

THE ORIGINAL  
**SCIENCE  
FICTION**

JANUARY  
1958

**STORIES**

35¢

PDC

**THE WILD ONES**

by **Tom Godwin**

**DEATH  
WISH**

by  
**Nicholas  
G.  
Lordi**

A  
DOUBLE-ACTION  
MAGAZINE



# THE ORIGINAL SCIENCE FICTION

STORIES

35¢

Volume 8

Number 4

January, 1958

## NOVELETS

- THE WILD ONES ..... *Tom Godwin* 20  
They'd been welcome and needed once, but they'd served their purpose, and Earth wanted no more heroes on the frontier worlds. Not even men who'd kill in self-defense...
- THE BETTER EGG ..... *Dick Hetschel* 61  
"Harmonized eggs" huh? thought Norman Estes. Only he was an expert on eggs, and he knew that no chicken had laid these prodigies...
- DEATH WISH ..... *Nicholas G. Lordi* 84  
There was one thing that this strange being they called "Pincus" could not do for itself...

## SHORT STORIES

- PRIME COMMANDMENT (illustrated on cover) .....  
..... *Calvin M. Knox* 6  
The two groups agreed on so many things that it was fatal...
- DANGEROUS WEAPON ..... *Donald Franson* 110  
Any intelligent man would tremble at the thought of what might come were it to get out of control...

## FEATURE

- OH, THAT LOST SENSE OF WONDER! .... *Isaac Asimov* 103  
With thanks to Sir William Gilbert's "Yeoman of the Guard".

## DEPARTMENTS

- AUTHOR, AUTHOR! ..... 5  
A brief run-down on some of our contributors.
- THE EDITOR'S PAGE ..... *Robert A. W. Lowndes* 17  
It's a grand word, but what do we mean by "Freedom"?
- INSIDE SCIENCE FICTION ..... *Robert A. Madle* 104  
Reports and Reminiscences from the science fiction world.
- THE LAST WORD ..... *The Readers* 119
- READERS' PREFERENCE COUPON ..... 130  
Clip it out, fill it out, and send it in, if you haven't time for a letter!

Editor: ROBERT A. W. LOWNDES

MARIE A. PARK, Asso. Ed.

COVER BY EMSH

DOROTHY B. SEADOR, Asso. Ed.

Illustrations by Emsh, Freas, and Murphy

SCIENCE FICTION STORIES, January, 1958, published bi-monthly by COLUMBIA PUBLICATIONS, INC., 1 Appleton Street, Holyoke, Mass. Editorial and executive offices at 241 Church Street, New York 13, New York. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at Holyoke, Mass., under the act of March 3, 1879. Entire contents copyright 1957 by Columbia Publications, Inc. 35¢ per copy; yearly subscriptions \$2.10. Printed in the U. S. A.

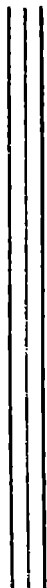
# Author, Author!

TOM GODWIN will probably be associated for years to come with a fine story that John W. Campbell used for the purposes of illustrating his ideas of science fiction in an article he wrote for *Saturday Review*, in 1956. You remember "The Cold Equations", and we hope you'll remember, "The Wild Ones".

★ DICK HETSCHEL and NICHOLAS G. LORDI have one thing in common, besides their debut in SFS, this issue. Before we'd read their stories, we had never heard of them before. But I think we'll be hearing more from them.

DONALD FRANSON could be found in the "Science Discussions" departments of leading science fiction magazines, back in 1937. His last appearance with us was in a short story on language reform, called, "Comes The Revolution".

★ CALVIN M. KNOX is a great admirer of Robert Silverberg, and seems to follow Bob around in the magazines. Latest news is that Knox expects to follow Silverberg into the pocket-book novels market,



# PRIME COMMANDMENT

by Calvin M. Knox

illustration by FREAS

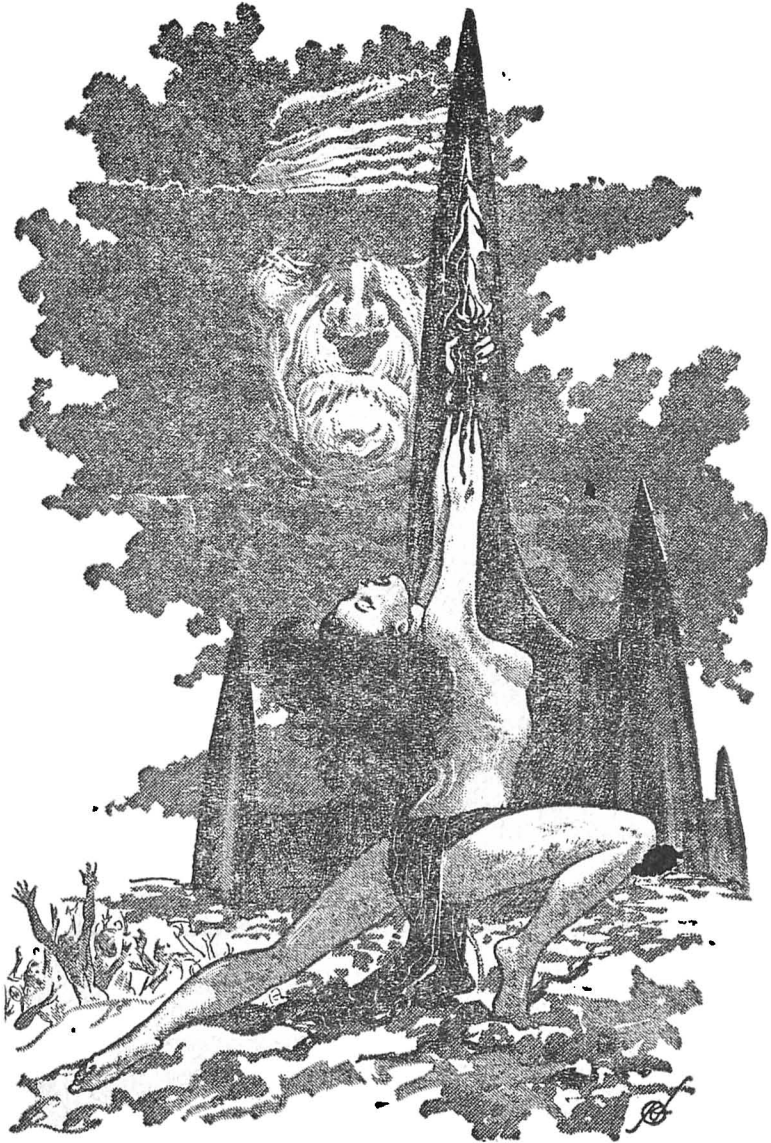
All laws ought to be obeyed; both parties agreed on that. But when obeying one would require violating the spirit of another, higher law, then the greater should rule the lesser. And both groups on this little world agreed here, too!

**I**F THE strangers had come to World on any night but The Night of No Moon, perhaps the tragedy could have been avoided. Even had the strangers come that night, if they had left their ship in a parking orbit, and landed on World by dropshaft, it might not have happened.

But the strangers arrived

on World on The Night of No Moon, and they came by ship—a fine bright vessel a thousand feet long, with burnished gold walls. And because they were a proud and stiffnecked people, and because the people of World were what they were, The Night of No Moon was the prelude to a season of blood.

Down at The Ship, the wor-



shipping was under way when the strangers arrived. The Ship sat embedded in the side of the hill, exactly where it had first fallen upon World; open in its side was the hatch through which the people of World had come forth.

**T**HE BONFIRE blazed, casting bright shadows on the corroded, time-stained walls of The Ship. The worshipping was under way. Lyle of the Kwitni knelt in deep genuflection, forehead inches from the warm rich loam of World, muttering in a hoarse monotone the *Book of the Ship*. At his side stood the priestess, Jeen of the McCaig, arms flung wide, head thrown back, as she recited the *Litany of the Ship* in savage bursts of half-chanted song.

*"In the beginning, there was the ship..."*

"Kwitni was the Captain, McCaig the astrogator," came the droning antiphonal response of the congregation, all five hundred of the people of World, crouching in the praying-pit surrounding The Ship.

*"And Kwitni and McCaig brought the people through the sky to World..."*

"And they looked upon World and found it good," was the response.

*"And down through the sky did the people come..."*

"Down across the Eighty years to World."

*"Out of The Ship!"*

*"Out of The Ship!"*

On it went, a long and ornate retelling of the early days of World, when Kwitni and McCaig, with the guidance of The Ship, had brought the original eight-and-thirty safely to ground. For three hundred years, the story had grown; six nights a year, there was no moon, and the ceremonial retelling took place. And five hundred and thirteen were the numbers of the people on this Night of No Moon when the strangers came.

**J**EEN OF the McCaig was the first to see them, as she stood before The Ship waiting for the ecstasy to sweep over her, and for her feet to begin the worship-dance. She was young, and this was only her forth worship; she waited with some impatience for the frenzy to seize her.

Suddenly a blaze of light appeared in the dark moonless sky. Jeen stared; in her twenty years she had never seen fire in the heavens on The Night of No Moon.

Her sharp eyes saw that the fire was coming closer, that something was dropping through the skies toward them, and a shiver ran down her back; she felt the coolness of the night winds against her lightly-clad body. She heard the people stirring uneasily behind her.

Perhaps it was a miracle, she thought; perhaps The

Ship had sent some divine manifestation. Her heart pounded; her flanks glistened with sweat. The worshipping drew near its climax, and Jeen felt the dance-fever come over her, growing more intense as the strange light approached the ground.

She wriggled belly and buttocks sensuously and began the dance, the dance of worship that concluded the ceremony, while from behind her came the pleasure-sounds of the people as they, too, worshipped The Ship in their own ways. For the commandment of the old lawgiver Lorresson had been, *Be happy, my children*, and the people of World expressed their joy while the miracle-light plunged rapidly Worldward.

**E**LEVEN miles from the Hill of The Ship, the strange light finally touched ground—not a light at all, but a starship, golden-hulled, a thousand feet long and bearing within itself the eight hundred men and women of the Temple of the New Resurrection, who had crossed the gulf of light years in search of a world where they might practice their religion free from interference and without the distraction of the presence of countless billions of the unholy.

The Blessed Myron Brown was the leader of this flock and the captain of their ship,

the *New Galilee*. Fifth in direct line from the Blessed Leroy Brown himself, Blessed Myron was majestic of bearing and thunderous of voice, and when his words rang out over the ship phones, saying, "Here may we rest and here may we live," the eight hundred members of the Temple of the New Resurrection rejoiced in their solemn way, and made ready for the landing.

They were not tractable people. The tenets of their church were two: that the Messiah had come again on Earth, died again, been reborn, and in His resurrection prophesied that the Millennium was at hand—and, secondly, that He had chosen certain people to lead the way in the forthcoming building of the New Jerusalem.

And it was through the mouth of the Blessed Leroy Brown that He spoke, in the two thousand nine hundred and seventieth year since His first birth; and the Blessed Leroy Brown did name those of Earth who had been chosen for holiness and salvation. Many of the elect declined the designation, some with kindly thanks, some with scorn. The Blessed Leroy Brown died early, the protomartyr of his Temple, but his work went on.

**A** HUNDRED years passed and the members of his

Temple were eight hundred in number, proud salvation-touched men and women who denounced the sinful ways of the world and revealed that judgement was near. There were martyrs, and the way was a painful one for the Blessed. But they persevered, and they raised money (some of their members had been quite wealthy in their days of sin); and when it became clear that Earth was too steeped in infamy for them to abide existence any further on it, they built their ark, the *New Galilee*, and crossed the gulf of night to a new world where they might live in peace and happiness and never know the persecution of the mocking ones, as they did on Earth.

They were a proud and a stubborn people, and they kept the Ways as they knew them. They dressed in gray, for bright colors were sinful; they covered their bodies but for face and hands, and when a man knew his wife it was for the rearing of children alone. They made no graven images; they honored the sabbath; and it was their very great hope that on Beta Andromedæ XII they could at last be at peace.

But fifteen minutes after their landing they knew this was not to be. For while the women labored to erect camp and the men hunted provisions, the Blessed Enoch

Brown, son of the leader Myron, went forth in a helicopter to survey the new planet.

WHEN HE returned from his mission, his dour face was deeper than usual with woe; when he spoke, it was in a sepulchral tone. "The Lord has visited another tribulation upon us, even here in the wilderness."

"What have you seen?" the Blessed Myron asked.

"This world is peopled!"

"Impossible! We were given every assurance that this was a virgin world, without colonists, without native life."

"Nevertheless," the Blessed Enoch said bitterly, "There are people here. I have seen them. Naked savages who look like Earthpeople—dancing and prancing by the light of a huge bonfire round the rotting hulk of an abandoned spaceship that lies implanted in a hillside." He scowled. "I flew low over them. Their bodies were virtually bare, and their flesh was oiled, and they leaped wildly and coupled like animals in the open."

For a moment, the Blessed Myron Brown stared bleakly at his son, unable to speak. The blood drained from his lean face. When he finally spoke, his voice was thick with anger. "Even here the Devil pursues us."

"Who can these people be?"

The Blessed Myron shrugged. "It makes little difference. Perhaps they are de-



sendants of a Terran colonial mission—a ship bound for a more distant world, that crashed here and sent no word to Earth.” He stared heavenward for a moment, at the dark and moonless sky, and muttered a brief prayer. “Tomorrow,” he said, “we will visit these people and speak with them. Now let us build our camp.”

**T**HE MORNING dawned fresh and clear, the sun rising early and growing warm rapidly; and shortly after morning prayer a picked band of eleven Resurrectionist men made their way through the heavily-wooded area that separated their camp and that of the savages. The women of the Temple knelt in the clearing and prayed, while the remaining men went about their daily chores.

The Blessed Myron Brown led the party, and with him was his son Enoch, and nine others. They strode without speaking through the woods. The Blessed Myron experienced a certain discomfort as the great yellow sun grew higher in the sky and the forest warmed; he was perspiring heavily beneath his thick gray woolen clothes. But this was merely a physical discomfort, and those he could bear with ease.

This other torment, though, that of finding people on this new world—that hurt him.

He wanted to see these people with his own eyes, look upon them.

Near noon the village of the natives came in sight; the Blessed Myron was first to see it. He saw a huddle of crude low huts built around a medium-sized hill, atop which rose the snout of a corroded spaceship that had crashed into the hillside years, perhaps centuries earlier. The Blessed Myron pointed, and they went forward.

And several of the natives advanced from the village to meet them.

**T**HERE WAS a girl, young and fair, and a man, and all the man wore was a scanty white cloth around his waist, and all the girl wore was the breechcloth and an additional binding round her breasts. The rest of their bodies—lean, tanned—were bare. The Blessed Myron offered a prayer that he would be kept from sin.

The girl stepped forward and said, “I’m the priestess Jeen of the McCaig. This is Lyle of the Kwitni, who is in charge. Who are you?”

“You—you speak English?” the Blessed Myron asked.

“We do. Who are you, and what are you doing on World? Where did you come from? What do you want here?”

The girl was openly impudent; and the sight of her

sleek thighs made the muscles tighten along the Blessed Myron's jaws. Coldly he said, "We have come here from Earth. We will settle here."

"Earth? Where is that?"

The Blessed Myron smiled knowingly and glanced at his son and at the others. He noticed with some disapproval that Enoch was staring with perhaps too much curiosity at the lithe girl. "Earth is the planet from beyond the sky where you originally came from," he said. "Long ago—before you declined into savagery."

"You came from the place we came from?" The girl frowned. "We are not savages, though."

"You run naked and perform strange ceremonies by night; this is savagery, but all this must change. We will help you regain your stature as Earthmen again; we will show you how to build houses instead of shabby huts. And you must learn to wear clothing again."

**"BUT SURELY** we need no more clothing than this," Jeen said in surprise. She reached out and plucked a section of the Blessed Myron's gray woolen vestments between two of her fingers. "Your clothes are wet with the heat; how can you bear such silly things?"

"Nakedness is sinful," the Blessed Myron thundered.

Suddenly the man Lyle spoke. "Who are you, to tell us these things. Why have you come to World?"

The pair of natives exchanged looks. Jeen pointed at the half-buried spaceship that gleamed in the noonday sun. "To worship with us?"

"Of course not! You worship a ship, a piece of metal; you've fallen into decadent ways."

"We worship That which has brought us to World, for it is holy," Jeen snapped hotly. "And you?"

"We, too, worship That which has brought us to the world. But we shall teach you. We..."

The Blessed Myron stopped. He no longer had an audience. Jeen and Lyle had whirled suddenly and both of them sprinted away, back toward the village.

The temple men waited for more than half an hour. Finally the Blessed Myron said, "They will not come back. They are afraid of us. Let us return to our settlement and decide what is to be done."

**THEY HEARD** laughing and giggling coming from above. The Blessed Myron stared upward.

The trees were thick with the naked people; they had stealthily surrounded them. The Blessed Myron saw the

impish face of the girl Jeen.

She called down to him: "Go back to your Lord and leave us alone, silly men! Leave World by tomorrow morning or we'll kill you!"

Engaged, the Blessed Myron shook his fist at the trees. "You chattering monkeys, we'll make human beings of you again!"

"And make us wear thick ugly clothes and worship a false god? You'd have to kill us first—if you could!"

"Come," the Blessed Myron said. "Back to the settlement. We cannot stay here longer."

**T**HAT EVENING, in the rude building that had been erected during the day, the elders of the Temple of the New Resurrection met in solemn convocation, to discuss the problem of the people of the forest.

"They are obviously descendants of a wrecked colony ship," said the Blessed Myron, "but they make of sin a virtue. They have become as animals; in time, they will merely corrupt us to their ways."

The Elder Blessed Solomon Kane, called for the floor—an ascetic-featured, dour man with the cold, austere mind of a master mathematician or a master theologian. "As I see it, Brother, there are three choices facing us: we can return to Earth and apply for

a new planet; or we can attempt to convert these people to our ways; or we can destroy them to the last man of them."

The Blessed Dominic Agnello objected: "Return to Earth is impossible. We have not the fuel."

"And," offered the Blessed Myron, "I testify that these creatures are incorrigible and beyond aid. They are none of them among the Blessed. We do not want to inflict slavery upon them, nor can we welcome them into our numbers."

"The alternative," said the Blessed Solomon Kane, "is clearly our only path. We must root them out as if they were a noxious pestilence. How great are their numbers?"

"Three or four hundred. Perhaps as many as five hundred, no more. We certainly outnumber them."

"And we have weapons. We can lay them low like weeds in the field."

**A**LIGHT appeared in the eyes of the Blessed Myron Brown. "We shall perform an act of purification; we will blot the heathen from our new world. The slate must be fresh, for here will we build the New Jerusalem."

The Blessed Leonid Markell, a slim mystic with flowing golden hair, smiled gently and said, "We are told,

*'Thou Shalt Not Kill'*, Brother Myron."

The Blessed Myron whirled on him. "The commandments are given to us, but they need interpretation. Would you say, *'Thou Shalt Not Kill'*, as the butcher raises his knife over a cow? Would you say..."

"The doctrine refers only to human life," said the Blessed Leonid softly. But..."

"I choose to construe it differently," the Blessed Myron said. His voice was deep and commanding, now; it was the voice of the prophet speaking, of the lawgiver. "Here on this world only those who worship the Lord may be considered human. Fleeing from the bitter scorn of our neighbors, we have come here to build a New Jerusalem in this wilderness—and we must remove every obstacle in our way. The Devil has placed these creatures here, to tempt us with their nakedness and laughter and sinful ways."

He stared at the rest of them, no longer were they his equals round the table, but now merely his disciples, as they had been all the long journey through the stars. "Tomorrow is the Sabbath day by our reckoning, and we shall rest. But on the day following we shall go armed to the village of the idolaters,

and strike them down. Is that understood by us all?"

"*'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord,'*" the Blessed Leonid quoted mildly. But when the time came for the vote, he cast in his lot with the rest, and it was recorded as a unanimous decision; after the day of the Sabbath, the mocking forest-people would be eradicated.

**B**UT THE people of World had laws of their own, and a religion of their own; and they too held a convocation that evening, speaking long and earnestly round the councilfire. The priestess Jeen, garbed only in the red paint of death, danced before them, and when Lyle of the Kwitni called for a decision there were no dissenters.

The long night came to an end, and morning broke over World—and the spies returned from the settlement of the strangers, reporting that the false god still stood in the clearing, and that his followers showed no signs of obeying the command to depart.

"It is death, then," cried the priestess. And she led them in a dance round The Ship, and the knives were sharpened; then she and Lyle led them through the forest, swords that had hung in the cabin of the Captain McCaig aboard the Ship, and Jeen the other.

The strangers were sleeping when the five hundred of the people of World burst in on their encampment. They woke gradually, in confusion, as the forest slayers moved among them, slicing throats. Dozens died before anyone knew what was taking place.

Curiously the strangers made no attempt to defend themselves. Jeen saw the great bearded man—he who had commanded her to wear clothes, and who had eyed her body so strangely—and he stood in the midst of his fellows, shouting in a mighty voice, "It is the Sabbath! Lift no weapon on the Sabbath! Pray, brothers, pray!"

SO THE strangers fell to their knees and prayed; and because they prayed to a false god, they died. It was hardly yet noon when the killing was done with, and the eight hundred members of the Temple of the New Resurrection lay dead.

Jeen the priestess said strangely, "They did not fight back. They let us kill them."

"They said it was the sabbath," Lyle of the Kwitni remarked. "But of course it was not the Sabbath—the Sabbath is three days hence."

Jeen shrugged. "We are well rid of them, anyway. anyway. They would have blasphemed."

There was more work to do,

yet, after the bodies were carried to the sea. Fifty great trees were felled and stripped of their branches; the naked trunks were set aside while the men of the tribe climbed the cliff and caused the great ship, the false god in which the strangers had come, to topple on its side.

Then a roadway was made of the fifty great logs, and the men and women of the people of World pushed strainingly, and the great ship rolled with a groaning sound down the side of the hill, as the logs tumbled beneath it, and finally it went plunging toward the sea and dropped beneath the waves, sending up a mighty cascade of water.

THEY WERE all gone, then, the eight hundred intruders and their false god. And the people of World returned to their village and wearily danced out the praise of Their Ship.

They were not bloodthirsty people; they would have wished to welcome the eight hundred strange ones into their midst. But the strange ones were blasphemers, and so had to be killed, and their false god destroyed.

Jeen was happy, for her faith was renewed, and she danced gladly round the pitted and rusting Ship. Her god had been true, and the god of the strangers false, and what had been command-

ed had been done; for it had been written in the *Book of the Ship*, which old Lorresson the priest recited to the people of World centuries ago in the days of the first McCaig and the first Kwitni, that there were certain commandments by which the people were to live.

Now one of these commandments was, "*Thou Shalt Not Kill*," and another was, "*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy*." These the

people of World hearkened to.

But they were godly people, and the Word was most holy. They had acted in concord with the dictates of Lorresson and McCaig and Kwitni and the Ship itself when they had slain the intruders and destroyed their ship. For, first of all the commandments they revered, it was written, "*Thou Shalt Have No Other Gods Before Me*."