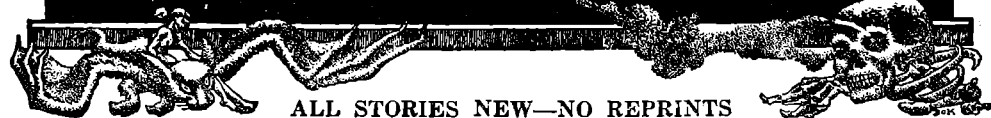


# Weird Tales



ALL STORIES NEW—NO REPRINTS

JANUARY, 1943

Cover by A. R. Tilburne

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*Except for personal experiences the contents of this magazine is fiction. Any use of the name of any living person or reference to actual events is purely coincidental*

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D. McILWRAITH, Editor.

LAMONT BUCHANAN, Associate Editor.

# Say a Prayer for Harvey

By JOHN J. WALLACE

**M**R. STEPHEN BRADLEY, society psychiatrist and author of several tomes dealing with behaviorism, eyed his table guest dourly. Balloon glasses of brandy were at their elbows, but something of the conventional host-guest camaraderie was lacking.

"You're bitter, Steve—and illogical," Dr. Rennald said critically. "The real task of the moment is Hitler and Europe. We've simply got to hold on as best we can

in the Pacific while we smash the master menace. Why do you go directly against the thought of the great world strategists?"

Surprisingly, Dr. Bradley's eyes had mellowed as he looked back at his companion.

"At heart I'm a romanticist, I imagine," he confessed, "and then, too, there's Harvey and the undiscovered South Seas Island, the one everyone has dreamed about

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*The little man assured the doctor that there was nothing supernatural about the way he projected himself to far-off places.*



at some time or another. It's all there, a glittering coral reef with the waters of the lagoon lapping against the sands, palm trees, pretty women, music, dancing—and until eight months ago no stranger ever had set foot on its shining beauty."

The younger man chuckled tolerantly. "Hard-boiled old Bradley," he said softly. "The next thing we know you'll be finding there really is something in the rumor about the baby and the stork. And who's Harvey, if you please?"

Bradley shook his head. "You wouldn't believe it," he grumbled, "and I don't know that I would if *you* told it to me. But here it is and Harvey's the hero. I'll tell it to you chronologically, and just the way it happened—without trimmings."

**H**ARVEY was a little chap, who seemed more puzzled than nervous. He refused all details to my receptionist, but he insisted that it was an emergency and that he must see me at once. Finally she passed him in ahead of three neurotic women. His first words were:

"Doctor, I've gotten into the habit of going places. I just can't help it. And Matilda, my wife, is simply furious about it. It irritates her and I can't blame her. Can you stop it?"

That was a let-down, just another wanderlust. You can't cure them, even with a ball and chain, for it's all the same motivation. But he was there, and I had to start routine questioning.

"You mean that the open road calls you?" I asked flatly.

"There's no road to it," he snapped. "It's lots worse than that. I just get to thinking hard about some place—Moscow, Rome, maybe Africa—and the first thing I know, there I am."

That changed things up considerably. Here was something different.

"You mean you think hard about those places, and then you're able to see what is

going on there; that you can project your seeing mind to them?"

"I wish it was just that," he wailed, "but it's my body, too. I think about a place, and I just turn up there, disappearing from where I was when I started thinking. Matilda says she'll divorce me if it happens again. She says it's bad enough for me to go traipsing all over the world without disappearing when we have company.

"That happened last night when Mr. and Mrs. Gibson finally accepted her invitation to come over for bridge. They're the real social leaders out where we live, and it meant a lot to Matilda.

"Right in the middle of it, Gibson said that he didn't believe London had been bombed as dreadfully as the papers said.

"I asked him why he thought that, and he answered: 'Propaganda. They're trying to steam us up so we'll get into the war, too.'

"I was worried. I'd been to London two nights before and I knew he was wrong, but there wasn't any way to prove it. It was then that the terrible thing happened. Matilda said she was mortified to death. I was thinking hard about London—and all of a sudden, there I stood on the East India docks!

"Was I in a swivet, realizing how I'd treated the Gibsons! So I just concentrated on the kitchen at home and there I was. I came back into the living room with some beer, but Mrs. Gibson acted awfully funny. She said she hadn't seen me leave. I hope there's some way you can help to stop all of this foolishness, Doctor."

**I** LOOKED him over carefully, the funny little rabbit-man, and *I knew that he really believed he'd been in London.* Well, you know about the rationalizing treatment for hallucinations, so I started to lay the basis. But first I had to know things.

"You're fully materialized, flesh and

blood, when you arrive at these far places?" I asked.

"Oh, yes, just like I am now. There's nothing supernatural about it, you know. I'm just there, that's all there is to it."

"I've got to have proof of that before I can help," I told him gravely. "How about ducking over to London right now, so I can see how you leave here—complete with body and clothing?"

He didn't want to, but finally he closed his eyes. And then he was gone, evaporated. He just ceased to be there. And there wasn't even a swish.

I started to make some notes, but before I could complete them he was back in his chair where he'd been sitting a quarter of an hour before.

"I'm back, Doctor," he said breathlessly, "and I brought you this."

*He handed over a copy of the London Times, and it was that day's first edition!*

"Now I'm in a pickle again," he wailed. "I've got to tell Matilda I was over there, and she'll raise hell. She's got an idea that I turn up in places where I shouldn't be,—ladies' bedrooms, backstage, places like that. Honest, I don't do that, Doctor, anyway, not often. There was one time—but why go into that?"

"Here's another question?" I said. "How about some place you hardly know exists? You think hard about it, and you're there—even if you don't know just where it is."

"Oh, yes!" he said eagerly. "Just the other night I was reading about the heroism of the men on Atlantic patrol, and it struck me that I'd like to shake the Commander's hand. Then, the next thing I knew, I was on a little boat out on the ocean. It was night and awfully cold, and believe me I was frightened."

"There were two men on deck, buttoned up in big overcoats. A wave came over and splashed me and I hollered I wanted to see the Captain. I was shivering, for I'd been sitting before the fire when

the thought struck me, so I didn't have a coat, even a hat.

"One of the men yelled and they ran at me. Bells started ringing and a big bunch of men came piling out on deck. So instead of congratulating the Captain, I just thought hard about home—and then I was there."

"Wait a minute now," I said crossly. "You're sure about that one? A patrol boat's a very small thing in a mighty big ocean, you know."

"Yes, he admitted, "and I caught a terrible cold in those few minutes. Matilda was awfully provoked. I was drenched, and she made me soak my feet in mustard water and drink hot lemonade—and I hate it. I guess I *am* an awful trial to her."

That was interesting. When he projected himself, it was an all-out job, even to catching cold in inclement weather. Yes, it was unbelievable. You cannot do such things with physical matter, but, darn it, there was the London Times he'd brought back, and I came to the conclusion that he either was truthful, or I was a candidate for some elaborate mental repairs.

**B**UT I decided on one more test before letting the alienists have a crack at me. As you know, I have the place down at Miami Beach, in Florida. So, as proof positive, I told him of my upstairs bedroom and a copy of Maugham's "Of Human Bondage" I'd left on the night table.

"Duck down there and get it for me," I suggested. "If you can do that, I'll go to any lengths to cure you."

Two seconds later he wasn't there. But he was back in five minutes, bringing the book!

"It wasn't where you said," Doctor, he apologized, "I had to hunt for it. It was in the bookcase."

And then I remembered putting it there. I told him to come back next afternoon, and until midnight I sat there putting him

on paper. I was deep in some old Scottish folk tales the next afternoon, trying to match his case up with something they had to say, when I heard someone breathing hard at my elbow. It was Harvey.

"The boss wouldn't let me off," he grumbled, "so I went to the little boy's room and thought my way over here. I'm in another mess with Matilda. You see, I took her to the movies last night to make amends for going to Florida for you. One feature was an African travel scene that didn't look right to me. I thought somehow it should be different. I guess I thought too hard for suddenly I was there.

"I was only gone for a few minutes, but when I got back the woman in the seat behind me started having the screamies. She said she'd seen me melt away and then melt back again."

There he sat, little and frightened—not at the strange power that possessed him—but because of that big brute of a Matilda. I told him I was sure I could blank his mind to travel urges through hypnosis, but I nearly spoiled everything by wondering aloud if he could project himself right into Hitler's presence.

"I—I've dud-done that—already," he chattered, "and as soon as his bodyguard saw me, they started kicking me to bits. If I hadn't held to consciousness long enough to think myself home, they'd have killed me."

I told him to come back the following afternoon, when we'd start his treatments. When he arrived, he had a big knot on the

side of his head where Matilda had underscored her disapproval with a skillet. He told me pretty frankly that it was now or never; that if I couldn't help him he'd go elsewhere.

There still were a lot of points to be cleared up before I could call you and a couple of other men in to witness the impossible—transsubstantiation. But he was impatient and Matilda was waiting.

"All right," I said, "but let's get this straight. You think of a place, and you're there. But suppose for sake of argument that in the South Pacific there is an undiscovered island where no white man ever has been. Where the natives are happy, where the sun shines, food is free, women are beautiful, sensuous, natural, loving girls without any silly inhibitions."

He looked at me dizzily for a moment. "Gosh!" he said. "And no skillets—no bursts of temper."

"Could you dream of such a place and, if it existed, find your way there?"

"I'm quite—sure—I could," he answered dreamily.

And then the most beatific smile I ever have seen, either in life or in art, spread over his harried face. His shoulders straightened. His chin jutted out. His eyes gleamed.

That was the last I saw of him. Even as he smiled he faded away. That was eight months ago. Matilda? Oh, she be blown. She's still raising Cain. What I'm worried about is the be-damned Japs and Harvey. He deserves better.