

JANUARY  
1942

VOLUME 16  
NUMBER 1

# AMAZING STORIES

TRADE MARK REGISTERED

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Front cover painting by Malcolm Smith, illustrating a scene from "The Test Tube Girl"

Back cover painting by Frank R. Paul, depicting the "Glass City On Europa"

Illustrations by Virgil Finlay, Jay Jackson, Robert Fuqua, Magarian, Rod Ruth, Joe Sewell

Cartoons by R. Newman; Bob Gluckstein

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AMAZING  
STORIES  
JANUARY  
1942

Published monthly by ZIFF-DAVIS PUBLISHING COMPANY at 608 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill. New York Office, 270 Madison Ave., New York City. Washington Bureau, Occidental Hotel, 12 Col. Harold E. Hartney, Manager. Entered as second class matter October 6, 1929, at the Post Office, Chicago, Illinois under the act of March 3rd, 1879. Subscription \$2.40 a year (12 issues); Canada \$2.90; Foreign \$3.40. Subscribers should allow at least two weeks for change of address. All communications about subscriptions should be addressed to the Director of Circulation, 608 South Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.

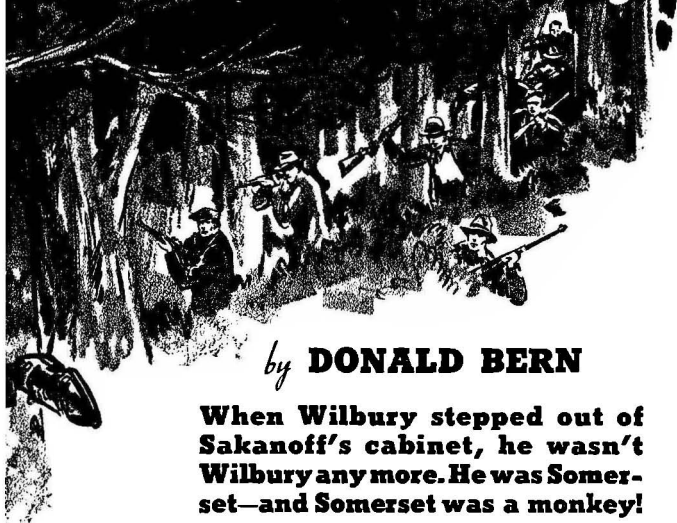
Volume 16  
Number 1

# Somerset, the



Somerset leaped into a tree with Marge Ann under his arm

# Scientific Monkey



by **DONALD BERN**

**When Wilbury stepped out of Sakanoff's cabinet, he wasn't Wilbury anymore. He was Somerset—and Somerset was a monkey!**

**W**HEN that son of a Cossack, Ivan Sakanoff, and pretty Marge Ann drove up in front of our house in Ivan's new auto, I was on the porch watching Somerset, my pet monkey, make love to a rag doll. As far as I know, Somerset was the only monkey in the world that made love to a rag doll. He crushed the thing to his brown little body and murmured sweetly, "Yeek! Yeek! Yeek! Yeek!"

Ivan honked the horn of his auto and motioned me over. I left the porch and shuffled toward them.

"Hullo, Marge Ann. Hullo, Ivan," I muttered. I wondered what it was he wanted. If he didn't have that white,

scared look on his usually smug puss, I'd think that he just wanted to show off his new car and make me envious that Marge Ann rode with him. I was awful in love with Marge Ann and Ivan knew it. She was the prettiest and snootiest girl in town, and I am always the slave of pretty and snooty girls.

"Horace," Ivan almost whispered, "tell your father that my dad has invented something important he wants to show him. Something dangerous, maybe, I dunno. He's been acting funny lately. Mysterious. Won't let anyone into his laboratory—Hurry, and I'll drive you over."

"All right, Ivan," I said. "Be with

you in a minute."

I turned and headed straight toward father's basement laboratory. Somerset skipped along at my heels, dragging his doll after him.

As I stumbled down the basement steps, father raised his round, pale face toward me. He had a dreamy look in his gray eyes so I knew right off that he'd been putting with an invention of his own. Father was an inventor, just like Sakanoff, and the two were always trying to outdo each other in inventing ridiculous gadgets. They were both maybe the greatest impractical inventors in the whole world.

"Oh, it's you, Horace," father murmured slowly.

I was a little surprised. Usually when father has that hazy expression he doesn't know me from Geronimo. It could be Geronimo, that blood thirsty Indian, walking around the house and father wouldn't know it.

"Yeah," I agreed, "It's me. And I bear a message—"

"Horace," father broke in, "did you ever stop to realize that time is only a product of motion? That there could be no such thing as time unless there was motion?"

I am accustomed to having such things thrown at me by father. Therefore, I did not gape or even gasp. I bit my lip and said quietly, "Fine. Wonderful even. But—"

Father turned from me and pointed proudly to something big and white that stood in a corner.

"That," he exclaimed in a rising voice, "is my Motion Master! Within it I am able to speed up enormously the passage of time!"

"You won't!" I gurgled. "I mean—you can't. It isn't. Ah—that's our old refrigerator!"

Father continued: "I repeat, only *within* the Motion Master am I able to

hurry time along. Simply put, the acceleration of the normal passage of time is achieved through the speeding up of natural processes, which, in turn, is achieved by the intricate exercise of motion. Kind of like putting the cart before the horse. Understand?"

I counted to ten. After all, I calmed myself, there were some fellows who'd be proud to have their dad an inventor, even if he did seem a little off at times. Uh huh. Sure. I ought to be glad.

"You deserve a medal," I said quietly. "Anyway, Sakanoff wants to show you something he's stuck together. He's been working on it in secret. Ivan looks scared. Thinks it might be dangerous."

Father said, "Phooey."

A MINUTE or so later, father, myself and Somerset, climbed into the rear of Ivan's auto. I didn't know it then, but I was to bitterly regret having taken Somerset with me. Finally, we pulled to the curb in front of Sakanoff's place. The one time Cossack was waiting for us in his garage laboratory, his dark, heavy face gloating. In fact, every inch of his tall, powerful body seemed to be gloating. His thick lips twisted in a sneer and he said, "Ah, Wilbury and son!" His beady eyes caught mine. "Horace, you're looking more like your old man every day," he added, smirking.

Just then Somerset flung his eighteen inch length to the top of a very peculiar looking clothes locker and hugged his doll enthusiastically. He chattered something and Marge Ann giggled at him sweetly.

"Sakanoff!" father squeaked roughly as he could, "You've disturbed me during a very important experiment. I wish you would cease annoying me with your quite useless inventions! I have better things to do than—"

Sakanoff rubbed his hands together and chuckled very unpleasantly. Not many people can chuckle as unpleasantly as Sakanoff.

"Wilbury," he addressed father, "my day of revenge has arrived. My invention will amaze the scientific world. I have achieved in fact what others, lesser men, have only dreamed of!"

"Go on, go on," father mumbled as the other hesitated. Father's pale face had become tinged with red. I guess he was bursting to tell Sakanoff about his Motion Master thing.

Sakanoff pointed to the strange looking clothes locker, atop which Somerset perched with the doll. "This is half of the machine," he said, "and that's the other half." He indicated an identical locker standing some yards away.

"It doesn't look like anything to me," Marge Ann murmured in a puzzled tone of voice.

**S**AKANOFF'S dark face twisted into a mass of frowns. He turned toward Marge Ann, snapping, "Don't you know that the true scientist never gives up his work for lack of proper instruments? If need be, he makes his tools out of the simplest materials at hand. Thus, I was able to construct this with the aid of the lockers—"

Father broke in impatiently, "What does the thing do—if anything?"

Sakanoff turned back to father.

"I haven't tested it as yet," he replied stiffly, "I waited for you— My invention will enable a man to exchange his own intellect for that of another man. It works on the theory that brain power is like electric power, that thought is the release of this stored power. What my machine does is to transfer the entire *stored brain power* from one mind to another mind, and vice versa. Understand, little man?"

Father reddened. "Of course I do!"

he said shrilly. "I worked along the same lines myself once— But I've yet to see if your machine will work!"

Sakanoff ran his right hand over his bald head thoughtfully. His cold, black eyes ran up and down father's chubby body, flickered to father's pale peanut nose and to his white curly hair.

"I mean to test it now," he growled. "And I suggest that you and I exchange intellects, Wilbury, just for the duration of the experiment." He smirked. "Unless you're afraid—?"

Father raised his white head proudly. "I'm not afraid," he said. "Let's get this over with. I doubt if it will work—"

Sakanoff shrugged his burly shoulders and snickered, "You'll find out. Get inside one of the lockers. I'll get in the other."

Father wriggled into the small space of a locker and Sakanoff slammed shut the metal door. He turned to Ivan and mumbled some brief instructions. Then he shuffled toward the second locker, the one atop which Somerset spooned with the rag doll. Suddenly, he stopped. A peculiar gleam came into his eyes. A very peculiar gleam. In fact, I didn't like it. He glanced up toward Somerset, then flashed a look in the direction of the locker into which father had disappeared.

That quick look told me what he had in mind. My heart did a jig. "Hey, better not," I choked. "In fact, don't!"

Sakanoff paid me no attention. He reached up with his muscular right arm, snatched Somerset from the top of the locker and shoved him inside! Banging shut the door, he sprang to the controls of the machine and pulled several levers. The hum of an electric motor filled the garage laboratory.

"You shouldn't have done that, Sakanoff," I reproached weakly, "now what's going to happen?"

The former Cossack chuckled un-

pleasantly!

MARGE ANN turned to Ivan and murmured, "You men are so silly. Will you drive me home, Ivan? Huh?"

"Sure, Marge Ann. In a minute . . ." he whispered. Ivan was staring at the lockers as I was. What was happening inside them? Sakanoff had his eyes glued to a small gauge.

"You shouldn't have done that," I muttered uneasily for the second time.

The seconds crawled and finally two minutes had passed. Sakanoff pushed the levers back and the electric motor hushed. He was breathing quickly. Then he moved toward the locker into which father had wriggled. I leaned forward tensely. Ivan's mouth dropped open. Even Marge Ann was awed. Sakanoff yanked open the locker door, exposing father.

"Pop!" I choked. "Are you all right? D'you feel like yourself?"

Father bounded from the locker with amazing agility.

"Ah . . . !" Sakanoff exclaimed triumphantly.

Father said, "Yeek! Yeek! Yeek! Yeek!"

SAKANOFF laughed harshly, "It worked, just the way I thought it would! Now Wilbury has Somerset's intellect. I'd say it was an improvement!" Then Sakanoff ran his right hand over his shiny pate thoughtfully and said, "No doubt, Wilbury now believes he is Somerset . . . *On second thought, it is Somerset in Wilbury's body!*"

As though to confirm Sakanoff's words, father—Somerset—bent and scooped up the tattered doll, which had fallen to the floor, and hugged it to him! I didn't need more proof.

"Ye Gads!" I croaked. "Open the other locker!" Sakanoff did. The

monkey skipped out, looked up at us with a puzzled expression. Sakanoff grinned down at the little brown body.

"Hello, Wilbury!" he smirked. "Do you agree now that my invention is a success?"

The tiny figure of Somerset shook a clenched fist at the inventor, muttered something that sounded like, "You big bum!" I repeat, it just *sounded* like that. Father may have been trying to say something else. In any case, I'd had enough of this monkey business—

I stepped forward, putting myself in front of Sakanoff.

"Listen, you Cossack!" I barked. "What you've done is to put Somerset in my father's body and father in Somerset's body. Now you better straighten things out before something happens—"

Something happened! Marge Ann screamed!

Sakanoff muttered, "What the hell —?" and spun around quickly. So did Ivan. So did I. Then my jaw dropped open and Ivan yelped something unintelligible.

Somerset, in father's body, had dropped the rag doll and was enthusiastically hugging Marge Ann!

"Ye Gads!" I gasped. "*He thinks Marge Ann is a doll!*"

Ivan grabbed hold of Marge Ann's pretty right leg and began to pull. Somerset jerked away, turned quickly, and with Marge Ann clutched tightly to his chest sped out of the garage laboratory.

"Hey!" I yelled. "Stop that. Cut it out. Come back here!" Father—Somerset—ignored me. Somerset seemed to like his new doll and he didn't want anyone to take it away. I lit out after him and bumped into Sheriff Abbott who was just entering. Sheriff Abbott had a long skinny body, a long face and a long nose. He wasn't much

to look at. If he didn't wear a star, a person would think he was a soda jerk in Thatcher's drug store.

"What's going on here?" he grunted puzzledly. "I was driving by. Who screamed?"

By this time, Somerset was half a block down Elmhurst Avenue, heading in the direction of Snobble Woods. Somerset often liked to spend a day in Snobble Woods, playfully springing around among the trees . . .

"We got to catch Somerset!" Ivan chattered excitedly. "He's got Marge Ann! See?" he pointed.

Abbott twisted around and glared down Elmhurst Avenue. His thick eyebrows raised up, his mouth fell open and he hollered, "Wilbury, stop that! Come back here!"

Ivan tapped Abbott on a boney shoulder. "Please, sheriff, that's not Wilbury—"

Abbott whirled around. "Not Wilbury?" he shrieked. "You're crazy! I know Wilbury when I see him!"

I thought, a fine job we'd have explaining it all to him. I'd better take things into my own hands— I dodged past the sheriff and continued to chase after Somerset. Marge Ann was screaming pretty steadily now, and the whole town was coming outdoors to investigate the trouble.

"It's Wilbury!" some big guy belated. "He's gone crazy and he's got a girl!"

"Stop him!" an old woman shouted shrilly. "Stop him! He's murdering her!"

"Somebody shoot him!" another voice put in.

I bent over, expecting a shotgun blast any second.

"Ummmmph!" Some big lug plowed into me, grabbed my throat. In a second I was flat on my back with this bruiser perching on my chest. "Ahhh!" he

crowed. "Got you!"

I lifted my head weakly and gazed after Somerset. He'd reached the edge of Snobble Woods with Marge Ann and was scaling up a tree. I knew that in a second he'd be going further into the woods, swinging from branch to branch. Maybe he'd break his neck. But it was too late to stop him now. It would take an organized search to find him.

**M**EANWHILE, the hefty individual on my chest decided to wring my neck. Maybe he thought there was a reward out for me, dead or alive. In any case, it required almost a minute, between gags, to convince him that he was slaughtering an innocent man. Disappointed, he removed himself from me, and I got to my feet.

Sheriff Abbott came striding up, followed by a big crowd. I tried to disappear but Abbott put a boney hand on my shoulder, raised one eyebrow and glared at me.

"Horace," he grunted. "Your father has done a dastardly thing. But perhaps he's lost his mind. When did he first show queer symptoms?"

I bit my lip and said quietly, "Sheriff, believe me, father is not insane. All this is just the unfortunate result of an experiment. What you believe to be father is really a monkey—"

The way Sheriff Abbott's eyes hardened then softened, I knew I'd have done better to shut up. He thought I was nutty, too. He smiled slightly, showing buck teeth, and said, "Horace, my boy, why don't you go home and rest a bit, eh?"

Just then a little fat man elbowed his way to the front of the crowd. He planted himself in front of Abbott and said hoarsely, "Sheriff, the people of Snobble Town demand action! Something must be done—and quickly—to rescue that girl from a madman! Her

fate is your responsibility!"

Abbott swayed slightly under the verbal blitz and for a bad moment I thought he was going to faint. But he pulled through.

"Ah, yes . . . action!" he murmured. "Shooting . . . and things like that." He straightened suddenly and threw out his pigeon chest. He faced the crowd.

"The law will handle this!" he growled a little weakly. "You men who want to join a posse step forward! We'll search the woods before Wilbury gets too far with Marge Ann. I'll give rifles to the men that don't own one!"

Rifles! Shooting! It had come to this! I staggered forward, choking, "No! You mustn't! You'll kill him!"

"We've got to save the girl, men!" a rough voice bellowed. "I'm going home to get my gun."

Sheriff Abbott put his hand to my shoulder again and looked down into my eyes. He was sorry for me.

"He'll come back by himself! He'll come back by himself!" I chattered. "He always does! Don't—"

Abbott shook his head slowly and said softly, "After all, Horace, we've got to consider Marge Ann . . ." He turned from me and muttered to the men who had volunteered for the posse, "All right. Come to my office, I'll swear you in."

As the crowd began to disperse, I sniffled a moment, then cried, "But you don't understand! You've got to believe me! You've got to listen—" A tear dribbled down my nose. No one cared to listen any longer. But once they caught up with Somerset in father's body they'd shoot. Kill him, most likely. And then poor father would be *doomed to end his days in the body of a monkey!*

I WIPED the dust from my trousers and started slowly back up Elm-

hurst Avenue. Things were black. No doubt about that. Black. In a few minutes the posse would be taking to the woods after Somerset—Somerset in father's body, that is—and father would be destined to remain in Somerset's body if his own were killed. He would never get over it. And mother wouldn't like it either. Father existing in the shape of a monkey!

"Maybe Sakanoff can do something about this," I muttered hopefully. "It's all his fault anyway!"

A few more steps brought me to Sakanoff's house and I turned into the yard and entered the small brick bungalow. Sakanoff was sprawled in an armchair, a half emptied bottle of vodka or something resting on a table beside him. He gazed up at me through bleary eyes and I knew where the other half had gone.

"Hor-ish," he invited, "sit down and have a little of this good stuff. Everything is gonna be shwell!"

I couldn't expect any help from him, that was clear. I guess my shoulders drooped as I left Sakanoff's place and headed for my own home. Some distance away the posse was making for Snobble Woods. From the distance it seemed to me that one of the men was fashioning a noose, I couldn't be sure. I didn't want to be sure.

By the time I shuffled into the Wilbury homestead I was shuddering and trying desperately hard to think. I had to do *something*. But what? There *had* to be *something* I could do to save father's body!

I entered father's study, sat myself at his desk and held my head in thought. "Come, Brain, perform!" I begged. But after a while I decided it was no use. I was beaten. I started to get up from the desk and all of a sudden two words in front of a jumble of other words written on some sheets of paper, swam



into my vision. The two words were: *Motion Master*.

Obviously, father had written some notes pertaining to his latest invention and left them here on his desk. I didn't have anything else to do so I lifted a sheet and read a little further:

"The acceleration of time is achieved by the speeding up of natural processes. Natural processes can be hurried by the correct use of motion, as in my Motion Master. This machine, then, *accomplishes the aging of years in minutes!*"

It was stuff typical of father. Silly—to believe that a machine could actually age an object *years* in just *minutes*. *Actually make it older*. Naw, I couldn't believe that. If I did, I'd not only be looking more like father every day, as Sakanoff had smirkingly remarked, but I'd be *thinking* like him.

Looking more like father every day! Was it true? If it was, then in about thirty years or so I'd be almost an exact image of father today. In thirty years . . . A peculiar idea tickled my brain: if the Motion Master worked as father claimed it would, then it could make me older in a very short while!

I sat straight as an idea formed—There was a way to save father!

"You've got to do it, Horace," I told myself.

I LEFT the study and hurried to father's laboratory. The Motion Master stood alone in a corner. Now that I saw it closely it bore only a faint resemblance to a mechanical ice box. Gadgets and springs seemed to sprout from every corner of the thing. Springs and more springs, as though father had taken apart a thousand clocks and fitted it all to the inside of his machine.

A dial with a knob in the center gave instructions— Each full turn of the knob was equal to a year. Carefully, I turned it thirty times. This would

bring me to about father's age—if the machine worked! Then, mumbling a short prayer, I crawled inside. The springs pressed against me, massaging. I started to get dizzy. Things were going around in circles—or maybe I was. Then after a while I felt that I was the sun, and revolving around me were a lot of little planets. It was a silly way to feel. I kept looking down at the little planets and thinking how important I was—

When I came to, the springs had run out and were motionless. I tumbled out of the Motion Master and hurried to examine myself in a full length mirror that stood in the hall— I blinked my eyes. I had become *chubby*. I had curly *white* hair. My nose looked like a *peanut*. My face was *round and mild*.

"Ye Gads!" I yelped.

I looked so much like father, that I'd fool even myself!

THE Motion Master *did* work.

But I had more to do than stand and gape, and not much time to do it in. The posse might even now be closing in on Somerset, ready to shoot, since they believed it meant saving Marge Ann—

It took me about ninety seconds to change into father's blue suit, and then I was hurrying as fast as I could to Snobble Woods. It was getting on toward evening now. I listened for gunfire.

Ten minutes later I could hear men calling to each other. Excitedly, as they crashed through the thick brush. Well, I knew Snobble Woods better than they. A short cut along an old path brought me ahead of the possemen and the sheriff. Then I leaned nonchalantly against a tree and waited for them to catch up.

Sheriff Abbott was the first one to

see me. His long jaw dropped open and he jerked his rifle up. He gagged a moment, then choked out, "Put up your hands, Wilbury!" His own hands shook like a leaf in a gale. The possemen bunched together around Abbott, staring at me scared-like.

"Good evening, gentlemen," I said, in father's best manner. "Is something wrong?"

They gaped a moment, then a pug-nosed gent warned, "Careful, men! He's treacherous! All madmen are."

"Let's shoot him," someone suggested.

"And ask questions later," a quaking little man added.

Sheriff Abbott knocked down a leveled rifle barrel, and I breathed easier. I decided then that when I reached twenty-one, I'd vote to re-elect Abbott. He wasn't a bad sort even if he didn't look like much. "The law will handle this!" he growled weakly.

He took a few short steps toward me and I wondered what he was up to. Then before I knew what was happening, he'd snapped handcuffs over my wrists. That was all right with me. I had fooled them into thinking I was father and that was enough.

"Where's Marge Ann?" the pug-nosed gent hollered suddenly. It seemed as though they'd forgotten about her for the moment.

"She went that way," I replied quietly, and pointed toward town. "I'm going that way myself," I added, "would you like to come along?"

A dozen of the possemen surrounded me and we started back to town, arriving just as the skies were turning dark. Among the crowd that met us was Sakanoff, bleary-eyed and clutching a bottle of vodka. When he saw me, he shook his head and staggered up to Sheriff Abbott. No doubt, he thought I was Somerset.

"Thish ish all my fault, your honor," he mumbled. "It wush my experiment. I know how to make Wilbury regain hish senses. Bring'im to my lab—laboratory. Everyshing will be shwell . . ."

Sheriff Abbott looked at him doubtfully.

"Pleash, your honor," Sakanoff begged.

Abbott scratched his long nose thoughtfully and grunted, "All right, Sakanoff! I don't know what you have in your mind, but don't try to get away with anything—"

Maybe Abbott didn't know what Sakanoff had in mind, but I did. And I didn't like it. Sakanoff still thought that I was Somerset—Somerset in father's body. Therefore, he wanted to undo his experiment— Which would be fine, only I wasn't Somerset. If Sakanoff had his way—I, instead of father, would be in Somerset's monkey body. Father would think he'd regained his own body, whereas he'd be dwelling in mine—aged by the Motion Master. He wouldn't know the difference—maybe.

In any case, I knew one think: I had to get away—and fast! For the moment, no one was watching me. I whirled around, bent over and started to run like hell.

"Yeooooow! Stop him!" Sheriff Abbott screeched. But I had a good start. I scooted for home as fast as I could, the sheriff and the possemen half a block behind. Home seemed the safest place.

I skidded around a corner and banged into—*Marge Ann!*

"Oooohhh!" she gasped, staggering back.

"Excuse me," I murmured, full of confusion, and kept my legs moving the remaining distance home. Then I jerked to a halt—Curled up on the

porch like a kitten, obviously asleep, was Somerset! Somerset in father's body, of course. He'd come home!

THE possemen came stamping around the corner, but before any one caught sight of me I dodged behind a wooden fence. Then men saw Somerset curled up on the porch.

"Close in, men!" the sheriff rasped. He had his rifle aimed. The men took cautious steps forward. Several held ropes ready for tying. Somerset slept on. The possemen took several more steps.

"Careful!" someone warned. "He's only fooling. If he attacks, shoot to kill!"

Then the pug-nosed gent tossed a noose around father's—Somerset's—head. The rope tightened. Somerset slept on.

Sakanoff, still happy with vodka,

reeled up to the porch.

"We've got him!" he crowed. "Now lesh get him ober to my lab—laboratory. Everyshing is gonna be fixshed up!"

The possemen raised Somerset, still snoozing, off the porch and lugged him toward Sakanoff's laboratory. And there, as it happened, Sakanoff "fixshed everyshing up." Father's intellect was transferred back to his own body and Somerset became a monkey once more.

Oh, yes. Father is now hard at work on an invention that will reverse the effect of time or something. Make things grow younger, maybe. And I hope he succeeds, cause looking the way I do, Marge Ann won't have anything to do with me. Not only that, but I had to learn how to shave, and that gets tiresome after awhile. My jaws used to be hairless.

---