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In response to your insistent demands and the enthusiasm with which our first issues were greeted, we have brought back STIRRING SCIENCE STORIES which you have acclaimed as a leader in fantasy.

We have changed the magazine for the better. We give you larger sized pages and a different format in accord with the 1942 growth of the popular fiction field. We are not allowing ourselves to be left behind in the past — we go forward with the times. We are giving you as much for your money as ever before. The new size permits us to give you that but it permits us to do more. WE ARE NOW MONTHLY! You all asked for it and we have complied!

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In the April issue we present a brilliant array of fiction by your favorite writers. Headed by one of the most unusual weird novelettes of the year "The Enemy" by Hugh Raymond and Mallory Kent. It's a remarkable picturization of a strange grim future — a memory and a warning that will linger for years.

If you travelled into the future a million years, you would expect to find the world vastly changed. Suppose you found it much as it is today? That's what happened to one man who went forward to "The Millionth Year" and the mystery he solved makes enthralling reading. Arthur Cooke tells the yarn in the next issue.

WATCH FOR THE APRIL ISSUE OF STIRRING SCIENCE STORIES. At your newsstand March 1st.

STIRRING SCIENCE STORIES

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NUMBER 1

STIRRING SCIENCE FICTION

THE PERFECT INVASION (Novelette)

S. D. Gottesman 4

FANTASY AND THE WAR..... 14

THE GIANT..... Basil Wells 15

BLIND FLIGHT..... Millard Verne Gordon 21

THE DAY HAS COME..... Walter Kubilius 26

THE VORTEX (Department)..... 32

STIRRING FANTASY FICTION

THE GOLDEN ROAD (Novelette)..... Cecil Corwin 34

THE GOBLINS WILL GET YOU..... Hugh Raymond 45

MASQUERADE..... Kenneth Falconer 49

FEAR OF SLEEP (Poem)..... Emil Petaja 54

THE LONG WALL..... Wilfred Owen Morley 55

THE UNFINISHED CITY..... Martin Pearson 60

THE FANTASY WORLD (Department)..... 64

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THE GIANT

by Basil Wells

Rolf Cameron went into the future to find himself a hated monster in a world of ant-like men. And safety lay millions of miles away. . . .

Illustrations by Bok

ROLF Cameron lapped four grimy slim fingers thoughtfully across his stubbly chin. His thumb gently massaged the slightly outsize member roofing his upper lip. Absent-mindedly he brushed back the lock of unruly dark hair that curtained his slitted right eye.

"No reason," he muttered, "why it shouldn't work. Same hook-up, same series exactly.

"Sent two pencils and a mouse through the thing an hour ago. Must be a bug somewhere in it. . . ."

His eyes probed deep into the snarled vitals of two unlovely jumbles of tubes, condensers, metal plates, and dull bluish plastic. Ten feet of emptiness separated the twin transparent domes that were the heart of the weird machines.

On the dull bluish base of one of the domes—the mattercast—a long yellow pencil, one end sprouting a bulging red rubber eraser, lay unchanged. The other receiving dome was empty.

The stubborn problem confronting Rolf was that of transmitting, via a radio beam, the basic atoms of matter and reforming them into their original unharmed state.

The modern newsheet transmitter that snaps your freshly printed copy of the *Ganymede Herald* from your receiver slot daily is essentially the same invention as that conceived by Rolf Cameron back there in the Twentieth Century. . . . However the transmission of matter has nothing to do with this story, so . . .

"She's okay," Rolf scowled,

shrugging his shoulders. "Maybe a little more juice will do the business."

As he spoke he drove home the knife-switches that cut in the power and gingerly adjusted the control knobs. Slowly the power built up until a muted hum of steady power beat out from the banks of tubes.

But the pencil lay unchanged and yellow beneath a weird flaming bath of greenish light.

Rolf stepped forward toward the other machine—the receiver—and for the moment was squarely in the path of the transmission beam. His fists were clenched and his deep-set gray eyes blazed angrily as he leaned over the impotent machine.

Then it happened!

A sudden blast of flame ripped through the soldered patchwork of the mattercast as a circuit shorted; a mighty surge of unleashed force sucked him into its vortex, and then blackness, inexorable chill emptiness, swallowed his senses.

VELVETY greensward was beneath Rolf's prone body when he groaned and rolled over, centuries later it seemed. Three inches from his left eye there glistened the bright golden cap that gripped the big red eraser and the painted yellow wood of a pencil equally. And scattered about were other scraps of shattered equipment.

Unsteadily he climbed to his feet, eyes shuttering rapidly as they took in the unfamiliar outlines of his surroundings. He shook his heavy, dully throbbing head. His jaw dropped and he thoughtfully tugged at his ear

as he saw the village sprawling beyond the low hedge.

The houses were doll houses, less than four feet in height despite the steepness of their thatched roofs. Unpainted, roughly constructed shacks they were and the crooked paths that wound between them were powdery rills of dust. So near was he to the little town—a hundred yards or less—that he could see its inhabitants, manlike in every respect save size, moving busily about their works.

A foot tall were most of them. They wore a single, loose-fitting coverall garment of drab brown or a discouraged yellow, and a silly little black helmet balanced precariously atop each miniature skull. Nowhere did the young creatures play together—instead they somberly weeded the geometrical rows of growing things beside their elders. For all the world like a colony of ants thought Rolf.

Rolf's startled eyes quested along the horizon—the familiar rugged outline of the distant hills was there, unchanged. But something was wrong with his immediate surroundings. A crazy six inch wall of stone wandered in a drunken circle about the barren patch of earth that outlined with green the shape of his extended body. And groves of fruit and shade-trees—stunted five foot growths that should have arched high overhead—surrounded him.

He was a giant in this strange, yet familiar, environment.

Then he saw a little creature, one of the manlike insect things, regarding him timidly from the concealing shade of a Lilliputian

orange grove.

"Hello," he called softly.

For a brief second the little creature cowered further back into the shadows, his broad ugly features frozen with terror into an ashen gargoyle mask. Then he hesitantly inched forward up to the encircling stone wall.

He was a squat misshapen little monster, his huge fuzz-rimmed head perching like some monster spider atop his warped frail body. Like some imagined man of the Future thought Rolf for there was the flame of intelligence in this creature's mismatched eyes.

"I am Jek," said the little man in clipped, oddly accented English. "Who are you, Moster, and what do you here in the Forbidden Field?"

"Moster?" queried Rolf. "Oh I get you — monster! I am no monster. My name is Rolf Cameron. About five minutes ago I was experimenting with an invention of mine when, pffft . . . and here I am."

"You," the little man's blue eye widened and his other squinted, "are Rof the Sleeper? You are he who slept in the Forbidden Field these many years in a bed of lightning?"

"Yes," he answered himself, "the fire is gone. Rof is gone. You are Rof the Sleeper."

"I could be," reluctantly admitted Rolf, his jaw tightening with a click. "How long have I — slept on my bed of lightning?"

"My people have lost count of time," Jek said sadly. "Long years before the Great Change you slept here. This I know from the fables of my people. It was death to touch the fire that surrounded you. So this wall was built about you."

Rolf chewed at his upper lip for a moment, staring off into empty blue space as he digested this startling news. Apparently the shorting circuit had somehow resulted in a mighty surge of time-annihilating power that carried him far forward into the future.

"Tell me, Jek," he requested, "why are you so tiny. Why are the trees, the village — even the grass — so tiny?"

"I DO not know all," admitted Jek solemnly. "My people have destroyed so many writings of the ancient days. Only a few of us, atavistic humans like myself, desire knowledge. Few of us can read. Few of us are curious or even try to think. We work, we eat, we sleep. If they see me away from my work I will be killed. It is the law.

"If they see you they will kill you. All Mosters must be killed. But have no fear. I will not kill you. I am not like the others."

Rolf smiled, grimly amused at the little man's words.

"Before the Great Change," Jek went on, "all men were giants. Too many men crowded Earth. Even in the oceans they lived on artificial islands. There were many wars to capture land already overcrowded. Men and women starved.

"So the scientist reduced the size of men. By radiations, glandular treatment or some other means. The records are not clear and many of the books are destroyed. But when men were a foot tall Earth was big enough for all of them."

"I rather imagine," murmured Rolf making rough mental calculations. "The area would be increased by 62 — thirty-six times as many square miles as before."

"The Great Change destroyed us," droned on Jek. "Sons of miners remained miners. The sons of farmers remained farmers. The power to reason is gone. Our brains are too small."

"Right," agreed Rolf. "And Jek, unless I'm greatly mistaken that same thing has happened before on Earth. The Age of Reptiles must have had some species with great intelligence. They are gone. Perhaps an ant civilization once dominated this planet — giants that lived in great city domes. The ants' or-

derly system of life and their galleried domes of earth and sand are pitiful survivals of their one-time civilization — wrecked by a desire for more room to live!"

Jek scratched his fuzzy skull in bewilderment.

At that moment a shrill shout of hatred sent Rolf's eyes flashing toward the village. Advancing through the low groves and across the mossy green meadows came perhaps a hundred of the little people, miniature spears gripped in their hands and glinting toy swords of hammered metal at their side.

Jek groaned. "You must escape," he shouted. "They will kill you and eat your flesh. You are a Moster. I will go with you. They will kill me too."

"Come on then," cried Rolf swinging Jek up to a perch on his shoulder. "Where do we go from here?"

Jek's arm thrust before Rolf's eyes, indicating the northern range of hills and the canyons beyond — the wild country of the upper Colorado.

"Mosters live there," he said simply.

A shower of little spears flashed about them as Rolf began to run. Two of them pierced the loose cloth of Rolf's baggy pants leg, where he found them dangling later in the day, while another grazed his side.

Then they were beyond effective range of the thrown weapons and Rolf sent a half-dozen heavy rocks crashing back into their advancing ranks. Jek tugged at his ear and pointed again toward the distant hills.

"Soon," he shrieked, "the horsemen will come. They can run like the swift rabbits. They will follow us. When we sleep they will plunge spears into our eyes. Thus do they kill the Mosters."

"Jek," demanded Rolf, "what are these monsters you talk about, the ones we go to find?"

"Giants," said Jek eagerly. "Men like you. Men who would not submit to the Great Change."

ROLF had lost all count of the days. For many weeks they had roamed the desolate tree-clad canyons of Northern Arizona and Southwestern Utah searching for men like himself. They found weedy cultivated fields in hidden box canyons and the clean-picked bones of men and women about the ashes of dead fires beside the empty walls of nearby cabins.

The Four Corners were as empty of human beings as in those ancient days when only Navajos ventured into that forbidding rocky wasteland.

Often they went hungry and water did not touch their lips for days. Rolf's beard was matted and long and his body was covered with ill-cured hides against the biting cold of the canyon nights. He carried a stout bow now and a butcher knife of hammered iron that he had found in one of the empty log huts.

So at last they stumbled quite by accident upon the entrance to a deep canyon, walled about with an unbroken line of sheer red and yellow cliffs. The rusty overhanging rim-rock seemed to close in overhead until but a slender ribbon of blue split through their twin walls to light the tree-lined stream bed. The crumbling eyeholes of an ancient cliff-dwelling stared down at them from the red ruin of the southern cliff.

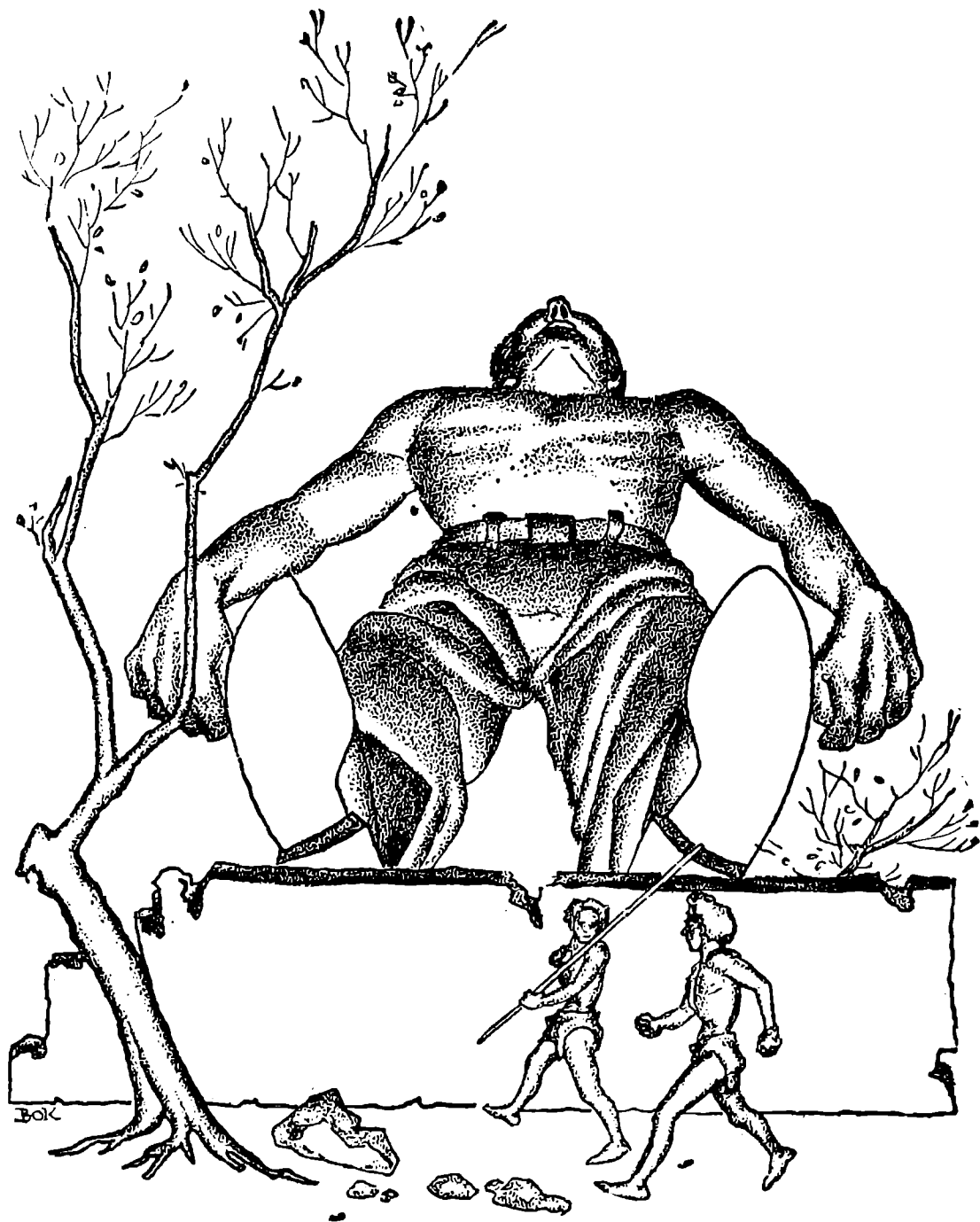
The smell of snow was in the air. The bitter Utah winter was at hand and the protected shelter of the hidden valley was welcome. Welcome too was the sight of several warm log cabins and a central stone building where, in its deep cellar, they found plentiful stores of dried foods and grain.

"Here we stop," announced Rolf.

"It is good," agreed Jek. "Better a spear in the eye than the cold."

"If we cannot live in the cold," laughed Rolf, "neither can your people."

"That is right," nodded Jek



emphatically. "We are safe here."

But that night the sound of light footsteps brought Rolf upright from his blankets. Closer to the crude bed of poles and laced rawhide thongs did they come. His muscles tensed; his fists knotted hard, and suddenly he launched himself on the intruder.

He felt soft flesh and the rough texture of coarse cloth beneath him. A startled moan of utter terror and pain whooshed out of the intruder's lungs at the moment of impact. This was no little man! It must be a Moster!

"Jek!" he shouted, "throw wood on the fire. I've caught a . . . ugh!"

Something heavy and uncompromisingly hard crashed down upon his skull and he rolled dazedly away from this second unseen assailant. Numbly he fought upward from the uneven hewed planks of the floor until his wide-spread feet were beneath him.

Jek threw a handful of dry twigs on the hot coals in the great fireplace. Flame flared up and in the indistinct half-light Rolf could see two shadows that moved swiftly away toward the cabin's inner room. Steep wooden steps led down from that central room into the narrow cellar. They must have entered there; the outer doors were double-barred and thick.

He was upon the escaping pair in a single mighty bound; spun

them around with a hand on either shoulder, and sent a hard-driven fist thudding into the jaw of the Moster on his left. The blow jolted hot lightning back along his arm to the elbow.

Then he was raining a flurry of slashing short blows on the other. Slowly he beat the intruder back against the wall. A soft cry of helpless despair checked his onslaught; the light blazed high from the fire, and he saw before him the swaying blood-bruised form of a woman!

"Please don't hit me again," she begged. "We did not know that you were a man. We thought the Little People had all gone so we came back through the tunnel tonight. This is our home you see."

"Lord I'm — I'm so sorry," stammered Rolf. "I didn't know you were a woman or . . . Rolf Cameron is the name."

The girl dropped into a rough chair before the fireplace, her breath a broken panting thing. Rolf hurried to light the tallow candles in their ugly rock candlesticks. Then he found a seat on the logs piled beside the fireplace's great maw.

"My name is Janet Larsen," she broke a long moment of silence. "We are the survivors of a colony of scientists who hid here almost two centuries ago when the Great Change destroyed Earth's civilization. Most of that time we have busied ourselves with the rebuilding and repair of a wrecked spaceship that crashed a few miles away.

"But that is ended," she sighed. "All the men are dead. We cannot escape to the stars now. Mankind is doomed."

"Glmmp," groaned a voice from behind them and another girl emerged from the shadows. "I'm the human punching bag. Call me Jean. Boy, do you ever pack a wallop!"

"Jean!" admonished her sister, "why must you use those awful archaic expressions? That, that — slang I think you call it.

"She's been reading some of the ancient books of the Middle

Ages," Janet explained to Rolf, "early Twentieth Century literature."

"Oh," smiled Rolf. "Then we'll feel right at home together. Sit down, babe. Where'd you learn to swing such a wicked sap?"

"Geeze," gasped Jean breathlessly, plumping herself down beside Rolf, "you do know the lingo!"

"**H**ERE we are stranded on Earth," Janet was saying several days later as they sat close together on a sun-warmed rock ledge overlooking the autumn-hued little hollow where the cabins squatted placidly. "If father and the others had only been with Jean and I in the cavern when the Little People attacked them we would be halfway to Ganymede by now. The *Vulcan* would not be an earth-bound hulk of metal. But they were all pulled down — and eaten."

"Why the Jovian moons?" Rolf wanted to know.

"Well," Janet answered slowly, "because a few years before the Great Change two Martian spaceships loaded with colonists from the three planets Venus, Earth and Mars, set out for the moons of Jupiter. They were never heard from again but we feel certain that some of them must have landed safely. Venus and Mars are of course overrun by the Little People so we knew that only on some distant world we might find human beings like ourselves."

"Why not go anyway?" Rolf questioned. "I would like to see Earth from empty space before I die. I have always dreamed of spaceflight and of exploring some new world. Eventually the runts will find us and jab out our eyes; so why not take a chance on blasting off for Ganymede or Io? Better to die in space than in these forsaken canyons."

"You are right!" cried Janet impulsively springing to her feet and facing the man. Her eyes

burned with a prophetic flame. "We'll blast off this very night. The labor of two centuries shall not be wasted. And we will reach our goal. I know it."

"It is a small target to shoot for," Rolf told her soberly, "but with the food and supplies already stored in the *Vulcan* we can live for fifty years in space. We should find a habitable sphere in that time."

"Hiyuh, Big Boy," rang out a cheery greeting from the trail above the engrossed pair. "Trying to play Romeo to Janet? No use playing up to her, Rolf. Her heart is pure asbestos. She thinks necking is a kin to hanging."

"Listen, brat," Janet cried, her face flushing beautifully, "do you ever think of anything but wisecracks? Beat it!"

"Begorra!" squealed Jean. "You've got her talking human, Rolfy. Ain't love the nuts?"

Rolf grinned back at the irrepressible little tomboy taunting her older sister. He could not decide which girl was the most charming — the blonde, tousle-headed, tanned Jean in her manish breeches and sweater, or the dark-haired, simply dressed Janet, so charming and thoughtful. Both girls were attractive, intelligent young women — almost beautiful. He was half in love with both of them.

"We're heading out into space in a few hours, kid," he told Jean.

"I'm no kid!" Jean exploded, tears bursting from her eyes suddenly as she raced madly away down the narrow trail toward the cabins.

"Weeell," gasped Janet, laughter bubbling deep down in her throat, "you *do* have a strange effect on the opposite sex, Rolf."

From the bushes nearby there sounded the patter of little feet and the tiny figure of Jek ran toward them. Rolf's hand dropped to the worn handle of the revolver now belted around his waist. Jek was panting and his eyes were glassy with strain.

"Have found us," he choked out. "Little People come thick



as ants to kill. Many, many of them. Must hide in cave inside big boat. Hurry."

"Good fellow," said Rolf clapping the little man's narrow back so hard that Jek swallowed twice and sat down abruptly.

"That settles it — we take off at once," Rolf told the white-faced girl at his side. "Last time you escaped their notice because they believed that all of you were wiped out. This time they will hunt us down one by one unless we leave the canyons forever."

Janet nodded her head mutely.

"Hurry, Rof," Jek cried out tugging at the leg of the man. "They are near. Run."

"I see them," Janet whispered tensely. Rolf spun half-about.

A moving mass of black dots, little men mounted on miniature shaggy horses, was descending a flinty ridge of stone a scant two hundred yards further up the canyon. Rolf sent six bullets booming up at them and for a moment they reined in, confusion milling them into a whirlpool of bobbing heads and legs. Then he grasped the girl's hand; swung Jek up to his shoulder

perch, and raced down the rocky path to the shelter of the cabins.

An instant later the pygmy horsemen charged down upon their heels. Swiftly the gap narrowed between the two groups but Rolf and the girl reached the cabins a good fifty strides ahead of their prisoners.

Jean welcomed them with a taut grin but the little repeating rifle in her slim tanned fingers kept snapping. And with every spaced shot a tiny rider rolled from his mount.

Rolf jerked down several shot-guns and rifles from their pegs

along the wall and sprang to the door at Jean's side. Janet found her father's old revolver and loaded it with trembling unaccustomed fingers. The shotgun bellowed twice and a great gap opened in the charging horde of little men.

Rolf snatched up a rifle from the little pile beside him and sent a barrage of bullets after those devastating shotgun blasts. The mounted men galloped away then into the screening shelter of the trees and brush at the edge of the clearing.

"Quick!" Rolf shouted. "Down the tunnel before they circle the cabins. I'll hold off the runts for a little while and join you."

"Okay, skipper," said Jean saluting him in a very unmilitary manner by blowing him a kiss. "And give 'em hell!"

"Be careful, Rolf," cried Janet anxiously as she followed Jean and Jek into the inner room.

"Sure," grinned Rolf, "Be with you directly . . . I hope."

DOWN the narrow trail and through the weedy clearing about the cabins swarmed the mounted Little People and their brothers on foot. Hairy little men clad in the furry pelts of beasts and armed with clubs moved forward beside trimly garbed pygmies armed with swords, metal shields and spears. Hundreds of them gathered for the kill, and behind them pressed yet other hundreds.

Rolf emptied three more of the shotguns, reloaded them and fired again. A third time he emptied all his weapons into those clustering ranks; dropped the last gun, and raced for the cellar and the tunnel opening out from it.

Along a narrow, rough-timbered drift he ran for a hundred feet and emerged in the shelter of a heap of rocks and clustering brush. Less than fifty feet distant, at the base of a weathered yellow cliff, opened the hidden entrance to the cavern where the ancient rebuilt spaceship pointed its blunt nose skyward.

He leaped forward out into the open stretch of rocky ground that lay between. Fifteen racing strides and he would be safe within the shelter of the great cavern. But from the rocks; from the very ground underfoot it seemed, there sprang screeching little spearmen, and behind them massed ranks of swordsmen and the hairy wielders of clubs.

In an instant his body was bleeding from a score of wounds and wicked little spears porcupined his heavy coat and trousers. Then he was ploughing through their frail ranks bellowing savagely with rage and pain. One arm he held before his eyes to ward off the showering spears but in his other hand he gripped the legs of two of the little men. With this improvised human club he battered a road open before him.

The unhurried crack, crack of Jean's rifle from the cavern's plank-doored entrance took a mounting toll of the swarming little monsters, and Janet fired her revolver blindly into their close-packed bodies, her eyes dry and hot with terrible rage. Rolf reached the door and stumbled headlong inside.

Jek swung the little two-handed axe that Rolf had fashioned for him, as the first of the little men poured into the cavern, and split a pygmy skull neatly. His axe swung up again.

The two girls slammed the heavy door shut against the crowding ranks of the enemy and barred it. A crushed tiny hand protruded from the crack where door met frame. Janet shuddered and her nostrils whitened. Then she turned resolutely upon the half-dozen rat-like warriors trapped inside. She swung her revolver by the barrel.

Grim work it was, and bloody, with the crunch of tiny skulls beneath the weight of their clubbed weapons and Jek's axe. In a moment it was over. When

Rolf climbed weakly to his feet there were no Little People, save Jek, in the rocky passage. None that lived, that is.

After that it was the work of but a few minutes to close and seal the outer and inner locks of the space-pitted, patched old cruiser. Rolf and the two girls hurried to the control room blister. Jek they strapped into a space hammock much too large for him and then found hammocks for themselves. Carefully they checked every strap and spring of each canoe-like suspended bed designed to ease the sudden pressure of several times normal gravity.

"Here goes," shouted Rolf as his fingers snapped over the primary firing lever.

A mighty surge of power, a great hand that pressed chokingly against their chests, bore them back, until their hammocks flattened against the padded walls behind each hammock cubicle. Blackness snapped a sudden curtain across their brains.

The thin rock shell left above the old *Vulcan's* nose parted like rotten tissue as the great cigar of metal blasted skyward. And the Little People covered on their bellies, trembling. . . .

Many stories would their meager brains concoct of the strange rock that stole away the last of the Giants, the Mosters, and fell up into the sky.

FAR below drifted the silvery disc of Earth. The blackness of space was about them and the bright sparks of a myriad of stars blazed in hitherto undreamed-of beauty. Somewhere out there the four major moons of Jupiter beckoned them on.

Rolf's fingers tightened on the two girls peering from the observation port beside him. They faced the unknown together.

Together, adrift in a battered old wreck searching for a rounded chunk of rock somewhere out beyond.