

FUTURE SCIENCE FICTION

Robert W.
Lowndes,
Editor

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★ ★ *Feature Novel* ★ ★



BECAUSE OF THE STARS Charles Dye 12

The stars mean more than life itself to Captain Grey, and because of them — to continue his career among them — he agrees to steal a certain chart. Only thus can his secret be kept safe for the short period still necessary. But one simple theft turns out to be far from simple, leading to an involved and deadly intrigue among a small party, whose objective remains in mystery. One thing is no mystery — the stake is high enough for one of the party to try to wipe out all the rest, including Grey!

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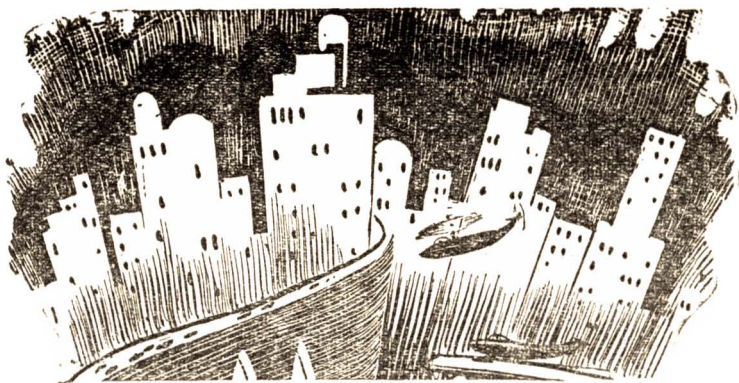
READERS' PREFERENCE COUPON 98

If you haven't the time, or inclination, to write a letter or postcard, why not fill this out? We won't lose it.

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REALIZATION

A Vignette of Tomorrow, Complete On This Page

by Ben Singer

JUST ONE moment ago you were standing there—doing nothing. The memory of this lack of movement is vague, but somehow you know that *before* it happened, you were doing nothing. Absolutely nothing.

And then—

The screams of the multitudes, blended into one high-pitched wail—almost music-like in its continuity.

You walk through the streets and the ghosts of the multitudes do not speak.

Clank, clank.

But the memory of—was it consciousness?—all events prior to *it*—the memory of all was vague.

Clank, clank.

You stop for an instant and look around you. The buildings are standing as before; could you possibly be imagining it?

No, you realize that you are not imagining *this*, so you stop fooling yourself. You *know* it happened.

Clank, clank.

And then a memory, just a faint hint, tugs at your mind. *They* were working on something big when this stopped all they were attempting to accomplish. But why are they *they* in your mind?

Were they working on space-flight? Or a new sociological experiment? Could it have been some kind of medical research—cancer perhaps? No, you are certain it was none of these.... But why should you wonder?

Clank, clank.

You do wonder if there are any others, but you look at the destruction around you and you *know* there are no others. None in the world!

But why you?

Clank, clank.

What were they attempting to do that was so important the memory of it haunts your mind now?

Clank, clank.

What was that sound?

The sound!

Clank, clank.

Frantically now, you start your memory-track back a little further; you dig. They were working on electronic brains, weren't *they*, to be used for—

Clank, clank.

—robots!

You stop walking, and the clanking stops.

Silence.