

FUTURE SCIENCE FICTION

No. 33

35¢

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★

THE CONVINCER

by David
Gordon

How could Quinn persuade investigators that there was no trickery in his invention?

★

ROUND AND round and round whirled the little vanes on their axes, spinning merrily within their sealed glass globe.

Bedford Quinn touched the knobs on a control panel several feet away, as he watched the revolving vanes in intense concentration. And, as he worked, Dr. Lyman Kent watched with narrowed eyes, his face calmly speculative.

"It moves, all right," Kent said, interestedly. He rubbed the tip of his short, stubby nose with an equally short, stubby thumb. "I'll grant that it moves. Now would you mind explaining just *how* it moves?"

Quinn glanced at the short, stocky figure of the physicist, and then back at the whirling vanes. His palms felt sweaty, and he bit at his lower lip.

"As I said, Dr. Kent, all I have to do is decide that they'll move, and they move. I've got a hunch that the magnetic field surrounding the globe focusses the—uh—the mental vibrations, and I can make the thing rotate."

Stories of inventions are traditional in science fiction, and today the "psionic machine" is being played up. Well, let's assume that our protagonist has built a psionic machine which really does what it is supposed to do. What can he do with it then? How can he persuade scientists and businessmen that he really has something here — not just a trick?

KENT TURNED his chubby face toward Quinn and looked at him from warm hazel eyes. His fist covered his mouth as he kept rubbing the tip of his nose. "I see. And that's how you explain the workings of a radiometer? Look, son, I've seen those things, you know. I think I saw my first one when I was in high school. I hate to disillusion you, but you really don't need all this electronic and optical gadgetry to surround that thing. All you need is a light source; an ordinary electric bulb will do it."

Bedford Quinn closed his eyes behind the rimless glasses and took a deep breath. "Dr. Kent, you know very well that an ordinary radiometer works by Newton's Third Law. The vanes in it have to be black on one side and silver on the other. The black side becomes warmer than the other; and the molecules of the rarified atmosphere within rebound from the hotter, black side faster than they do from the cooler, silver side, and—"

Dr. Kent wagged a hand in the air. "Please, young man; don't lecture me on elementary physics. I can see very well that the vanes of this particular radiometer are white on both sides. I am also well aware that there are various

compounds which reflect visible light, but do not reflect infrared. Others reflect both. Even though both sides *look* alike, they don't necessarily have the same temperature."

"Then how do you explain *this*?" Quinn snapped. He took another deep breath.

The whirling vanes slowed, stopped, and began to spin in the opposite direction.

KENT MERELY looked tired. "Look, son; I was only naming *one* way it could be done. There are others. A rotating magnetic field—"

"There's no magnetic material in the vanes," Bedford said sharply.

"—or an electrical field," Kent continued. "I can think, right offhand, of a dozen ways. Now, if you'd just let me put instruments on your circuits, and make a few checks for various fields..." His voice trailed off with a sort of "I-know-you-won't-so-why-go-on" tone.

Bedford Quinn closed his eyes again. "I've told you, Doctor; the shape and the density of the fields are highly critical. Any instruments will—"

The elder man broke in. "—will cancel the effect," Kent finished mildly. "I under-

stand perfectly, Mr. Quinn. And I don't suppose that *I* can do this, eh?"

"You can try if you want," Bedford said dispiritedly. "Just try—well, try to think of the vanes stopping. Well, not exactly *think*—I mean *get* a—sort of get ahold of them, and—" He stopped abruptly, knowing there was no use going on.

Dr. Kent looked at the vanes for a long minute, scowling. Nothing happened. At last, he looked up at Bedford. "I know," he said sadly, "I understand why it didn't work. I've been told the same thing a hundred times. I don't believe it will work; I'm skeptical. So is every other scientist who is asked to investigate these gimmicks."

BEDFORD didn't say a thing, so Dr. Kent looked around the room, searching for the place where Quinn had hung his visitor's trenchcoat.

The workshop was untidy, unlike the rest of the neat, small, suburban house. It was cluttered with spare wires and tubes, tools, spots of solder, bits of glass, and the general array of what's usually found in an electronics workshop. But one bench was spotlessly clean; the Formica-topped bench on which the weird-lookingappa-

ratus sat, surrounded by its shield of copper mesh.

Kent spotted his coat draped over a chair. His hat was resting on the seat. He picked them up and then looked at Bedford Quinn once more.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Quinn; really, we're wasting my time and yours." He looked at the tall, lean, prematurely-balding young man and shook his head. "I fail to see why you people do it. Lately, there has been a popular rash of this sort of thing. ESP, psychokinesis, telepathy, and heaven knows what else, seem to be the things for people to try to fool scientists with. It's gotten to the point where a mathematician has to avoid using the Greek letter *psi* in his equations for fear someone will think he's working on parapsychological formulae.

"I can't blame anyone for desiring fame and fortune; that has become the ideal of our society. But why they try to do it by attempting the impossible, or trying to convince someone that they have achieved the impossible, is beyond me.

"Every so often, someone comes up with a squared circle, or a trisection angle, or a perpetual motion machine. Sometimes they're trying to fool the savants; sometimes they're just fooling themselves.

I don't know which class you're in, young man, but it's got to be one or the other."

AS KENT pulled on his trench coat, Quinn watched him silently, his long, bony fingers stretching and flexing at his sides. Finally, he said, in a somewhat strangled voice: "I had hoped that perhaps you might be able to think of a way to measure the effect, Doctor."

Kent buckled his trench coat over his slight paunch. "You seem to be very well educated in electronics, Mr. Quinn, and yet you say that no instrument whatsoever can be used. How do you know when the field is just right?"

"I—I *feel* it—sort of," said Bedford Quinn.

Kent shook his head. "I don't. Nor can I see X-rays or hear a sixty kilocycle note. I can only deduce their existence by instruments which transform their effects into something I can detect. Someone once said that ghosts can never be detected by science, because ghosts can only appear when there are no scientists around. Your machine seems to have the same aversion to instruments."

"If you'd just approach this with an open mind, Doctor..."

KEKT SHOOK his head firmly. "You don't mean that, Mr. Quinn. You mean that I ought to believe it in the first place. A man with an open mind is one who is willing to be convinced by facts which are obvious to him. I have, I think, an open mind—but I see no facts. Don't point at that radiometer; I see it. I can also see light coming in through the window, but I don't believe it is caused by emanations from my eyes, because there are other theories which explain the facts better.

"Believe me, any time you can let me prove to my own satisfaction that no detectable, known force is spinning that thing, I'll concede that something unknown is doing it. I'll also concede that it might come from your mind. But until that time..." He spread his hands in a gesture of helplessness.

"Very well, Doctor," Bedford said stiffly, "I'll try to think of something. Thank you for coming; I'll take you to the door."

Bedford reached, shut off the apparatus; the two men left the cluttered laboratory and walked through the neatly-kept living room without saying a word. At the door, Kent turned, and said: "I mean that, Mr. Quinn; if you ever work out a way to run

tests on your machine, let me know."

"Thanks, Doctor; I will." Quinn shook the older man's hand and closed the door after him. He stood there a moment, then walked deliberately over to the fireplace, picked up a china figurine and hurled it vehemently at the door, where it smashed loudly into fragments and scattered all over the floor.

THE LAST chip had barely touched the rug when a clatter of high heels fluttered down the stairway. "Honey! What is it?" called a feminine voice.

The girl standing at the foot of the stairs was by no means beautiful, but she was pleasant to look at. Her face was round and plump, as was her figure; her mouth had a tendency to smile all the time, and her eyes were clear and intelligent. The whole ensemble was topped off with a crown of flaming red hair.

She looked at the shattered figurine and then at her husband. "He didn't believe you, did he?"

Bedford shook his head. "No. He didn't. He wouldn't even listen, Doris."

Doris walked into the kitchen. "You mean he just walked out without listening to you?"

"Almost. He said I was a

phony or a nut, one or the other. He wouldn't even try to think about the possibility that I might be neither."

Doris came out of the kitchen with a broom, a dustpan, and a freshly-opened can of beer. She handed the last item to her husband, then began using the other two industriously on the scattered fragments of china.

BEDFORD QUINN leaned against the fireplace, sipping his beer in silence. He was a lean, nervous individual, with dark, thinning hair and a pencil-line mustache. His thin lips were clamped tight in anger; his eyes looked out from behind rimless glasses and stared at nothing in particular.

"Something wrong, somewhere," Doris said, as she dumped the dustpan into a wastebasket. "He could see the thing spin, couldn't he? Why wouldn't he believe it? It seems to me that something like that would convince even the most skeptical."

"Not a man like that," Bedford said. "Actually, we're being very unkind to him. He's open minded enough, for one who doesn't believe in such things and doesn't want to. He won't believe it until I can prove to him that nothing else is doing it—in other words,

what he actually wants is negative proof."

"Joe Thorne believed you," she pointed out. "And so did Mason Bruckner. And they're both pretty hardheaded individuals."

"Sure," said Bedford, "but that's different. Thorne and Bruckner both know me. They know I wouldn't deliberately try to fool them, and they know I'm not a nut. But they aren't Dr. Kent." He lifted his beer can to eye level and looked at the label. "Kent was right, you see, when he said that an open mind wasn't enough. He..."

"Is that what he said?" Doris interrupted. She sat down in the big, soft easy chair that faced the fireplace. Normally, Bedford claimed the exclusive right to that chair, but Doris was permitted to sit in it when he was lecturing.

"That's what he said," her husband continued. "And he was right. You've got to believe in something before it can convince you."

“WHAT ABOUT the people who watched Galileo drop weights off the Leaning Tower?"

"They believed in what they saw. They did not refute the evidence of their own senses. That has its drawbacks, of course; they also believed that prestidigitation was magic, if

they didn't know the trick. They believed that the Earth was flat, and the sky was a round bowl, because they saw it that way.

"But a man who's been trained in modern science doesn't believe only in his own senses. He's willing to accept the existence of things which he can't see, sounds he can't hear, and force fields that he can't feel, because he can detect them with instruments.

"So, just as the medieval thinker attributed things he saw to the actions of demons or spirits, or to Divine Miracles, the modern thinker attributes them to known forces. And, just as the actions of God or Satan might be hidden from mortal sight, and indecipherable at the moment, so a revolving radiometer vane might be unexplainable at the moment; but there is no doubt that it will be explained in time."

He took another long draught of beer. "I drink, my dear, to the common man. The common man can believe both. He is educated enough to believe in what the scientists tell him, and superstitious enough to believe in the things they don't tell him.

"The only trouble is that he believes in the scientists when the scientists tell him what *not* to believe—unless

he *doesn't* believe what the scientists told him to believe in the first place."

DORIS WAVED her hand in the air. "Stop, dear. When your rhetoric becomes incomprehensible, you're becoming overwrought. Besides, you're the last one in the world who should be ranting against scientists."

"I know, dear, but—"

At that moment, the phone rang. Bedford walked over and lifted the receiver. "Bedford Quinn speaking," he said.

"Mr. Quinn? This is Dr. Schuyler van Wyck. I represent a small group of men who are interested in psionic research in connection with electro-optical phenomena. I understand that you are working on something in that line."

"Who told you that?"

There was a pause at the other end of the line. Then: "I don't think our informant would mind if I told you. It was Mr. Mason Bruckner. If you don't want it known that you are working along these lines, we'll certainly co-operate. Many of our experimenters are, shall we say, keeping under cover because of the fear of public ridicule."

"But what we would like you to do is send us your name and address. Our purpose is to keep men like yourself in

contact with others who are doing the same sort of work."

BEDFORD looked up at his wife and grinned wryly. "I see. And what are the dues?"

"The what?" The voice on the other end seemed surprised.

"The tariff," Bedford said. "The registration fee. Whatever you call it."

Again there was a short pause. "There is no charge, Mr. Quinn; we are merely acting as a clearing house. All you have to pay is postage. May we register you?"

"You already have my name and address, obviously," Bedford said. He looked at his long fingers, making a fist and relaxing it.

"Yes, we do," said the man who had identified himself as Dr Van Wyck. "But we do not give out this information to our other correspondents without permission."

"I see. May I call you later?"

"Certainly," said the voice. The man gave a number and an address. "Call us any time, Mr. Quinn, and thank you for your time. If you don't mind, we'll send you some of our literature."

"Fine," Bedford said. "I'll call you later, Dr. Van Wyck."

He hung up.

"Who was it, dear?" Doris asked.

BEDFORD grinned, twisting the misplaced eyebrow he called a mustache into an odd curve. "That chuckleheaded friend of mine, Mason Bruckner, gave my name to some mystic society for the preservation of crystal balls. Anybody who does any investigation of this sort is invariably adopted by everyone from the American Spiritualists Union, Local 69, to the International Society for Psychical Research. The trouble is that they are all about as selective in what they accept as a feline in heat."

He walked over to the wastebasket and dropped his beer can. "There's the whole trouble, you see. Anyone who believes in ESP is also assumed to believe in calling up the dead, haunted houses, and fire-breathing dragons. You're either a 'scientist', and believe in none of them, or a 'mystic' and believe in all of them. There is no middle road."

Doris looked at his hands. "Stop wiggling those fingers of yours! You look as though you wanted to strangle someone."

Bedford Quinn looked down at his hands. "Not *someone*, my dear," he said softly. "A whole lot of people."

IT WAS THREE days before Bedford Quinn came across the name of Dr. Schuyler van Wyck again, and the context

was such that he recognized it as being familiar, but couldn't place it immediately. It was in a news article.

**NOTED SCIENTIST SAYS
NEW NEUTRINO DE-
TECTOR WILL LOCATE
ATOMIC REACTORS**

New York (AP) Dr. Schuyler van Wyck, former AEC research head, announced today that a new method of detecting neutrinos, tiny, neutral particles given off during atomic reactions, will enable the U. S. Government to locate atomic reactors anywhere in the world. Neutrinos have heretofore been, for all practical purposes, indetectable.

Dr. Van Wyck refused to give details of the new detector, which, he said...

It was at that point that the name registered with Bedford Quinn. He sat bolt upright in his easy chair and said: "Yikes!"

Doris stuck her head out of the kitchen and said: "Burn yourself, dear?"

BEDFORD answered her with a sharp "No!", dropped the newspaper to the floor, and stood up. He lit a fresh cigaret off the butt of the old one; his eyebrows pulled

tog'her in a concentration scowl, his eyes focussed on nothing.

Doris stood in the doorway, a dish in one hand, a dishtowel in the other. She polished the dish mechanically and watched her husband.

"What's the matter, honey?"

"Van Wyck," he said, as if that explained everything. He strode over to his voluminous bookcase, pulled down a new copy of *Who's Who in Science*, and flipped to the V's. There it was: *VAN WYCK, Schuyler Peter; B.S., Physics, Texas Technological College; M.S., Physics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; M.S., Chemistry, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Ph. D., Mathematical Physics, Columbia University.*

He pushed the book back into place, thought a minute, and walked over to his bound copies of *Scientific American*. He had to look through several before he found the copy that his memory had vaguely told him contained the article he was looking for. It was entitled: *"Extrasensory Perception: A Statistical Analysis*, by Schuyler van Wyck."

HE GLANCED through the article to confirm his recollection of it. It was a detailed analysis of Rhine's work, and it proved—as far as

the author was concerned—that there was no basis for anyone believing in anything that had so little real evidence for its existence as ESP, PK, and related "so-called psionic abilities of the human mind."

Dr. Schuyler van Wyck, in other words, thought it was all bunk, pure and simple. At least, he had thought so a year ago, when he article was written. What had made him change his mind? Or had he, really?

There was only one way to find out. Bedford walked over to the phone, picked it up, and dialed the number he had been given.

"Dr. Van Wyck's residence," said a female voice at the other end.

"Is Dr. Van Wyck in?"

"Who is calling, please?"

Bedford identified himself, and within a few seconds, Van Wyck's voice came over the line.

"How are you, Mr. Quinn? Have you received our pamphlet?"

BEDFORD realized guiltily that the envelope had come the day before and he hadn't even bothered to open it. It was right there, on the desk. "Yes, but I'd like to ask you a few questions, if you don't mind. Doctor." He tried to stall for time while he opened

the envelope that lay on the desk before him.

"Not at all, sir. Go right ahead."

Bedford pulled out the pamphlet and tried to skim through it as he talked. "The pamphlet really isn't too informative. And, frankly, it seems more intended for the mystic than the scientific thinker."

"It is," said Van Wyck. "We are trying to get the mystic interested in the scientific method. Believe me, that's a lot harder than getting scientists interested in extrasensory phenomena."

"It is?" Bedford Quinn felt baffled. "How so?" He felt a lecture coming on, so he signalled to Doris, who was still polishing a dry plate, for a can of beer.

"Certainly it is," said Van Wyck. "A scientist is willing to accept proof, even when he doesn't believe in a hypothesis. The mystic doesn't believe that scientific methods can ever discover the working laws of—or—shall we say, the supernatural."

Doris handed him the beer, and Bedford said: "I just re-read your article in *Scientific American*, Doctor. A year ago, you thought ESP was all hooey. What changed your mind?"

VAN WYCK chuckled. "We can all make mistakes, es-

pecially when we don't have proper data. After having seen definite proof of the existence of extrasensory phenomena, I must admit that my thinking has changed. I've seen the error of my ways, you might say."

"Have many other well-known men become interested in this?"

"Several." Van Wyck named names, and again Bedford was amazed. "Naturally," he went on, "we're not doing a lot of advertising on this; we don't want our files cluttered up with a lot of screwball stuff. But anyone who is genuinely interested in psionic phenomena is welcome; and men such as yourself, who have a good, solid, educational background, and are actually doing successful work, can have access to our research files."

"Naturally, we'd like to see your work, too."

"You're welcome any time," Bedford Quinn said dazedly.

Arrangements were made for a demonstration, and Quinn finished his beer at the same time he finished the conversation. Doris handed him another as he cradled the phone.

"Well, I'll be damned," he said thoughtfully.

"What was that all about?" Doris wanted to know.

He told her and ended up with, "...I don't know how it

happened, but someone has really got these boys interested."

THE NEXT several weeks were busy ones. The demonstration of the apparatus was quite successful, and one of the men who came to watch commented on a similarity in structure to other psionic devices. Quinn began to read outlines of the varied attempts of others, and the various theories propounded to account for the phenomena in an attempt to nail them down.

One thing Bedford began to notice, however, was the high praise that many of the men of the men who came to watch had for the machine of a certain Mr. Dudley MacIntosh. But he never got any inkling of what the machine itself did. Mr. MacIntosh, it seemed, was not yet ready to publish his results. Bedford was mildly curious at first, and then his curiosity was no longer mild. It turned out that every major-league scientist recently become interested in psionic work had become interested after seeing Dudley MacIntosh's machine.

Meanwhile, he concentrated on writing out a report of his own, explaining the whys and wherefores of his own device as best he could. When it was finished, he sent it to Dr. Van

Wyck; it eventually was printed up and sent out to others—at Bedford Quinn's expense.

But his curiosity about the Dudley MacIntosh affair came to a head on the day that Dr. Lyman Kent knocked diffidently at his door.

WHEN HE opened the door, he was a little surprised, but he tried not to show it. "Come in, Dr. Kent."

"Thank you, Mr. Quinn." There was a half-embarrassed smile on his round face, and his mild hazel eyes were almost apologetic. "I'd like to talk to you about that device of yours. I read your report on it, and I'm beginning to see why it's difficult to check on such things. Uh—well, frankly, I'm quite interested. I thought, perhaps, that I might be able to help you. I know I sounded rather—uh—well, narrow-minded last month, and maybe I am. But there definitely seems to be something here worth investigating."

"Doris!" Bedford yelled. "Bring some beer! Two cans!" Then he looked at the little physicist. "You do drink beer?"

"Love it," said Kent, unbuckling his trenchcoat.

Bedford took the coat and traded it to Doris for the two cans of beer. He handed one to Kent and waved him to the

easy chair, then he pulled up a dining room chair and lit a cigaret.

"Have you seen Dudley MacIntosh's machine, Doctor?" Quinn asked bluntly.

Kent nodded. "Yes, as a matter of fact, I have. It's rather remarkable, in a way, but I think yours is much more impressive."

"What does his do?"

KENT RUBBED his nose with his thumb. "Well, it's a sort of interferometer, as far as I can tell. He causes a shift in the interference bands in the light from the green band of mercury 198."

Bedford started to say that he didn't think that was so impressive, but he suppressed the remark. "I'd like to see it sometime."

Kent frowned at his beer can. "You'd have to arrange it through Dr. Van Wyck. MacIntosh won't let just anyone see it. There have been several requests, I understand, and most of them have been refused. But you just might be able to get to see it. He seems to be a very secretive sort of man. All the rest of the men in this project seem to be quite willing to discuss their work, but not Dudley MacIntosh."

Bedford flexed his long fingers and thought. "Well, I'll see if I can't talk him into let-

ting me see it," he said at last. "Meanwhile, you wanted to talk about my work—right?"

"Right," agreed Kent.

BEDFORD didn't get around to calling Van Wyck until the next afternoon. The Ph. D.'s secretary put him on the line immediately.

"How are you, Mr. Quinn? How's the project coming along?"

"Quite well, Doctor," Bedford said. "Dr. Kent thinks he can not only instrumentize the apparatus, but can detect the energy that's causing the motion. I'm not as sure as he is, but we can at least try."

"Fine, fine. Was there anything else?"

Bedford took a deep drag off his cigaret. "Yeah. I wonder if I could get a look at the work Mr. Dudley MacIntosh has done. I understand I'd have to contact you."

VAN WYCK went through one of his pauses. "I'm afraid not," he said finally. "Mr. MacIntosh says that he doesn't want anyone to see the apparatus unless he, personally, invites them. He's—ah—rather reclusive about his work." There was another pause. "As a matter of fact, just between the two of us, I'd say that Mr. MacIntosh is somewhat of a snob."

"Snob?"

"Well, perhaps that's too strong a word, really. But I've noticed that he's only invited men who are—uh—well-known, shall we say, in science.

"One of these days, I'll have to let you see the letter he wrote me when he wanted me to look at his apparatus. It's really awfully funny. He offered to pay a hundred dollars if I wasn't convinced by his work. It's a rather challenging letter, actually. Naturally, the offer of a hundred dollars for simply saying I thought he was a phony was, I'll admit, rather tempting." Van Wyck chuckled self-consciously.

"But you didn't collect?"

"Of course not! When shown indisputable proof of a natural law, only a thief would try to collect money by lying!"

Bedford looked at the tip of his cigaret. "Then I can't see MacIntosh?"

"I'm afraid not, Mr. Quinn. He's informed me that if he wants to see anyone he'll ask them himself. I'm sorry."

"That's OK," Bedford said. "Thanks, anyway, Dr. Van Wyck." He cradled the phone and sauntered into the kitchen.

Doris was curled up in the breakfast nook, absorbed in a copy of *Charm*. She looked up as Bedford opened the refrigerator. "Open me one, too. So

you can't get an appointment with this MacIntosh?"

BEFDORD pressed the sharp point of the opener into two cans of beer before answering. "*'Curioser and curioser,' said Alice,*" he quoted. "I wonder why he's so exclusive?"

"Who knows? Is his name in the phone book?"

"Nope. That was the first thing I checked. He—"

The phone rang.

Bedford went out to answer it, and Doris looked back at her magazine. She could hear his voice from the living room.

"Who? I see... I'm glad you liked it... I'd like to very much... Certainly... Yeah, I can make it then... All right... I understand... Very well; goodbye." There was a click as he hung up. He came back into the kitchen with a dazed look on his lean face.

"That was MacIntosh," he said. "I'm to be at his house tomorrow afternoon at five."

THE MACINTOSH residence was out on Long Island, a custom-built ranch-type house on a magnificently landscaped half-acre lot near Manhasset. Bedford Quinn pulled his Buick into the driveway and mentally estimated that the place had cost at least fifty thousand. He climbed out of the car and

walked up to the front door.

There was no need to push the bell button; the door was opened by a man whom Bedford immediately knew was Dudley MacIntosh.

He was of average height and inclined toward portliness, though he could not at all be called fat. His hair was dark and wavy, with traces of gray at the temples. He had the sort of eyes that are usually described as "twinkling blue", but there was more behind them than simple good humor.

They were overshadowed by vast, bushy brows that would have been a credit to John L. Lewis. His mouth was generous, and curved in a lopsided smile that gave him the appearance of a happy demon.

"Ah! Mr. Quinn!" His handshake was warm and friendly without being too much on the "hail-fellow-well-met" side. He took Bedford's hat and coat, hung them in a hall closet, and waved him into a broad, spacious living room. A huge fireplace flickered with a fire that chuckled happily to itself.

He pointed toward one of the three overstuffed chairs that faced the fire. "Sit down, Mr. Quinn. What do you drink? Bourbon? Gin? Wine? Ale? Anything you want."

"Ale sounds good," Bedford

said, easing himself into the chair.

"Ale it is," MacIntosh said, and disappeared into the kitchen. He came out a moment later with a foam-topped beer shell. "I never drink before demonstrating my apparatus," he explained. "Dulls the brain or something. Doesn't always work." Then he frowned. "Come to think of it, though I might as well have some ginger ale to be sociable."

HE WENT into the kitchen again and came out with a tall tumbler of ginger ale. He sat down in a chair facing Bedford Quinn. Then he reached out to a nearby table, picked up a pair of spectacles rimmed with black plastic and adjusted them on his face. At the same time, his other hand picked up a sheaf of paper which Quinn recognized as the printed edition of his own report.

"This is a very interesting report, Mr. Quinn," he said as he leafed through it. "In fact, I think it's the most convincing demonstration of psychokinesis I've ever heard of. No one that I know of even approaches you. And you've expounded a very believable theory here—about how the magnetic fields focus the mental force on the converted radiometer. Tell me—" He dropped

the paper to his lap and looked at Bedford. "—how does it feel? Subjectively, I mean."

Bedford shrugged a little. "I don't know. I've tried to explain it, but there are no words for it in English. You've got to have the concept before it can be explained thoroughly."

"I've tried explaining it to my wife, but it's like explaining a dream. Any explanation is merely a verbal abstract of what really happened."

MacIntosh pursed his lips a little. "Let's assume that I know what you mean. You know that *grasping out* feeling? That impression of stirring a heavy liquid? That feeling of urgency?"

BEDFORD did, and he was startled. The man's description was a great more accurate than his own had ever been. "I know exactly what you mean."

"Very well. We'll assign it a response word. Let's use the verb to *will* it. Decline it as 'gwill', 'gwilled', 'gwilled'. The adjective is 'gwilled', and can't be compared, any more than you can compare 'perfect', or 'daily'. A thing is either 'gwilled' or it isn't. How's that? Make sense?" He chuckled.

Bedford laughed. "I'll buy that, Mr. MacIntosh."

"Call me Dudley. What do they call you?"

"Quinn, usually. 'Bedford' is a little clumsy; even my wife usually evades it. She calls me 'honey' or 'dear' or 'sweetheart'."

"Quinn will do," MacIntosh said, grinning lopsidedly. "The others might be misunderstood."

"Very well, then. Would you like to see how I *gwill*?" Without waiting for an answer, he stood up and walked toward the kitchen. "My lab's in the basement. Come along."

Bedford followed him through the big, bright kitchen to a door that led down into the lower depths of the house.

The apparatus filled the center of a fairly large room. Bedford tried to calculate what the maze of equipment had cost, and gave up. It at least ran into five figures.

"Sit down over there," MacIntosh said, pointing to a chair bolted to the floor. "Put your eyes to the binoculars."

BEDFORD took off his glasses and put his eyes up to the rubber-padded double eyepieces. They fit comfortably, so he leaned back and waited while MacIntosh warmed the equipment up.

After throwing several switches and adjusting several controls, MacIntosh said:

"Okay. Now look. The focusing knobs are on the side."

Bedford leaned forward and peered through the eyepieces. At first, all he saw was a green blur; but by adjusting the focus, he soon saw the characteristic pistol-tar get rings of an interference pattern.

"I've got it."

"Okay. Now watch the interference bands."

Bedford watched. The bands began to ripple; at first the rings seemed to collapse in on each other, then they expanded outward. After several seconds, they stabilized and became motionless.

"Well?"

At the sound of MacIntosh's voice, Bedford Quinn realized that the show was over. Slowly, he lifted his head from the binocular eyepiece. His host was grinning at him.

"Well?" he asked again. "What do you think?" His blue eyes were really sparkling.

BE D F O R D hardly knew what to say. It was probably the greatest disappointment in his life. It took him several seconds to get up nerve enough to say: "Frankly, I don't get it. Is that all there is? I—I mean..."

The grin broadened. "You

mean it was unimpressive? Ah! That was because it *isn't* impressive. I didn't *gwill*, you see. Now try it again. Watch!"

Again Bedford Quinn put his eyes to the binocular. And, as he watched, he felt the majestic flow of power—power that could move planets, extinguish suns, change energy, and obliterate matter soundlessly. It was a feeling of infinite motion and infinite knowledge, of absolute sympathy and total compassion.

And the interference rings rippled in and out.

Bedford Quinn lifted his head at last and looked full into the intelligent blue eyes of the man who stood over him. "I see," he said softly. "You're a phony. The most magnificent phony the world has ever known."

"I wouldn't go so far as to say that," MacIntosh demurred. "Let's go upstairs and have a drink. This time, I think I'll take a little bourbon."

THE TWO of them sat in the overstuffed chairs before the fireplace, watching the ever-changing pattern of the firelight. Each man held a small glass of excellent bonded bourbon in his hand. MacIntosh tamped a heavy briar with tobacco while Bedford

lit a cigaret. "The machine is a phony, isn't it?"

"Of course it is, my friend. But it has enough science behind it to convince the physicists—for a while, at least."

"Does it actually serve any purpose? Or is that feeling caused by you and you alone?"

"I need the machine," MacIntosh admitted. "The whole purpose of that interferometer gadget is to get the subject in the proper focus. That's why the chairs bolted to the floor."

BEDFORD QUINN looked at the clear sparkle of the whiskey and rubbed a forefinger along his pencil-line mustache. "It's a matter of faith, isn't it?"

"Not exactly," said his host. "It's a matter of allowing oneself to believe. I can't *gwill* psychokinetically, you see. I can't do anything like what you do—can't even influence dice; I get the nicest statistical average you'll ever see. I'm up one minute and down the next. I just don't *feel* matter. But emotions—ah! That's something different."

"I've known that psionics was real for years; but I also knew that PK alone would never convince anyone."

Bedford thought of Dr. Kent and silently agreed.

"Besides," MacIntosh con-

tinued, "I couldn't convince them that way. On the other hand, I knew that the hard-trained, logical brain of a scientist would have to *think* he had been convinced by PK. The machine is a phony, of course; I don't think I could have fooled you, even if I had used my—ah—ability on the first run. You see, you *already* believed in the existance of psionic phenomena; I couldn't impress you that way. Besides, you were able to detect the flow of psionic power and recognize it for what it was; and you could also detect its absence. Frankly, Quinn, I'm happy to know you."

Bedford Quinn sipped at his whiskey. "Then all you did was break down the hard-held resistance to believing? You didn't hypnotize them?"

“NOT AT ALL. Remember, scientific training insists that one be able to change one's mind when confronted with irrefutable proof. I presented them with that proof. Even though they couldn't recognize it, they accepted it because—unlike your PK work—I was working on *them* instead of on a piece of matter.

"But I've had to be very selective in the persons to whom I showed my apparatus. Only the rigidly scientific

mind can be affected by it. The person who already *knows* that such energies exist, detects them sooner or later and proves that my machine is phony."

Bedford rolled the warm liquor around his tongue appreciatively. "Tell me, Dudley, why did you show me?" "Why did you let me know you were a fake?"

Dudley MacIntosh grinned hugely. "Isn't it obvious, Quinn, old man? I can convince 'em, *you* can demon-

strate to 'em. Between the two of us, we ought to be able to build a gadget that will start research all over the world.

"Our Lord said: '*Know thyself.*' If we can get people to do that—and I think we can, the two of us—we can't ask for a better life."

In the flickering of the firelight, Bedford Quinn's lean face creased in a satisfied smile. "I think you're right, Dudley; I think you're right."