseen," the two Patrolmen were told.

"I'd like to believe that," snapped Sid unbelievably.

"You may," assured the No. 1 man of the enemy forces that had slowly been infiltrating into the Solar system. "We know every move you could logically make and have prepared for them."

"Not you, your machines," corrected Chet. He had decided on direct action regardless of the consequences to himself and Sid. Killing Borj would be almost as good as their original mission to destroy the Tenno Empire nerve center, a gigantic electronic brain.

Borj laughed. "Centuries ago you might have been correct but our machines now merely do the thinking we are entirely capable of if necessary."

He still smiled as Chet drew his blaster without warning and pressed the stud. Nothing appeared from the muzzle, but a flat area, several feet from Borj and completely enclosing him, instantly glowed with energy. Baffled, Chet allowed the muzzle to drop towards the floor.

"That action too was probable," he was told. "By now you Earthmen should realize the inferiority of your science. The field surrounding me is very elementary, even our children play with

it for amusement."

Chet holstered his blaster. "Okay, you've got us. You know why we came so go ahead and finish it."

Borj unsuccessfully smothered a yawn. "Later," he said disinterestedly. "Go ahead, use the door you were searching for. A little more effort might succeed in convincing you how foolish your entire planet is and could even give us a trifle more amusement, although I doubt it."

A mental picture of Earth scientists studying the efforts of mice to solve various maze patterns flashed into Chet's mind. His face reddened slightly but he grasped Sid's arm.

"Let's go," he ordered.

The two opened the door and ran down a sloping passageway that ended in another room. Here there were three large and well lighted tunnels leading upward and still another smaller hole, dark, but light from the room indicated that it led to an even lower level. Sid hesitated, then turned to Chet.

"Get down on your stomach," ordered the latter. They dropped to the dirt floor and Chet directed, "Follow me."

He wriggled toward the dark entrance and promptly drew a protest from Sid. "That one leads down, we may as well try to get out of here. Besides, why this waste of time, they're not likely

to hurt us after letting us go."

"This might throw them off," explained Chet, standing up as he reached the entrance. "That snake act just now was to miss any possible knee-high detection devices."

They hurried down the still sloping tunnel, slowed only by the darkness. "What a spot to fall into a deep hole," muttered Sid.

Chet's scalp tingled at the thought. They rounded a bend in the tunnel. "Look!" he called out. "A light up ahead." They approached cautiously and were puzzled to see that it was radiance from the walls and that the tunnel had widened into a room. At the far end was a heavy wooden door with no handle but eight studs imbedded in it.

"Some sort of an electrical lock," Chet finally theorized after examining it. "No telling what the combination is."

"You might even set off an alarm by hitting the wrong one," advanced Sid pessimistically.

Chet thought for a moment. It was a possibility. Then he shook his head. "I doubt it and it's worth a try anyway. We can't go back and no telling who might be along if we stay here."

They first tried each single stud with no success, then started working combinations of pairs and finally triples. After an hour, pausing only to listen anxiously in the direction from which they

had come, Chet finally sat down wearily.

"It's got me," he admitted.

Sid reached over and angrily pushed all the studs. There was a loud click and the door moved slightly as an unseen latch released itself. Both men stared at it, surprised and amazed.

"You did it!" exclaimed Chet, springing to his feet. He pulled the door open and stood there, lower jaw hanging in amazement. The door had been covering only a dirt wall!

"Your reaction time is very low," commented a familiar voice. They swung around to see Borj casually leaning against the side of a seemingly dirt door that had swung open behind them.

Chet swept his blaster up again and then, as memory flooded back, holstered it.

Borj laughed. "Very commendable," he said. "At least your memory processes seem adequate after a fashion." Chet found himself flushing, rankled by the other's inference that they were mere specimens to him.

"You should've tried it again anyway, you know," chided Borj. "The screen wasn't on and you could've killed me."

His mocking laugh rang out as energy flared along the screen, being sprayed by a thoroughly aroused Chet. Finally the Earthman realized the futility of his defiance and desisted.

Borj turned and spoke rapidly back into the passageway in what was evidently their native language. He turned to the two Patrolmen, his face set in cruel lines. "Enough of playing. As fairly intelligent beings, you realized before the start of your venture the penalty for failure."

A squad of the leather-skinned aliens came from behind him, tube-like weapons held ready. Sid started to draw his but Chet commanded, "Drop it, Sid. Might as well last as long as we can."

Allowed full use of their arms and legs, both men were marched upward. All tunnels appeared to emanate from a common center and Borj finally led them to an immense cavern hollowed in the planet's rock. In the center was a gleaming maze of machinery of glass and metal, suspended by an intricate system of shock absorbers. Even the walls themselves were lined with a soft, spongy-like material that deadened every sound so that it was difficult to hear conversation only feet away.

"Our master brain," said Borj proudly, "Connected with minor ones throughout the base and even in space by radiation waves, the correct solution to every type of problem is instantly available. The more intelligent our enemies, the easier their defeat."

Chet stared at spider-like webs of cables that trailed from the sides of the cavern and connected

into the monster brain. The other's words echoed through his brain, "*the more intelligent our enemies. . .*" He watched technicians carefully stepping around banks of tubes that alternately glowed and died out as incoming data fed into them and was disposed of. He looked over at Borj who sneered sardonically.

"I suppose you are thinking how simple it would be to best us if you could destroy the machinery below," he said, gesturing casually at the brain. "You'd find it almost impossible but, even if successful, as I've said before we could still do practically as well."

They were led away from the nerve-center and into an elevator that shot them to the surface of Tenno. Their way led past batteries of weapons, each turret manned only by a single soldier and connected to the underground nerve system. Chet mused on the consternation a successful and sudden attack might cause. He felt sure that Borj was telling the truth that his people would be able to survive such a disaster but there was bound to be a time lapse until human minds could grasp the problems their mechanical slave brain had been solving for them.

"Why do your people resist us?" asked Borj, curiosity softening the normal harsh lines on his face.

"Because we'll fight anyone to

stay free."

"Free from what? Our science could add immeasurably to your way of life. You would, of course, contribute a small number of technicians and materials to us but the total cost would be far less than war has been."

"We'll fight as long as there's one of us left," insisted Chet stubbornly.

"For what gain?" argued Borj. He glanced at the Earthman's bars. "A captain now. By the time you're an old man and too old to enjoy life, you might possibly have become a General. Not now of course."

Before Chet could retort, they were interrupted by a group of officers who were led to Borj and engaged him in excited conversation. The alien leader scowled once, then laughed with satisfaction. They went into a plainly furnished office, banks of televisors and computers lining its walls. Judging by the glimpses he was able to get, Chet saw that they led to various sections of the enemy planet and even to battle fleets in space. One that interested Borj showed the conclusion of an immense space battle.

Borj had lost interest in his prisoners and Chet stared at his broad back, wondering if the screen were still present. Both Earthmen had been allowed to retain their weapons by the confident aliens and this might be

their opportunity to catch Borj unawares. He finally decided that there were probably electronic scanners connected to the master brain that interpreted all their actions and protected the leader in event of any gesture that could conceivably be hostile.

Finally the conference was over and Borj indicated surprise that they were still there. He summoned the squad leader and gave rapid instructions. As they were about to be led away, Chet asked, "What do you plan on doing with us?"

"I've ordered you executed immediately," replied Borj impersonally, looking through a sheaf of papers he had picked up.

"Why the haste?" asked Chet, hiding the dismay the calloused statement had caused him. Judging by Sid's rapid gulps, he hadn't been so successful.

"You're of no use to us alive."

"Oh," said Chet, pretending sudden enlightenment. "Alive we might prove too much of a problem. I thought your air of superiority was a pretense."

The other frowned, then a slight smile curled his lips. "Elementary," he said. "A type of psychology I would expect from a child endeavoring to escape punishment. Do you think for a moment that you could out-think either our electronic brains or us?"

"I think so," asserted Chet.

There was a short period of

silence while Borj attempted to interpret Chet's statement. The Earthman saw, to his relief, that growing interest spread over his enemy's face. "In what way?" the alien finally inquired.

"What about a game of chess played directly with your supposedly infallible machine?" suggested Chet. "You're familiar with the game no doubt."

"Oh yes, a very commendable means for utilizing and developing one's logic and sense of deduction. But, it will be of interest to observe your reaction when you realize that even our creations of minerals are superior to you."

"That remains to be proven," said Chet defiantly.

"I'll have a historian familiar with all the Earth rules set up a computer immediately and connect it to the master brain," said Borj. He spoke rapidly into a small speaker.

"Wait a minute," objected Chet. "What happens when I beat your brain?"

"Happens? The very idea is unthinkable as well as impossible."

Chet was insistent. "That's what you think anyway. But supposing I do beat it?"

Borj laughed scornfully. Several technicians who had come in response to his summons grinned when their leader interpreted Chet's question. Finally the alien asked, amused,

"What do you want?"

"Freedom."

"Very well," came the answer, in mock seriousness as the others in the room grinned. "You shall have it." A thick, squat computer was wheeled in and technicians immediately began making adjustments according to the direction of one, evidently the historian.

"On no," objected Chet. "What assurance do we have that you'd give us our freedom?"

Borj seemed genuinely surprised. "You mean our word isn't sufficient?"

"Not for me."

The other frowned heavily. "You're almost too impudent. Very well, what assurance do you desire?"

"Our space cruiser where we can get to it quickly."

"Granted. Only I warn you, any trick to gain access to it will prove to no avail. You'll have to defeat the brain fairly."

"I can do it."

Sid had been showing more and more anxiety. "I hope you know what you're doing," he whispered.

"I do," said Chet in low tones. "Just stand by to use your blaster and sprint for the ship if they try to stop us." Both men were aware of the fact that the ship represented the latest Earth science had been able to devise and had already demonstrated its ability to outspeed the enemy. Only the possibility that they could de-

stroy the alien nerve center had prompted the Earth Council to allow the new drive to be placed where its secret might be captured by the enemy. It was a calculated risk that had misfired — thus far.

Finally the calculator was pronounced ready for the game and the Earth spaceship moved to the concrete covered open space immediately outside the office.

During long space flights early in his patrol career, Chet had played numerous games of chess and was considered somewhat an expert by those who knew him. The first few moves by both and he and the machine were with pawns only. Then, with lightening speed, the machine moved to the attack and Chet found himself without one of his knights. Borj beamed with satisfaction and the Earthman realized, with dismay, that the machine had initiative as well as the ability to counter his moves.

After this one disastrous move, Chet grew calm and set up a defense the machine was unable to crack although it checked him several times. It finally attacked until his queen was in such a position that the sacrifice of the machine's queen would enable one of its knights to checkmate him in an additional two moves.

Borj watched his every expression intently and Chet hid his growing excitement and elation

by simulating a weak smile. He had now reached the turning point in his plan. Either the next few moves would see them speeding towards Earth or a quick execution would be in order. He delayed, then made his expected move. The machine instantly took his remaining knight with its queen. This left the queen at the mercy of one of Chet's two remaining pawns.

The other pawn had been guarding one of his bishops, it itself being covered by the other one. This defense had remained static for some time, since moving any of the pieces would lay him open to immediate attack and a checkmate by the machine's bishops.

He reached a hand for the pawn that would take the machine's queen and leave Sid and himself but two moves from defeat and death. Instead, he changed his hand and abruptly moved the defending pawn on the other side of the board which left it at the mercy of a machine pawn and the entire side open to attack.

"No!" exclaimed Sid involuntarily.

The smile on Bori's face had frozen in amazement and the machine stilled its hitherto ceaseless chattering. A large red light on top began flashing a signal of defeat. Those in the room could dimly hear alarm bells from deep within the planet and cables to

the machine in the room began smoking as technicians jumped to break connections.

Several other minor machines broke into open flame, throwing the entire room into confusion.

"Come on," yelled Chet, "let's go!"

No one opposed their dash to the ship although a guard at the air lock raised his tube. His body was instantly encased by crackling energy from Sid's blaster and he crumpled as the two Earthmen piled inside. Seconds later, they were in outer space with only a minor puncture in one compartment where a manually controlled space torpedo had finally reached them. There were growing signs of confusion below but Chet knew it would soon be controlled.

"We've got heavy stuff," Sid shouted. "Why don't we attack the central brain, now that we know where it's at?"

Chet shook his head. "Nope, we're better off by letting them repair it and getting back with what I've learned. This is the turning point in the war." He chuckled. "I'll bet that's a new experience for their machine, he's got the biggest and best headache any human or mechanical brain anywhere's ever had."

"What happened?" demanded Sid. "That was the most stupid move I've ever seen and the machine threw in the towel when it had you licked two different

ways."

"Remember when Borj said the more intelligent their enemies, the easier their defeat?" Sid nodded. "Well, I was fairly certain that when the technicians set up the machine, they'd not trouble to include moves that had no bearing on logical action. They assumed that every move I made would be done intelligently. When I didn't, the machine was utterly incapable of comprehending what had happened and the master brain couldn't provide the assistance demanded by the calculator playing the game. So, it went wild and temporarily threw their system out of kilter."

Sid shook his head admiringly. "The luck some people have by being stupid," he said. "But that still doesn't say how we're going to explain why we failed after penetrating to the brain itself."

"We didn't fail," differed Chet. "That's why it's necessary for the brain to continue functioning. We can apply the same principles I did at chess to our battle plans. We'll listen to the wildest arm-chair strategists and follow their plans instead of the logical ones our generals and admirals figure out. So far we've been losing but I doubt if the machine will ever be able to cope with some of the hindsight ideas I've heard back on Earth after a big battle."

Sid shook his head wonderingly. "What a way to win a war."