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# MYSTIC

MAGAZINE

January 1954

35¢

## THE DEVIL'S EMPIRE

How Lucifer Fell,  
and Who He Really Was!

## DOPPELGANGER

THE STRANGE CASE  
OF MONICA LILITH

... and many others





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# MYSTIC Magazine

Issue No. 2

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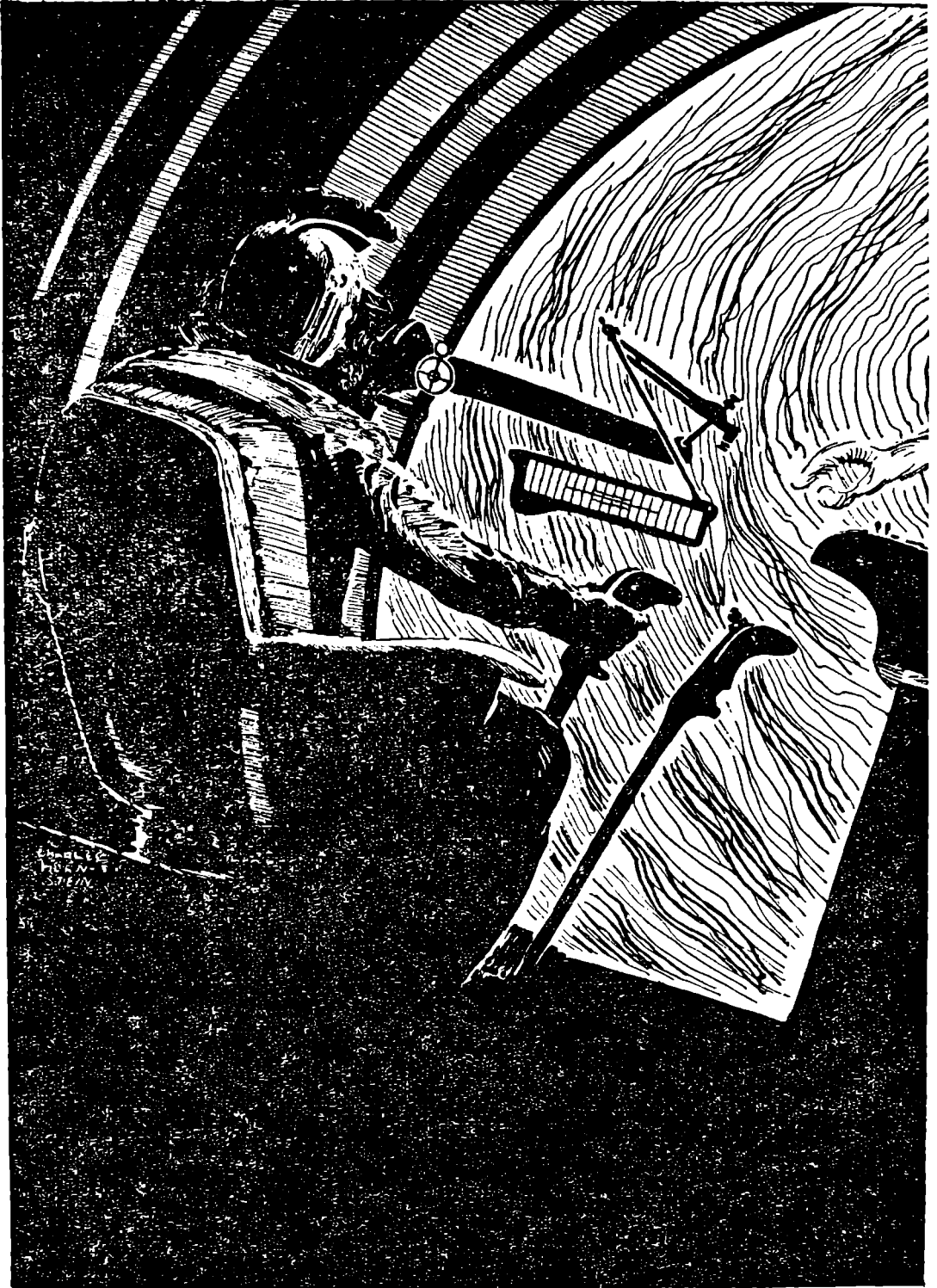
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Cover Painting by Robert Gibson Jones illustrating THE DEVIL'S EMPIRE

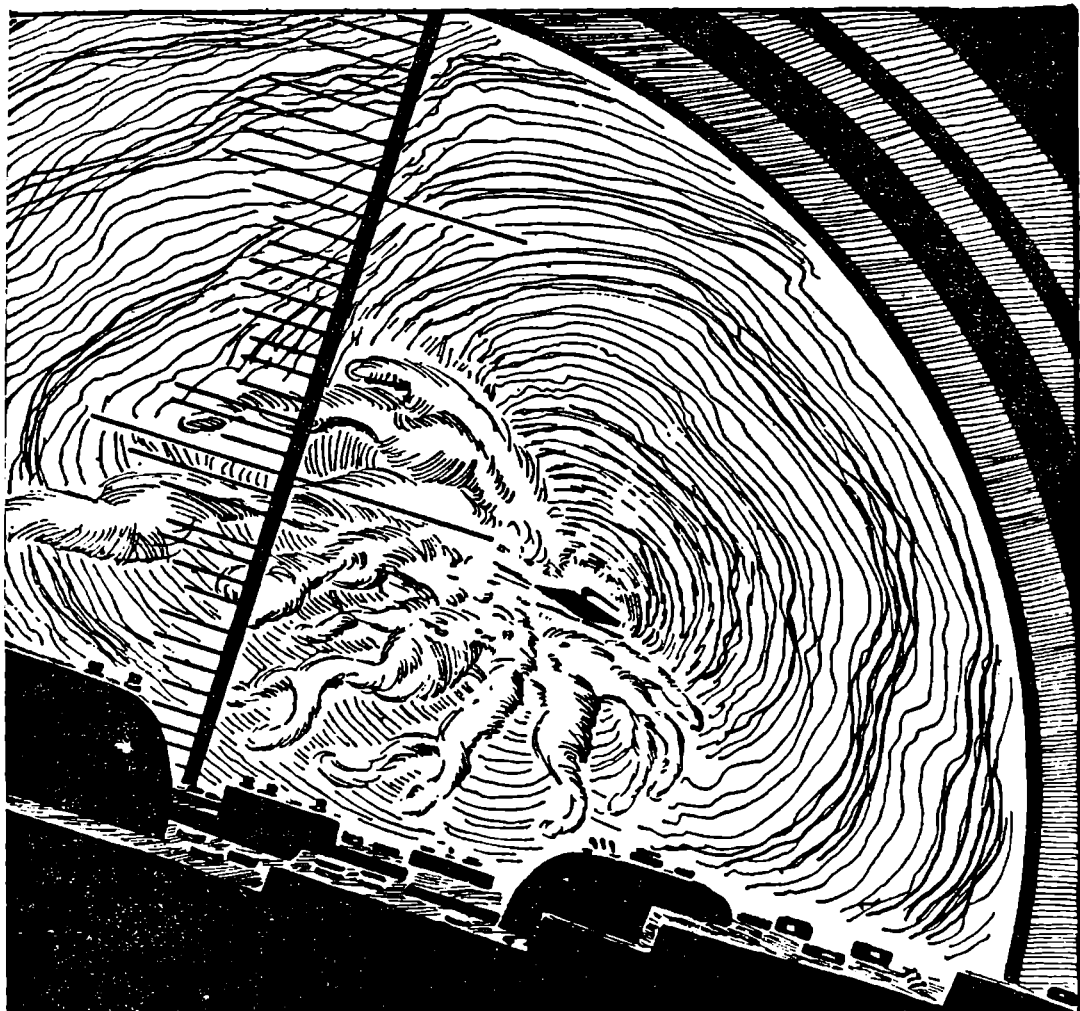
Illustrations by Malcolm Smith, Charles Hornstein, Michael Becker

Mystic Magazine is published bi-monthly by Palmer Publications, Inc., Evanston, Illinois. Entry as second-class matter has been applied for at the Post Office at Evanston, Illinois. Additional entry applied for at Chicago, Illinois, and Amherst, Wisconsin. Printed in U.S.A. by the W. F. Hall Printing Company of Chicago, Illinois. No responsibility is undertaken for unsolicited manuscripts, photographs or artwork. Return envelope and sufficient return postage is required. Advertising rates at request. Subscriptions: 12 issues \$3.00; 24 issues 6.00. Mail subscriptions to Ray Palmer, Amherst, Wisconsin. Copyright 1963 by Palmer Publications, Inc.

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Lucifer peered into the blazing inferno that was the sun.



*The*  
**DEVIL'S EMPIRE**

By  
**Ray Palmer**

## FOREWORD

**HOW ANCIENT** is Man? This is a question that has been debated hotly for many centuries. According to Ussher's interpretation of biblical chronology, Man appeared on this planet in the year 4,004 B. C. According to the Chinese, that is too late a date; since they have a civilized calendrical record which goes back farther, indicating that Man's age is certainly greater, considering the pre-civilized era. Geologists and archeologists thrust Man's tenure back even more, and they tentatively place him as much as 25,000 years in the past. On the other hand, there is the school of thought among these same scientists that Man existed in primitive form on this planet for as much as several million years.

What is the real truth?

The best answer to that, of course, is that nobody knows.

But a better question, one that fulfils the varied phases of our actual research better than any other, is this: What is a man?

Is he the descendant of an ape? Is evolution a true explanation for our presence here today? Is the ape a descendant of a fish? Is the fish a descendant of an original single-celled form of life in the ancient seas? Is that single-celled animalism an accident; a fortuitous circumstance of a combination of carbon-base elements and heat and sunlight, and possibly the impact of cosmic rays?

Are we just *chance* beings?

Are we *alone* in the cosmos, with the exception of possible other *accidents*?

Is the total universe void, without form, without purpose, without plan, a *happenstance*?

Or is Man the son of God?

Scientifically speaking, we don't know. And scientifically speaking, we'll never know. The accident is unprovable. If we *do* succeed in creating a living cell in our test tubes, *it will not be an accident*. It will be purposeful! And all our theory of chance will topple with the act. Yet science goes on disproving itself by trying to prove the unprovable.

We have begun with an assumption: we have called ourselves *men*! But are we? If science is right, we are *animals*! If the bible is right, we are the descendants of the sons of God. Then, in neither case are we true *Men*.

*"And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all that they chose. And Jehovah said, My Spirit shall not strive with man for ever, for that he also is flesh: yet shall his days be a hundred and twenty years. The Nephilim were in the earth in those days, and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them: the*

*same were the mighty men that were of old, the men of renown." Genesis 6.1-4, Amer. Standard Ver.*

According to Genesis, then, originally there were the "flesh" life forms of earth, the Adamic race; there were also the "sons of God" (both flesh and spirit?) who came in unto the daughters of the Adamic race; and further, there were the Nephilim, who were in the earth. It was these latter who were the "mighty men of old, the men of renown."

Three kinds of men! The Adamic race; the half-breed offspring of the sons of God and the Adamic race; and the mysterious inhabitants of the (interior?) of the earth, the Nephilim.

Of which breed are we?

According to the bible, it was shortly after the sons of God mated with the daughters of Adam that "Jehovah repented that he had made man on the earth because his heart was only evil continually."

During 1944 through 1947, the author of this story, who was then editor of the science fiction magazine, *Amazing Stories*, published a series of stories by Richard S. Shaver which came to be known collectively as The Shaver Mystery. Shaver claimed it to be a true account, and certainly its reception was the most amazing in all the twenty-seven years of *Amazing Stories'* history. LIFE magazine called it, in its May 21, 1951 issue, a "celebrated rumpus." Following

is what LIFE further said about it, and about your writer:

"The Shaver business mainly concerned a race of malformed, sub-human creatures called 'deros' (from 'detrimental robots') who inhabited a vast system of underground cities all over the world. The original name of their habitat was Lemuria, and they had once been slaves of a Lemurian master race. But this master race had long since disappeared from the earth, leaving the ignorant and malicious deros in control of the great cities and wonderful machines it had built. Since then the deros had occupied themselves mainly in persecuting the human race who lived on the crust of the earth above them.

"The deros were responsible for all the evil in the world. All the catastrophes, from shipwrecks to sprained ankles, were directly attributable to their influence. They often appeared on the surface of the earth and were sufficiently human in appearance to pass unnoticed in a crowd. But they performed most of their harassments by telepathy, rays and other remote-control devices from their subterranean homes. Their underground cities communicated with the surface through various caves which were extremely dangerous for human beings to enter.

"The deros first came to light in a story called 'I Remember Lemuria,' published in 1945 in *Amazing*

**Stories.** The story was purportedly the work of a Pennsylvania welder named Richard Shaver who, it was alleged, had a 'racial memory' capable of recalling events that had happened to mankind since the beginning of time. The 'racial memory' idea, it turned out later, was an editorial device thought up by Raymond Palmer, editor of *Amazing Stories*, to lend verisimilitude to Shaver's account of Lemuria.

"The device proved unnecessary. Practically everybody seemed to remember Lemuria. The deros were apparently as familiar to *Amazing Stories* readers as they were to Shaver. Letters to the editor poured in at 10 times their usual volume. The letters stated that Lemuria still existed, that the ground beneath dozens of American cities was honeycombed with dero communities. Some identified their neighbors as deros; others reported or hinted at personal encounters with deros carried out under conditions of incredible danger. The deros were referred to as 'the fifth column from Hell.'

"For heaven's sake drop the whole thing!" wrote an excited ex-Air Force captain. 'You are playing with dynamite. My companion and I fought our way out of a cave with submachine guns. I have two 9-inch scars on my left arm . My friend has a hole the size of a dime in his right bicep. It was seared inside..How, we don't know. But we both believe we know more about the Shaver mystery than any other

pair Don't print our names. We are not cowards, but we are not crazy.'

"Editor Palmer expressed skepticism over these letters but confessed with an appropriate show of reluctance that the mounting evidence of the existence of the deros seemed overwhelming. Circulation zoomed. In the interests of science Palmer went to visit Shaver in his home and came away hinting darkly at strange happenings.

"... somebody . . . convinced his publisher . . . that the theories of Shaver and Palmer were in flat contradiction to Albert Einstein's Theory of Relativity. This, obviously, was too much. The Shaver stories were discontinued; Editor Palmer, still affirming his faith in the existence of deros, resigned his job."

LIFE's story, as are all stories hastily covered by individuals whose research effort is scanty, and whose information sources are heresay, (besides being written with tongue in cheek) is largely erroneous. The true story will be told later in a book being prepared which will cover the Shaver Mystery in every detail. However, the basic idea is correctly presented.

Many people have asked this writer (who did not resign [to go into business for himself] until two years after the Shaver Mystery, and who never affirmed any belief one way or the other regarding deros) what he actually thought of the cave people. They might ask

him what he thinks of the bible, with its Nephilim, its sons of God, its Adamic race. The answer would be the same: he *does* think of them!

Here, then, is a story based on what he thinks. It cannot be said to be truth; but neither can it be said to be fiction. It is the result of *thinking* about the things just outlined. Specifically its theme is the coming of evil into the world, with its development dictated by the conditions and kinds of men who lived in those days. The writer believes you will find it entertaining, thought-provoking, and even exciting reading. Let us go back, then, many thousands of years—how many no living man can tell with accuracy, for all memory of that ancient civilization save for scattered references in the bible and other religious writings, has perished. But it was long ago. . . .

\* \* \*

*"Satan, with vast and haughty  
strides advanced,  
Came towering, armed in adamant  
and gold."*

—John Milton

**L**IKE a comet, trailing a fiery tail thousands of miles long, the great ship *Star of the Morning* flashed through space. On one side it was black as ink, but on the side nearest the sun (and the sun was very near) the vessel's shiny metal skin blazed with brilliant gold. Never had the morning star been as bright!

To an observer unknowing of the existence of such ships as this the *Star of the Morning* would indeed have seemed to be a comet, so fiery was it and so long its tail of ionized gases. But there were no such observers, for in all the Sol System none were so ignorant. The *Star of the Morning* was well-known, but no more so than its lovable master, the Arch-Angle Lucifer, Son of the Morning.

Best loved was Lucifer in his homeland, Mu, the Continent of the Morning, on the third planet of Sol's family. The Angles of Mu had originally been blond and blue-eyed, but some time in the past Lucifer's bloodline had been crossed with a dark race of space. Dark was Lucifer—and handsome. Daring, dashing, fiery. He was ruler of Mu, and in addition, a Monitor Angle (Arch-Angle) in charge of the whole system of inner planets under their supreme head, their ruler and representative in the God Council—Elder Angle Aph. When Lucifer went forth his ship was literally a star, ruling the heavens, visible to the outermost limits of his domain. When he monitored, all obeyed his command.

Visible he was now, at distances greater than he knew, for as the *Star of the Morning* blazed past Sol within a million miles of its fiery corona, almost licked by the topmost flames, its image was duplicated in a great crystal sphere floating majestically in the center of a great council hall on a far, dark



world belonging to no sun's system. It was the God Council, and seated in the monitoring position before the great crystal globe was Elder Angle Aph. He turned now to face the others of the Council.

"Need we more evidence than that?" he asked, sweeping a hand toward the scene in the monitoring globe. "Would the Son of the Morning be so foolish as to brush the sun's surface in the face of our warning if the detrimental effects had not already taken hold of his judgment?"

None of the Council spoke, some nodded, but on the faces of all was certainty and agreement.

"Then we must act," said Aph. "Honorable Orion Sethantes, I yield to you. Speak your mind."

The leader of the Council regarded the shining, speeding ship in the monitor crystal gravely a moment, then he spoke, "I am Orion over you, commissioned to provide for many sun systems. It is

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<sup>1</sup>The symbol S means Sun. The name of our sun is Sol, a combination of the symbols for Sun, Origin and Life. The sun is the originator of life on this planet, as all who have waited for the Spring have discovered. In the designation of the gods, our planet is known as a "Sin" planet, because it is a planet "in the sun(light)" and derives its animal and vegetable life from the sun's energy. We are all "sinners" because we live in the light of the sun. It is no fault in us, but merely our location and derivation. Today we have a belief that sinners go to hell because of distorted memories of that day, long gone, when the Sinners were removed from this planet and taken to a dark world named Hel, not under the rays of a Tainted sun.

my will that Lucifer be arrested, brought to a place of cure, and that his peoples be evacuated to a safer world. There is great urgency: although protected to some extent from immediate serious mental damage by the ionic layers of the planet Sin, degeneration is inevitable and cannot be halted as long as Sol's heavy metals blaze. Let the Sinners<sup>1</sup> be taken to a dark world—such as the new planet, Hel, which is unpopulated."

"So be it!" As one man the Council voiced its approval of the edict.

\* \* \*

**O**N the great ship, *Star of the Morning*, Lucifer sat before the visi-screens, his handsome dark eyes slit-lidded as he peered into the blazing inferno of light that was the sun pouring its rays into the control room and bathing all in a fiery incandescence almost impossible to bear. He laughed aloud.

"A brilliant sight, but harmless!"

He turned to his Lieutenant. "What say the indicators, Karmatt? Are we in danger of our lives, as we have been warned?"

"There is some radiation, Sire, but no more than one would experience from a normal x-ray. Certainly no heavy particles to lodge like bullets in our bones and burn our blood, turning us into hopeless idiots."

Lucifer frowned. "Then what do you say is the true meaning of the warning from the Council that Sol

is on the verge of becoming a D-type sun, and that its rays are already dangerous to the point of preparing for evacuation of the planets?"

"The sun," said Karmatt, "is a flaming ball of carbon. If it has any heavy elements in it they are far beneath the surface, prisoned by their own weight. Not for millions of years will they become ignited and produce atomic explosions which will cast radioactives over the System. We have always been taught that, and our readings have ever indicated that it is true. Those readings have not changed, if our trip is any proof. If any considerable amount of radiation were present, we would know it now."

"What you are saying," observed Lucifer, "is that more lies beneath the warning than mere helpfulness?"

Karmatt shrugged. "Why leave a world that is a jewel of perfection as far as inhabitation goes?"

"Unless somebody else wants it . . ."

Karmatt grinned. "There will, in any event, be sufficient time to evacuate the planet if the warning comes true—perhaps hundreds of years—and then that someone can have the planet if they so desire. But until we find more danger than this, it would be foolish to succumb to so obvious a trick."

"My sentiments exactly," said Lucifer. "Therefore, I shall inform the Council that all proper steps are being taken to safeguard the

people of Sin, and especially of Mu, and that their best interests will be served to the utmost of my ability."

"A good decision," approved Karmatt. "After all, you are Arch-Angle of the inner planets. And if that is not the course desired, then they will show their true hand ere long."

Under Lucifer's guiding hand the *Star of the Morning* turned from its skirting of the sun's surface and headed back outward into the void in the direction of its home planet. As he rode, Lucifer pondered deeply—and shook his head in irritation. It was clear that there was some plot here, some threat to his leadership (which he suddenly regarded with new highness, and with ambition toward the future of even greater leadership) but why could he not put his finger on it? Why could he not divine it instantly, brilliantly and correctly?

He thought of Lilith. Ah, there was a woman! A fitting mate for a god, even though she was a daughter of man. He would go to her with his suspicions and his plans—and place them before her. She would tell him, with her woman's intuition, just where the fallacy lay.

Lilith was the daughter of the Chief Justice of the capital city of Mu, the fairest woman in the land, with hair the color of silver and eyes of a blue that rivaled the waters of the southern sea. It had been said that countless men had cast themselves into that sea after looking into her eyes and failing to



Lilith

win their attention. But Lilith had no eye for a common man—she had set her bird of paradise-feathered cap for a god, no less—and she had gained her objective. In Lucifer she found her rare beauty striking rare fire. In Lucifer she saw herself raised to the status of goddess, more than mere mortal, and destined to mother a superior race. And for these children she hoped to have, she planned—the mastery of the world of Sin. Ambitious beyond all measure was Lilith, daughter of Ra-Mon, Chief Justice of all Mu!

In Lilith, Lucifer had recognized the perfect foil for his own ambition. And also the perfect realization of his own plans to expand his greatness until it encompassed more than just a System Monitor. An Orion, no less, did Lucifer aspire to be. His ambition was newfound, growing upon him unaccountably in the few short years since he had been made Monitor Angle and had taken his monitoring ship *Star of the Morning* out into the brilliant light of Sol. He had taken to turning to Lilith to discuss his work, and it had been upon her advice that he had gone upon this unprecedented approach to Sol—to check the fact or the fallacy of the sun's newly-reported dangerous radiation. That report had come from the God Council, from the deeps of space so far away that none living on Sin had ever seen its place.

To Lilith the far-off authority represented a stumbling block to

her own ambitions, and a possible source of frustration. No one ever knew just what edicts would come from the Council, and whether they would serve the immediate interests of those who came under them. Therefore she had decided to put to a test the doubts that had grown in her mind. She dared to question the latest edict; and had been filled with exultance when Lucifer had revealed that he shared her opinion.

"It is as though I have just begun to see clearly!" he had exclaimed "True, I have been made an Arch-Angle, but is that not a sop to prevent more lofty ambitions? Aph I have seen, but an Orion I have not seen. I know not if there is one, and Aph but holding out an illusion to enforce his own appropriated authority. If there is an Orion, I would be one!

"These worlds love me. They know not the distant gods. I will give them a god they can see!"

Lilith had placed her finger on his bold lips. "Softly," she had murmured. "No authority is gained by noisy outpourings. It is deeds you must perform; deeds you do not forecast to every idle ear."

Memory of all this was in Lucifer's mind as he landed his ship at last on the surface of his home planet. And almost at once he began to put into operation a brilliant plan that had come upon him even as the bright rays of the sun had poured upon him in space. But first he went to Lilith and took her to

him, for she was very fair.

Thus came to fruition the secret ambition of Lilith.

\* \* \*

**O**N all Sin had never been any war—therefore there were no armies, no fleets, no engines of destruction. All had been ruled by the symbol of integration, the T. The ancient sign of the cross, universal over all the cosmos, insignia of the gods. On the star maps Sol bore a T beside it; but now, superimposed in red was an ominous D. D, the symbol of destruction, of disintegration, of death!

Lucifer did not know it, but that red D was now also inscribed beside his name in the Book of Judgment. Upon Lucifer's mind had fallen the Taint.<sup>2</sup>

Accordingly, Lucifer now began to put into operation his plan—the first idea for the application of force ever conceived on Earth. In short, Lucifer had invented the concept of War. And with it he had

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<sup>2</sup>The symbols of T and D are the most important in all the languages of Earth. It is no accident that the cross is the symbol of Christ, nor is it an accident that the Devil's name begins with D. He is D-evil! Christ is the Cross-T. T is the incoming value; D is the departing value. The vortex that constructs matter ever whirls inward upon itself; the disintegration that dissolves matter spreads ever outward into nothing. A rather humorous (to us today) note is found in the word Taint. Literally it is slang, T-ain't. And there was no T in Lucifer now that his mental powers had been set into destructive rather than creative channels. The current of his life-force had been reversed.



invented the tools of war, weapons that could accelerate the process of D to a tremendous extent.

Lucifer knew full well the science of T and D. But because of his Taint, he was unable longer to distinguish true construction from destruction. As he labored to build his weapons, he labored in the mistaken, reversed idea that he was *building*, not tearing down. He saw only in his work the formation of objects, not the potential for the ultimate destruction they would certainly cause. The D in them was hidden from him by his sun-blinded insight.

He was building a D-fence behind which to establish his personal Empire. But a defense is not designed to hold things in, only to keep them out. And thus the cancer growing within his mind was destined to spread beyond his expectations. For war is the most virulent of spreading cancers.

Thus it was that his intentions (which were basically good insofar as he conceived them) were misinterpreted by his neighbors, and they, too, began to prepare for war. The first armament race in history was on.

Fired by his enthusiasm the people of Mu fell in behind their beloved leader. Brought into even closer communion by the marriage of Lilith to Lucifer it became an easy thing to form a mighty army to wield the arms Lucifer was building.

All through his building, Lucifer

had held to Lilith's advice to refrain from bespeaking his acts; and so it was that other races of the planet did not understand his motives. They did not know that Lucifer aspired to be an Orion and to rule the Sol System, even the Polaris Galaxy, in beneficence and benevolence. All they could see was the mighty preparation for offense; for that was the only way the preparations could be construed, as nowhere was there any menace visible which might be an attacking force against which these weapons and army could be used as defense. Being only men, they knew nothing of the God Council, and the regulations of T by which they ruled.

Then came the day when Lucifer first tested his new-built power. A great new battleship rose from its cradle in Mu and headed out over the ocean toward a tiny deserted island. . . .

\* \* \*

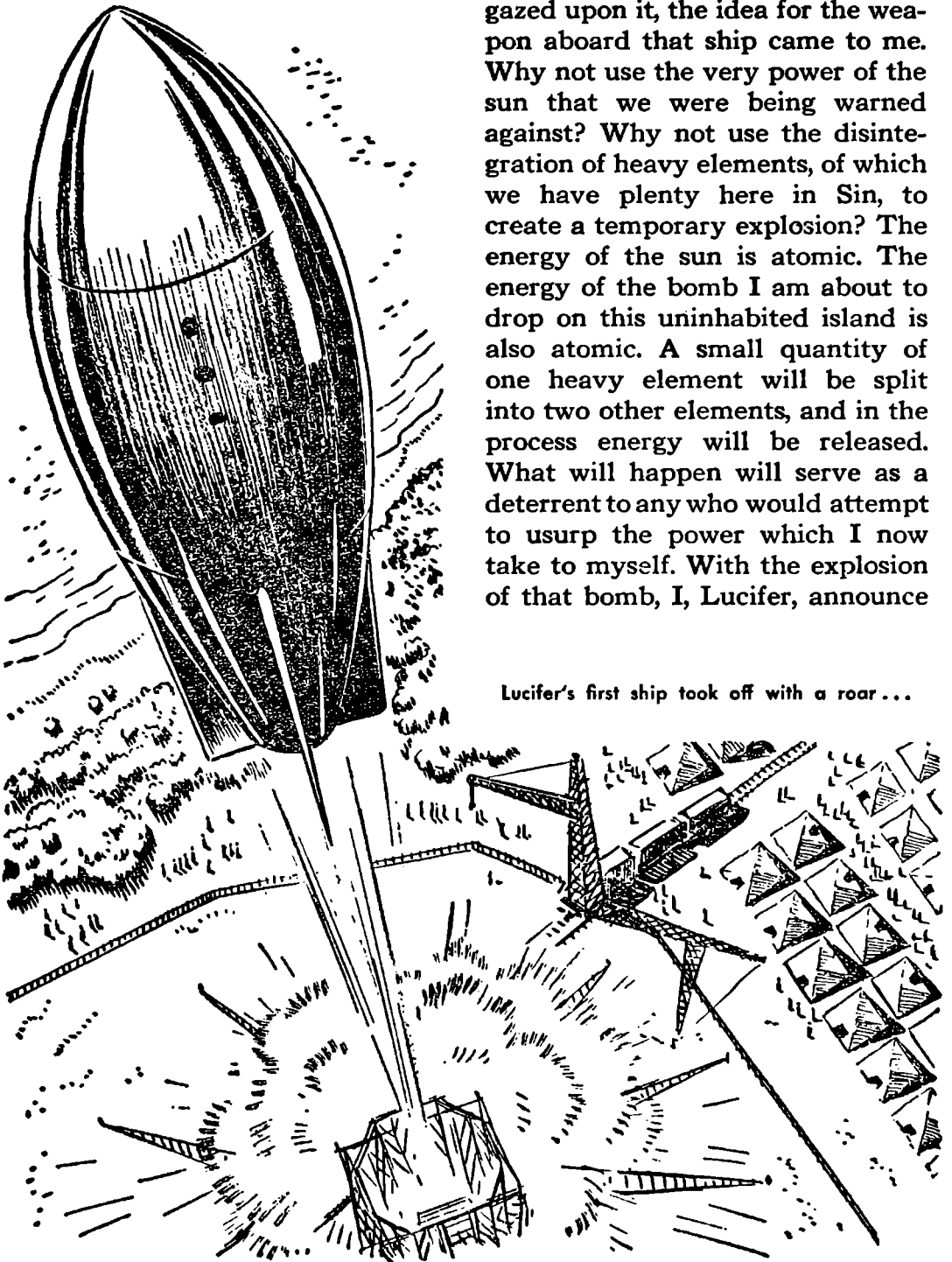
“**N**OW we shall see!” exulted Lucifer, seating himself beside the monitoring crystal in his palace. He glanced lovingly at his wife, who smiled back at him with pride in him. On the other side of the room sat Karmatt, watching the crystal sphere intently. In it was mirrored the tiny island, an emerald jewel in a blue sea.

“What is it that we are about to see?” he asked.

Lucifer smiled proudly. “Remember when we went to the sun

to see if it were really D? While I gazed upon it, the idea for the weapon aboard that ship came to me. Why not use the very power of the sun that we were being warned against? Why not use the disintegration of heavy elements, of which we have plenty here in Sin, to create a temporary explosion? The energy of the sun is atomic. The energy of the bomb I am about to drop on this uninhabited island is also atomic. A small quantity of one heavy element will be split into two other elements, and in the process energy will be released. What will happen will serve as a deterrent to any who would attempt to usurp the power which I now take to myself. With the explosion of that bomb, I, Lucifer, announce

Lucifer's first ship took off with a roar ...



myself Orion over the Polaris Galaxy!"

All three in the monitoring room became intent on the sphere, and as the great warship raced toward the island their excitement grew. At last the ship itself came into view, hurtling straight for the island. It passed over, and from it dropped a tiny object. The ship went on swiftly on its original course at top speed to get beyond range of the destruction it had loosed, and within a few minutes it had dwindled to a speck in the far distance.

Then the bomb went off. On the screen there was a flash of light as brilliant as the sun. It filled the monitoring chamber with fiery incandescence and Lilith cried out involuntarily.

"You see!" said Lucifer triumphantly to Karmatt. "It is the same energy. Harmless at a distance, but . . ."

A gigantic mushroom cloud leaped up now, and the incandescence died down. They watched as the cloud rose, and for a half-hour they marveled at the tremendous evidence of power unleashed. Then, as the cloud drifted away, Karmatt loosed an exclamation.

"The island! It's gone!"

It was true. Where before a green gem of land had protruded from the water, now only muddy brown waves lashed angrily, forming a horrid blot in the midst of the ocean's blue.

But Lucifer's eyes were fixed on

the far horizon. He had known what would happen to the island. His interest was in the ship, his mighty weapon of D-fence.

"The ship," he muttered. "It should be turning back now to inspect the site of the island and take radiation tests. Where is it?" He spun the dials of the monitoring sphere and the scene in it jumped forward at great speed, crossing the blue water in the direction the vessel had gone. For several minutes it quested onward, then it slowed. Under Lucifer's guiding hand it seemed to descend toward the water where a column of black smoke was rising. Then as it swooped down to a close-up view, Lucifer's fist crashed down on the arm of his chair and he uttered a great oath.

There, sinking into the sea, a shattered wreck, was the great vessel; and even as they watched, horrified, it disappeared beneath the waves.

"What happened to it?" cried Lilith.

Grim-faced, Lucifer swept the monitoring device onward, toward a distant shore looming in the east. Then he pointed.

"There!" he said harshly.

Now it was Karmatt who swore.

"Three ships! Fleeing. It was they who shot our bomber down!"

"But who are they?" cried Lilith.

"That's what I intend to find out," said Lucifer grimly. He turned his knobs and the images of the three ships grew larger until they filled the screen. Then all at once

they seemed to be inside the ship in the rear.

"Black men," said Lucifer. "The Atlans! They are making war on us!"

But he was wrong. The Atlans had but defended themselves against what had seemed an attack headed toward their shores—and after having witnessed the potency of that attack, they had rushed out to forestall it.

That they had succeeded stung Lucifer to the quick. With a gesture of rage he snapped off the monitoring ray and rose towering to his feet.

"If it's war they want . . . !"

He rushed from the room, followed by Karmatt.

\* \* \*

**D**EEP beneath the surface of Mu, where no monitoring ray had ever penetrated, lay a great system of caverns. No one, not even their inhabitants, knew their extent, but it was vast beyond belief. And in one of the caverns, the most ornately furnished and magnificent of many ornate and magnificent caves, sat a man (or was he a man?) named Neph. At the moment he was listening to a report from his Chief of Intelligence.

"If what you are telling me is true, Zho-bab, it is a serious matter."

"Yes, Lord Neph, it is. If the Council ever orders a search of the planet, we will be sure to be discovered, and although I believe we

are impregnable here, we may be bottled up and our future plans for emergence into the galaxy throttled."

"And they *will* discover us!" said Neph emphatically. "Even now their instruments must be recording the atomic explosion Lucifer has set off. When they arrive to arrest him—you say the order has been given?—they will know that the concept was never his own, but was planted there while he was off guard in the sun's ion-field."

"Perhaps they will not suspect the deed was done from here, as it occurred so far from this planet. . . ."

"They are not fools. And also, they are thorough. They will scan the whole System, if necessary, and even the galaxy. Unless. . . ."

"Unless what?"

"Unless we can somehow step up the activity of the sun, so that more D will be thrown out than they anticipate. If we can affect the minds of the arresters, perhaps we can mislead them."

"We might. They will come prepared for a calculated amount of radiation, and perhaps before they realize the danger is more potent, we can infect them with the Taint."

"Exactly. Meanwhile we must not make ourselves known to Lucifer and yet enlist ourselves in his cause."

Zho-bab smiled. "Wisely said, and with an element of humor. I am sure he would not enlist in *our* cause, even if he knew we existed.



His vanity is beyond compare! Imagine his ambition to become an Orion!"

"As well attempt to eat the sun!" agreed Neph with an answering smile. "But sometimes great ego can be a potent weapon, in the right hands."

Zho-bab turned to go, but Neph interrupted him. "What of ourselves. if we accelerate the D activity of Sol? Are we safe here?"

"Perfectly so. Since we installed the air purifiers we are no longer exposed even to the contaminated atmosphere of the surface. And no particle, no matter how active, can penetrate four miles of solid rock or water."

"Good! Then we Nephilim will be safe even if Lucifer fails in the mission we have set him."

"That we will be."

Zho-bab left the chamber, and Neph sat silently staring after him. As he sat, he thought deeply, and he made an awesome sight as he sat there in contemplation. Neph, like all the Nephilim, was a big man, more than eight feet tall, and bulking in proportion to his height. Originally he had not been named Neph, but when he had become the ruler, the name went with the position.

He was thinking now of his plans (the plans his predecessors had developed before him) of acquiring the entire galaxy for the Nephilim, undisturbed by the god-race whose half-breed offspring they were, sons of a planet now but

shattered remnants in an orbit beyond the fourth planet of the Sol System.

Supposedly all his ancestors had been destroyed with the planet that had been their birthplace, but the gods had reckoned without the original Neph, who had made a great discovery, and found a strange and wonderful hiding-place inside the planet on whose surface the gods had placed the seed of a new Adamic race.

For long centuries (hundreds of them) the Nephilim, as they called themselves, had prepared for their emergence again into the System, and ultimately into the galaxy. Great was their science, derived from the original discovery of a secret of nature by the original Neph. It had been the present Neph who had brought the sun into premature radioactivity, knowing that it would mean abandonment of the System and quarantine for many milleniums. Yet, the amount of Taint was too little to move his plans along at the pace he desired, and he had hit upon the idea of creating an illusion of greater radioactivity than actually existed to accelerate the evacuation of the System and thereby leave it free to the activities of the Nephilim until their larger plan took shape. And Lucifer was the core of that illusion. If the God Council believed that the Taint was so great as to bring the evil of war upon the galaxy, they would quarantine the System. Then Neph could prepare

the great invasion that would destroy the control of the Council in the galaxy, and give it into the hands of the Nephilim.

"No, Lucifer, you will not fail. Your arm will be mightier than you know. You will never become Orion, but you will not fail!"

He smiled grimly, and in that smile was little of kinship with man.

\* \* \*

**B**UT sometimes the plans of mighty men go astray. For, although Lucifer had great ego, so that he was even blinded to the actual strength of his own right arm, not so Lilith, who, most beautiful of all women, was also most crafty—and most curious.

Thus it was that when Lucifer embarked with his great fleet toward the shores of Atlan, she sat constantly before the monitoring globe, scanning the whole affray in all its detail. For all her inner hardness, Lilith was of delicate sensibilities. No woman of such beauty can be oblivious to the factors of beauty. She knew the value of her white skin, of her silvery hair, of her incredibly blue eyes. And her clothing always was of exactly the correct hue to accentuate and complement her natural coloring. Even the color of the sunlight on any given day played a part in her selection of attire. An artist was Lilith.

When Lucifer's crimson rays lashed down at the topless towers

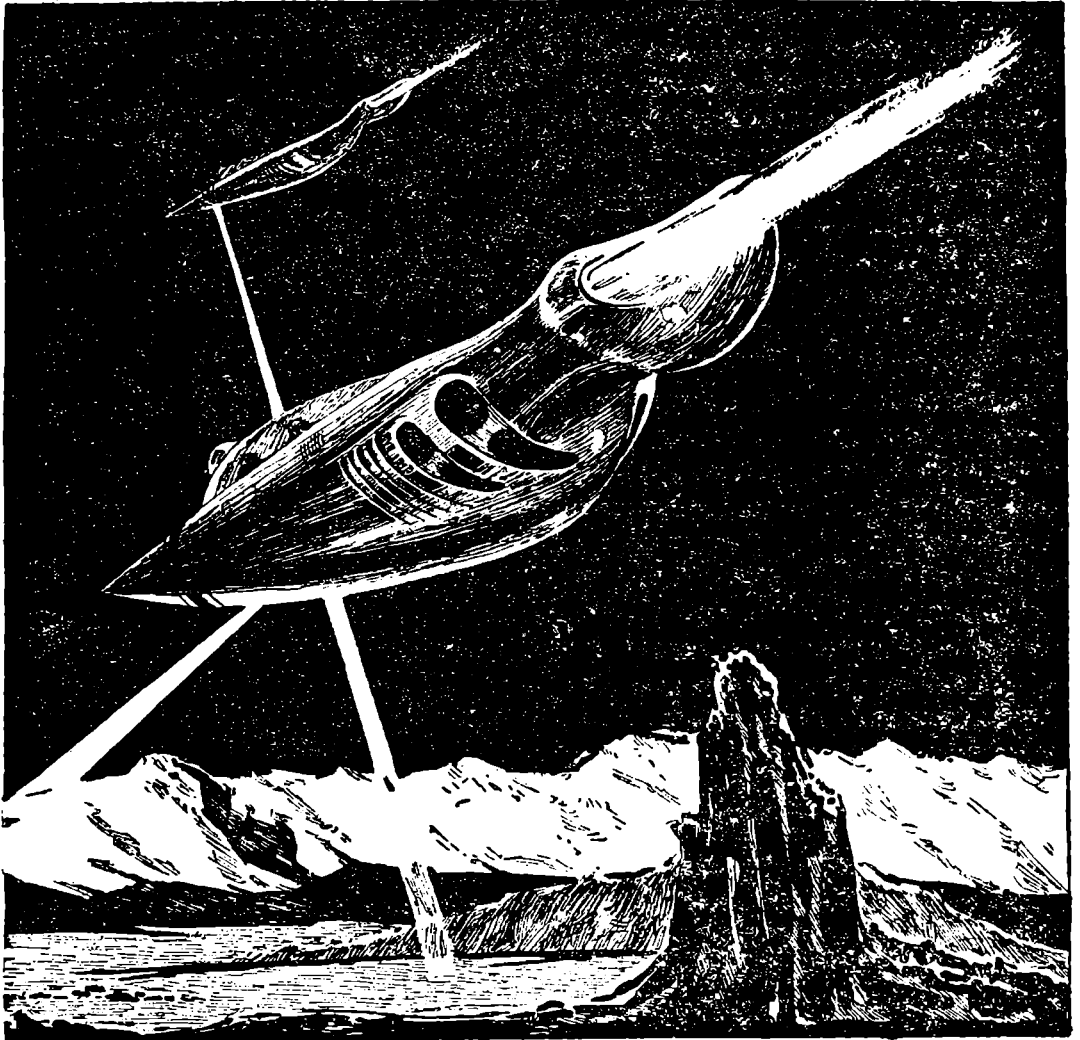
of Atlan, sending them tumbling into ruin, smashing the power of the planet's second greatest race, she was aware of the grim beauty of the colorful scene as it came to her over the monitoring ray. For a time she watched it, even picturing the vivid hue of the red ray as the hue of a new gown—and rejecting it because it would dominate her own more delicate coloring—until she sensed an off-hue quality to the rays; something blue and cold that gave them the slightest of purplish tinge. Her intent eyes searched and analyzed, and then she drew a sharp breath. There, visible plainly now that she sought for them, were separate, superimposed rays on those of Lucifer. And as she watched the unaccountable might of her husband's avenging fist, she began to seek for the source of the cause.

Slowly she moved the knobs of the monitoring ray. Nearer came the scene of conflict. Downward dipped her field of vision. Then with a gasp she snapped off the ray. A moment she sat, motionless as white marble, then rose to her feet, her mind a purposeful blank. Her lips were tight so that no breath whatever might pass them lest she utter inadvertently one word of what she had learned.

Lilith had discovered still another potential menace to her ambitions. And Lilith had come too far now to be thwarted. There would be no noisy outpourings from her, even to Lucifer. But there



Lucifer's ships lashed rays down at Atlan.



would be deeds. . . .

\* \* \*

**L**UCIFER returned from Atlan master of the planet. And he returned to the acclaim of his people, drunk with their first taste of power, and convinced they had destroyed a treacherous attacker. Justice was on their side, and justification. And if among them had been

doubters, now they saw that Lucifer was their protector and champion. And in a great oration, Lucifer gave them the peace of the planet, and a promise of perpetual safety from any further attacks such as they had suffered. Born into the world was propaganda, although in all truth, not even Lucifer knew that it was propaganda. But its success was obvious to him,



and he learned a secret he catalogued carefully for future use.

But his triumph was short-lived, for that night, in the privacy of the palace chambers, he sought to take Lilith to him and she resisted him. Amazed, he looked at her.

"Why do you shun me? Have I given you cause for rancor? Have I not given you the beginnings of a great empire?"

She shook her head, her deep blue eyes mysteriously veiled. "My Lord, I am supremely happy with the gift you have brought me today. And I would reward you, but . . ."

"But what?"

She motioned toward the window and the brilliant moonlight that streamed through it, making of the room a fairy place. "Draw the curtains, Lucifer. I would have it dark. ."

He lifted his eyebrows. "Dark! Would you hide your beauty from the moonlight that sets it off so perfectly?"

She dropped her head demurely. "Tonight I prefer the dark. Sometimes when one cannot see, one can feel much more . . ."

Lucifer rose to his feet and laughed. "Ah but you are the coy one. I had thought you had suddenly gone shy, as is not your wont." He strode to the window and drew the golden curtain that shut' out the moonlight. Then in the dark he groped his way back to her.

"And now . . ." he said.



. . . And now Atlan lay  
conquered at Lucifer's feet.



She pulled him down to her, placed her lips close to his ear.

"I must tell you something," she whispered. "Hold your caresses for a moment, for we are in great danger. Only listen, make no utterances, and if I cease speaking, know that I have a reason, that I avoid others hearing. I wanted it dark so that I could see any listening monitor ray."

Then she poured into his incredulous ear the secret she had learned—and the solution.

So it was that the Nephilim remained unaware that their hiding place had been discovered, and an enemy forewarned whose power



they were bound to underestimate, for they knew nothing of the wiles of woman.

\* \* \*

**N**OW that the Atlans had been vanquished, Lucifer's warlike preparations took on an accelerated pace until it seemed he was

preparing feverishly for something tremendous. And indeed he was, but to the Nephilim watching from their hideaway far beneath the surface of the earth it was as inexplicable as to the surface inhabitants of Mu, who were themselves engaged in the vast undertaking.

Countless weapons of a hand variety were manufactured, and vehicles of transportation of many types apparently intended for the roughest of terrain. Foot soldiers numbering millions were trained and kept in readiness.

"Does he think the God Council will send a gigantic invasion force to arrest him?" asked Neph one day of Zho-bab.

"It is hard to say what he thinks," replied the Nephilim. "We have managed to disturb the sun's equilibrium a bit more by hundreds of atomic bombs dropped into it by remote control, causing great storms on its surface. Even the Muians have noticed the sunspots. But it seems the effect is as we desired, saturating the Sol System, and that the mental processes of Lucifer and his countrymen are being affected even more strongly than we expected they would."

"Then when the God Council's arresting emissaries arrive, they may find it difficult to reason correctly," said Neph with satisfaction. "Our plans are going very well indeed!"

But Neph's plans were not going well, and he was to learn a new meaning of the word saturation before many more months had passed.

At last the day came when Lucifer was ready. While he worked, Lilith had been busy spying and ferreting with the monitoring ray, and the Nephilim would have been surprised indeed to know how

much she knew of them. All this information Lilith passed on to Lucifer in the innocent-seeming privacy of her bedroom, and always in complete darkness where the phosphorescence of a spying ray would betray its presence.

The first indication Neph had of the disaster that was upon him was the gigantic explosion that marked the destruction, deep beneath the surface, of the main power plant that armed his weapons. That one brilliant stroke, accomplished by loosing an atomic bomb into the ventilating shafts of the power plant, made the battle an even one of arms against arms, muscle against muscle. And as millions of men poured down the ventilating shafts into every Nephilim city, hundreds of thousands of giant Nephilim learned, with their leader, the meaning of the word saturation. For Lucifer saturated their defenses with the weight of flesh he hurled against them. The result was inevitable.

The Nephilim worked a horrible holocaust of death on the men of Mu, until ventilating tunnels and access corridors were choked with corpses. But ever the piles of human corpses overlay the bodies of the slain giants.

No longer were there giants in the earth, only death and foul corruption and the end of a centuries-long dream of conquest.

Neph himself was taken prisoner and brought before Lucifer and Lilith, who sat upon the throne he

himself had occupied for so long. He faced Lucifer, utterly crushed, confused, beaten.

"How did you know we existed?" he asked. "How did you discover all our secrets? How did you prepare this mighty attack?"

Lucifer smiled at him, but there was no mirth in his smile. "Perhaps you, like the God Council, have been mistaken about the sun. Perhaps there is no deadly radiation twisting the mind of man into faulty thinking channels. Perhaps the faulty thinking is in the degeneration of old age that has set its senile fingers on your own minds. For know that it was a mere woman, a daughter of man, who utterly destroyed you. I but followed her bidding, acknowledged her craft, placed might behind her plotting."

Neph turned to look at Lilith and for a moment he stared at her. Then he nodded. "Yes. That would be true. You are still not as mad as your husband, whose mind is almost beyond repair through exposure to the full force of Sol's D emanations. It would be your mind, still clear and bright, that could carry out this amazing thing without being detected by us. We placed no estimation on the men of Mu, fearing them not, and even less upon its women. That there was one woman among them all whose mind-power ranked with that of the god-race, was our undoing."

"You are a fool!" said Lucifer.

"You yourself are mad, to call me mad. I have been to the sun's very edge, with instruments, and the danger you say exists is a figment of imagination, or perhaps more truly, a lie for a purpose I have suspected from the beginning."

Neph looked at the Arch-Angle reflectively. He seemed now to have recovered some of his composure, resigned himself to the end of his dream, expected nothing more from life but death. "What is it that you have suspected?" he asked.

Lucifer waved a hand aloft. "This is a fair world, and a fair System. It is the jewel of a galaxy that is most perfect. From far beyond, doubtless from much less fair regions, comes a warning without foundation. It can be for only one reason, to rob us by stealth of our birthright, so that, abandoned, it may be picked up without struggle."

Neph looked at Lucifer steadily. "Perhaps even in defeat I am to have my revenge. But not being vindictive, I am going to offer you instead the only hope of salvation you have. Listen to me now, Lucifer, for I speak words of wisdom far beyond your science to comprehend. I only hope that your mind is not too badly affected to accept the truths I am about to reveal to you. But if it is, then I will base my statements upon proof which I can produce in due time, if given the opportunity. And unless you slay me on the spot, that



opportunity cannot fail me.”

“I slay no defenseless man,” said Lucifer angrily.

“I am not exactly a man,” returned Neph. “My ancestors, like yours, were both man and god. On a world now destroyed. Let me tell you of it, briefly, that you may lend proper weight to my words.”

“Tell on,” said Lucifer, interest lighting his eyes.

“The same thing happens on all worlds. The seed of life is planted by the god-race, and grows until by evolution it has reached the status known as human. A Hu-man is something less than a Man. Perhaps it is a man without a soul—I do not know myself. But Hu-man dies, and Man does not. But without the gods, there can be no men. It is when the gods mate with the humans that Man is born into the worlds. That new half-breed can rise to greater spheres, progressing ever onward. Unless he has a blight. Unless he is Tainted. If the Taint is not too great, he can be cured. If he cannot be cured, he is quarantined. We, the Nephilim, were mighty men of old, of renown and power. But when our science reached the point where we loosed the Taint on our own planet, we builded a fire that we could not put out. It remained to the god-races to extinguish it. This they did by utter destruction, and by so drastic a means only because they said they wished to save the remaining planets from a like fate. They cut us out like a cancer, and

although we might have been cured, there was no time. Except for one family, the family of Neph.

“Neph had discovered a great secret, and it had led him deep into one of the moons of his planet where he was safe from the madness that overtook his fellows. Luckily, being sane, he kept safeguards, and thus it was that he learned of the approaching expedition of gods to destroy the cancer that had been introduced on his planet, and he escaped to this world. Here he used his secret, the secret of eternal life in the flesh, and lived in secret in the caverns. And for many ages we have planned to come forth, to take what we need to live as the gods we really are. For what better is a god born to eternal life, than a man who has attained the same goal by his own science? Indeed, is not the Man superior to the God, by reason of Intent over Chance?”

Lucifer frowned. “Already your story is false. You say you are immortal, yet observe how you Nephilim have died.”

“By accident, yes. By force, yes. But naturally, no. Given the means to continue our science, we can renew our flesh eternally. But let that go—I have more important things to say to you. Perhaps better would it be if I showed you the record and said nothing, allowing you to draw your own conclusions.”

Neph stepped forward to the monitoring globe that occupied the

center of the room and snapped on the switch. "We will play back the record of the past few months . . ." he said.

As an image began forming in the crystal sphere, Lucifer and Lilith leaned forward and stared intently. It was the God Council they saw

"You see," observed Neph. "Even our monitors are better than yours. Never had yours such range."

Before them Lucifer saw the enactment of the scene in which his arrest was decreed.

"Why have they not yet come?" he asked.

"It takes time to prepare a fleet of vessels sufficient to remove the whole population of a world."

But now the scene had changed, and Lilith uttered a cry of dismay as she saw the giant ships, as big as satellites, speeding through space toward them.

"The ships have been built," said Neph. "Even now they approach the limits of the Sol System. It may be that as you emerge upon the surface, they will have arrived. Your arrest is near."

"They will never arrest me!" said Lucifer arrogantly. "Even those huge ships I can destroy."

But Lilith looked at him. "No, Lucifer, that would not answer the problem. Destroy them, and more would come . . ."

"Perhaps not," said Lucifer, still with flaming eyes. "The God Council, if its own words be true, never

wages war. Rather would they quarantine the System than fight."

"Wrong again," said Neph. "First, your weapons would be impotent against them. They come in a manner you know nothing of. There are dimensions unknown to you, wherein atom bombs are to no avail. When they come, you will be arrested and your people taken from the planet. There is only one way you can be saved . . ."

Lilith laid a hand on Lucifer's arm as he started to rise angrily to his feet. "And what way is that, Lord Neph?" she asked.

"It may be that even a few days in the Tainted System may cloud their judgment. It may be that they can be caused to reason falsely, be swayed to an argument. Certain it is that the God Council has always advocated the principle of free will, when that will is proven to be untainted. Convince them that you have not been seriously affected by the Taint, and avoid detention."

"How can that be done, and what will be gained by it?"

"Go out to meet them. Welcome them with joy. Prepare the evacuation of the peoples of Sin with all possible speed, then abandon the planet."

"You are mad!" gasped Lucifer. "Come, Lilith, let us listen no longer to this madman."

But Lilith retained her grasp on his arm. "I see that you have not finished speaking, Lord Neph," she said gently. "Say on."

"I will speak briefly and simply," said Neph, a peculiar look in his eyes. "Leave your armies here in the caverns, where they are. Go swiftly to the surface and send down the women who are wives to these men, and their children. These caverns will hold ten million. And support them. Then return to the surface, allow the rest to be evacuated, pretending to aid in the process. Then contrive some seeming accident in space that will make the God Council believe you perished and return to the caverns, there to build for the conquest you plan. The System will be quarantined, the sun's rate of D will subside, for it is we who have accelerated it, and you will be safe, uninfected, and in peace to perfect your plans. There is no other way to carry them out, for once the God Council works its will on you, your dream will die forever, as has mine."

Lilith looked at him reflectively. "I see, and what is your part in this plan?"

Lucifer jerked his arm away from Lilith and he stood erect. "That is easy to see," he said with a snarl. "Did he not say he might have his revenge even in defeat? He has some trick in mind . . ."

"Nay," said Neph, a strange tragedy in his voice. "The revenge I spoke of was two-fold. On you I would visit the future fate that has fallen on me, by bequeathing my fallen empire to you; and on the God Council I would gain my

revenge for my destroyed race by presenting them with a potential problem that may conceivably overwhelm them, even as you plan, in this galaxy. In this chamber you will find the secret of eternal flesh life to aid you. As for myself, I take the death of my fathers!" And so saying, he drew a dagger from his tunic and stabbed himself through the heart.

"By the gods!" gasped Lucifer. "What manner of man . . .?"

"Said he not that he was something other than man?" whispered Lilith. "But one thing he has proved . . ."

"What is that?" asked Lucifer.

"By his death he has proved his sincerity. Only one interpretation can now be placed on his plan as he outlined it to us . . ."

Lucifer looked wonderingly at her. "You are right!" he exclaimed. "It is the answer to a problem otherwise insoluble. For the time my empire is here, in the Nether Regions of the Nephilim."

"Yes," said Lilith. "Here we shall be bound for a time, but the bonds will be of our own making. One day the time will come when we will strike them from us and be masters of a galaxy forever free of the influence of gods we want not."

She stepped from the throne. "Come, Lucifer, we have work to do, in haste."

\* \* \*

**I**F the preparations prior to the invasion of the Nether Regions

had been conducted in secret, the carrying out of Neph's plan was even more secret, and in the dead of night millions of the inhabitants of Mu were singled out, rushed to what were designated as embarking points to those who remained. In reality they disappeared into the shafts leading to the caverns and their loved ones, husbands and soldiers.

Meanwhile Lilith kept close watch for the appearance of the on-coming ships of the God Council, and it was nearly a week before she first detected the giant ship in the lead. Instantly she gave the warning to Lucifer, and under cover of the remaining few nights, Lucifer sealed up the openings and concealed them from observation.

At length all was in readiness and Lucifer and Lilith embarked in their own ship to go out to meet the vessels of the Council, now well within the orbit of Jupiter.

"Do you think we have fooled them thus far?" asked Lucifer.

"I think so, my Lord. I have watched their monitors closely, and none seem to have detected anything unusual. In fact, they have kept only a superficial watch, seeming confident of what they will find when they arrive."

Lucifer smiled. "Then they will find nothing. Even the factories where our arms were manufactured have been destroyed. They will think that we have disarmed, once the menace of the Atlans, who went mad, was removed. They will be-

lieve our story of our love for peace."

Soon they were able to see the approaching ships of the God Council with the naked eye, and Lilith gasped as she saw the actual size of the ship in the lead.

"It is as large as a world!" she exclaimed. "Well it is that we decided not to resist them. Our bombs would have made but pin-pricks on the skin of such a ship!"

"Perhaps not," said Lucifer. "If we had time to prepare, to do more research into atomic energy, we could find a way to create a contagious reaction. Then, once started, the disintegration would grow until it engulfed even a ship like that, making of it an artificial sun."

"Our plan will give us time to create such things," said Lilith.

They approached the huge ship now, and as they neared, a voice spoke to them in their control room. "Welcome Son of the Morning, and Daughter of the Red Star. The heart of Aph is filled with joy that you come out to greet me."

"Welcome to the Sol System Great Aph!" said Lucifer in ringing tones. "That you have arrived in time is our great delight. Long have we hoped, and hard have been our labors to prepare for your coming. Even though we could not know when you would arrive, yet with the faith in our hearts, we prepared, knowing that the great Orions who govern the galaxies would take all suitable measures. I sent you a message that I was at

work.”

“We received your message, and delighted in it,” came the voice. “In order that we may now carry out our plans with the greatest efficiency, what have you accomplished?”

“I have checked the radiation of Sol and found it even more dangerous than your warning indicated. Therefore, I have prepared the people of my continent for evacuation, trusting that you would bring suitable ships to convey them from this world. Many ships have I built to aid, but insufficient is my knowledge to know what is truly necessary, and how far we must journey. But this I know—we must leave the planet in all haste. Our minds fail us, and my own brain whirls with D. Rescue us, Oh Aph, before it is too late!”

“You have done well,” said Aph. “Be not too concerned, for it is obvious that the Taint has not yet become so serious as to be incurable. We can cure the people of Mu once we have removed them to Hel, a dark world safe from radiation.”

The two ships were very near now, and as Lucifer’s vessel plunged on an opening appeared in the ship of Aph and took Lucifer’s vessel into it as a cloud would engulf a mote.

Once inside Lilith and Lucifer stared in wonder at the magnificence of the scene before them. Here in this gigantic vessel were lakes, rivers, forests, a miniature

sun, and cities, orderly and well built and waiting for occupancy. They landed their ship at a place to which Aph directed them verbally, and stepped out.

Before them now appeared Aph, clad in white gown, bearded and majestic in appearance. He took Lucifer’s hand in his and drew the Arch-Angle to him, kissing him. Lucifer kissed him back fondly, then stepped aside as Lilith came forward.

“Is it meet that a daughter of man kiss a god?” she asked shyly.

Aph smiled at her, and took both her hands in his. “Think you that even a god is blind to the beauty of the daughters of men? Nowhere in all the universe, my child, is there more beautiful than you. Indeed, my daughter, your embrace would be most pleasurable.”

And Lilith, radiant and misty-eyed, lifted her lips to those of Aph and kissed him as a child would kiss a grandparent. As she drew back in shyness and disengaged her hands, a strange light glowed for an instant in Aph’s eyes, then it was gone. Lilith noted it, and for a moment she was troubled. But she concealed her perturbation and turned to Lucifer with an ecstatic clapping of her delicate hands.

“Oh let us inspect this wonderful vessel! How great indeed are the gods, and how wonderful will be our lot under their care! To be rescued from the awful danger that threatens the planet Sin! Lucifer,

I could weep for joy. . . .”

And Aph smiled down at her fondly.

\* \* \*

**I**T was dawn when the great rescuing fleet of the Council landed on the broad plains of Mu, where already millions of the people of Mu were encamped, awaiting evacuation. So splendid was the scene as the brilliant ships, shining with a gold color that set the sun to shame, that the populace was caught up in an ecstatic fervor that literally lifted their souls from their bodies with joy.

Hundreds of thousands of gods came from the ships and mingled with the people, and a day of recreation was declared. Together men and gods consorted, and watched spectacles of such magnificence that the inhabitants of Mu were rendered speechless with wonder. Musicians played music never before heard on the planet, and triumphant songs echoed through the air as though from the clouds themselves. Colored banners unfurled through the sky like the northern lights magnified a hundred-fold. And that night, none on Mu slept, nor felt the need for sleep as beneficial and soothing rays and emanations played on them from the ships, restoring them to such vigor and well-being as they had not realized possible, mute evidence of the poisons that had been on them for years from the Tainted sun.

But Lucifer and Lilith sensed it not, intent on playing their parts. And cleverly they did it, so that Aph, who seemed intent on bestowing them with his every font of love and tenderness, seemed completely pacified from doubt or suspicion.

At last came the end of the celebration, and the beginning of the great task of embarking all the people of the continent aboard the ships. For two weeks the job went on, and more than sixty-four million people left their homes and entered the cities built inside the great ships. As each ship was filled, it took off into the sky and began the long trip out into the void where sailed the dark world, Hel, waiting them to become their foster-planet.

“What is the planet like?” asked Lilith in curiosity as she sat with Aph, watching another of the great ships take off.

Aph took her hand in his and said, “Close your eyes, my child, and I will *show* you.”

Wondering, Lilith did as she was bid, and strangely, before her inner vision, a scene began to unfold. At first she saw nothing but millions of stars, brighter than she had ever seen stars before. Then she saw a vast looming bulk before her. As it engulfed the whole heavens, she saw it was a sphere, a world unlit by any sun. Dimly mountains loomed, eternally frozen and dark, except for starlight.

“How can we live here?” she

murmured, startled.

"See on," said Aph.

Onward her inner sight went, until it passed through the crust of the planet, and burst through it into an inner world, vast beyond belief, and brilliantly lit by a flaming red sun that hung at its exact center like a glowing coal.

"That is a pure carbon sun, and it warms the interior of this world." came Aph's voice. "It is a light and heat entirely suitable to men, although gods would find it unbearably dark."

"What is the light of the gods like?" asked Lilith.

"You could not bear it, especially in your condition," said Aph softly.

Abruptly Lilith opened her eyes and stared into those of her guide. For a long moment their gaze held, then Lilith turned hers away.

"Your love for Lucifer is very great," said Aph gently. "And I say to you that it will not be in vain. Aye, many thousands of years will pass, but you will not lose that love. It will grow stronger until it shall be your salvation, for only in love is there sanity and the cure of insanity. Only one power in the universe can overcome the Taint, and that is Love. The love in your heart will be the seed that will ultimately grow to conquer the Taint in Lucifer."

Lilith was trembling. "I don't know what you mean," she whispered.

Aph drew her to him and kissed

her on the cheek. "Nay, but your heart does. Bless you my child, and cherish what I have told you. It will be your comfort in dark hours, and your hope unto the day of release."

He rose and left her sitting there.

\* \* \*

**W**HEN the people of Mu had been taken into the last great ship, Lucifer and Lilith readied themselves for departure in their palace. Aph came to them and spoke to them warmly. "The work is nearly completed, my children. I go now to survey the planet, to see what men remain on other continents. I will take them up, and depart. Go now, and I will see you hence."

Once more he kissed them, and as he did so, a deep sleep fell upon them both. For a moment Aph looked down at them with pity in his eyes, then he turned and hurried to his own vessel.

When Lucifer awoke, he looked about him dazedly. Beside him Lilith still slept, and he shook her to waken her.

"Why have we slept?" he asked. "We must be off, or we will arouse suspicion."

Lilith sat up and looked about her. Then she went hastily to the monitoring sphere and switched it on. Lucifer watched it as she turned the knobs. At length she found what she wanted, then Lucifer gasped. It was the ship of Aph, already far beyond the orbit of Nep-



tune, and before them was the face of Aph, smiling back at them sadly. And even as they watched, he raised a hand in farewell. Then the scene faded from the crystal, and although Lilith sought to recapture it, the sphere remained blank. Nor could she longer make it penetrate the barrier that seemed to surround the Sol System.

"What does it mean?" asked Lucifer in bewilderment.

Lilith turned to face him. "No fool is Aph. He read our hearts, and must have guessed our plan."

Lucifer paled. "You mean he knows what we . . . ?"

"No, not that. I am sure he does not suspect what we have hidden in the Nether World, but I believe that he thinks we have chosen to remain on Sin—and because we have done so, we have been granted our wish. Harmless are we to the galaxy, he believes; and quarantined to the Sol System."

Lucifer's eyes lit with exultance. "Then we have fooled him! He will not return nor spy upon us. Our empire is safe!"

Lilith looked at him, and her eyes began to kindle with his enthusiasm. But still she remained strangely troubled. "Let us descend swiftly to our caverns and our people," she said. "Let us build our empire in the dark—lest the monitors of the God Council discover our work, and move to thwart it. From this day on, we must work in secret, ever remaining in the Nether World."

"You are right," said Lucifer, rising to his feet and taking her by the hand. "We will govern this world from our hiding place, and build for the day when we shall emerge in full power to extend our sway to the galaxy. Let us go and begin to enjoy the fruits of the secret that is now ours, the secret of immortality in the flesh."

As they went, there was a strange sad happiness in Lilith's heart and her fingers tightened around those of her Lordly husband. In her mind remained now but one all-consuming ambition, and it has ever been the ambition of woman—to comfort the man she loves.

Whither thou goest . . .

And thus it was that Lucifer was cast down from heaven by the gods, gently for he was the Son of the Morning. And after the darkness there is always the dawn.

For although living in Sin under the sun he was to become the Prince of Evil, yet to be evil is only to live backward. Only the spirit is immortal, and though the flesh is tainted, it shall return to dust from whence it came. The heavy elements shall become inert lead. And ever the promise of Aph has rung in Lilith's ears, her comfort and her hope for her mad husband:

". . . I will see you hence . . ."

And it remains today the hope of all Sinners!

THE END