

WEIRD TALES




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Harnes Bok

"He was burned at the stake in the year 1526!"

The Green Invasion

By DENIS PLIMMER

From the world of the ninth dimension came swarming the damned of all the centuries.

FOR Joan and me nothing has been the same since the night of the Green Invasion. Our outlook on the world has altered, our love for all that is permanent and peaceful has increased a thousand-fold, and above all else I believe that our souls reached their full maturity during those shattering seconds when the

Green Invasion startlingly materialized in the empty midnight sky.

It all began with the strange behavior of Peter Barrows.

Peter had been our closest friend for more years than either of us cared to count, and his loyalty, humor, unselfishness, and courage had endeared him to both of us.

He was everything which I, Martin Gaye, am not. He was bold where I am cautious, reckless where I am wary, imaginative where the wings of my own mental powers skim close to the ground.

And now Peter had made us move!

He had come to us with lyric praise for a small apartment he had found in an old private house on lower Riverside Drive, a house which had flavor, character, atmosphere; whose rooms were large, with gaping fireplaces, broad windows, heavy and genuine oak panelling.

And, he assured us, we could afford the rent!

Unable to withstand the cataracts of enthusiasm he poured forth, we shifted at once and found everything quite as attractive as he had predicted. One matter only troubled us. This house had four stories, and each apartment occupied an entire floor. However, when we came the top floor alone was rented by, as the landlord explained to us, "a very quiet professional man."

The three floors below this "professional man" were empty. If the house was such a bargain, we speculated, why had not these three unimpeachable apartments been snapped up long before? We said nothing of this to Peter, however, and it was really so small a thing that it hardly gave us more than a moment's worry.

Our second night in our new home saw us fairly well settled. Joan was dressing to go to an evening fashion exhibit—Joan designs expensive looking clothes for girls who can't afford expensive clothes—and I was glancing through the evening paper. Finally Joan bounced into the drawing-room wearing, of course, one of her own creations.

"Ready to leave, dear?" I asked. She nodded, adding, "Anything interesting in the paper?"

"Yes," I replied, and read aloud the following:

An unaccountable electrical leakage has been reported today by officials of the New York Standard Electric Company. Firm engineers and accountants both state that they have discovered large discrepancies between the amount of current actually put out by the New York Standard Electric Company, and the amount of power registered on customers' meters. No explanation, officials report, can conceivably explain this difference.

"I don't think much of that," Joan observed. "Electricity's not the sort of thing a thief could very well abscond with, is it?"

And in a perfumed swirl of lace and velvet she was gone.

Forgetting the paragraph, I put the paper aside and settled down to work. The night was pleasantly cool—it was early May—and I had a sheaf of proofs to correct, proofs of my latest book, "Uncle Possum and the Bumble Bee." I write children's stories, a most engrossing occupation and one which I personally delight in.

The proofs before me were surprisingly good and needed little alteration. Within an hour I had reached the last page and had even pencilled in a final notation, when someone knocked on the outside door leading to the stairs. I jumped up immediately for I was expecting Peter, who, naturally, would be anxious to see us comfortably settled in this home he had chosen for us.

However, when I opened the door my visitor proved to be a boy of about seventeen, slight, blond, immature, and quietly dressed. My surprise was so great that I stood open-mouthed. The stranger spoke first.

"Mr. Gayé," he said, and his voice was far more mature than I had expected. I nodded. "I am your neighbor of the floor

above, Mr. Gaye. I have come to pay you a visit. Am I welcome?"

This courteous, balanced mode of address was so unusual that once again I was tongue-tied. However I managed to nod, and invited him in. When I re-entered the room behind him he had already reached my lighted desk. He swung about politely, and it was all I could do to hold back a cry of amazement, for this was no stripling! This was a man many years older than I and the spurious air of youth which had deceived me had been caused by the bad lighting in the hall. His thin face was furrowed and his eyes deep pits of discontent. But his slight unformed body spoke only of adolescence, and his fine flaxen hair might have adorned the head of a youngster.

"My name," he announced in his unruffled manner, "is Cardin Kane."

Collecting my wits I indicated a chair and brought him a glass of sherry. Then I surveyed my "professional man" at my ease. He was sipping the wine with discrimination and when his eyes met mine they were eloquent of respect for the fine liquor. The glance held for so long that I, never a man of much poise, felt constrained to break the silence.

"Mr. Kane," I began, "we understand that you're a professional man. In what sense?"

"I see by the proofs on your desk," he replied, "that your work lies with the arts. Mine is somewhat different. I am an electro-physicist."

"I suppose," I ventured then, "that you are connected with some institution of learning — or perhaps with one of the great commercial laboratories?"

Deliberately he finished his drink and, leaning toward me, spoke in a level controlled voice.

"Mr. Gaye," he said, "commercial laboratories and institutions of learning are chimeras in the popular imagination. They

accomplish little, they encourage no new work. The great things of this world have been done by men working alone in lonely places. His colleagues laughed at Pasteur, the work of Harvey was scorned at first, and Lavoisier was guillotined in the Place de la Revolution! How much more should I then be ridiculed, I whose work is so much greater than theirs!"

He stared firmly into my face, his light brilliant eyes burning with intensity.

I managed to stammer in reply that I saw his point and that he had my complete sympathy.

"Sympathy!" he exclaimed bitterly. "Sympathy is a fine thing no doubt, but we who must fight humanity's battles in the face of humanity's distrust need more! We need help! Have I your help, Mr. Gaye?"

His personality was so completely overpowering that I could do no more than nod. At that he arose sharply and marched to the door.

"I'm glad to have seen you, Mr. Gaye," he said. "I believe that you and I shall be friends. I should like a friend. I have none, you know. I shall take the liberty of dropping in again tomorrow evening at this time. Good night."

The door opened, he stepped out, the door closed. I was alone!

WEAKLY I returned to my desk and stared at the pile of proofs before me. My mind was in a maelstrom of amazement. If this was to be our upstairs neighbor, then no wonder the house had no other tenants! And yet something about Cardin Kane attracted me. He was so strong, so purposeful, so dogmatic, that his mere presence had been a mental tonic.

Although I was anxious to have Joan's opinion of him, I decided not to prejudice her in advance. I would in fact say nothing, so that his visit of the following evening would be unheralded and therefore

his dynamic presence would affect Joan freshly.

The next day passed uneventfully and I saw nothing of the electro-physicist. With nightfall Peter arrived to share our dinner. His manner, I thought, betrayed intense excitement.

"How do you like the place?" he asked us more than once, and with such eagerness that we were both, I think, a little surprised. We tried to discuss Peter's work but his replies were monosyllabic and almost brusque. Peter had some sort of government job, the duties of which were to Joan and me ill-defined and hazy. The three of us had finally fallen into a dead silence when we heard a sharp rap on the door. I admitted our upstairs neighbor.

"Mr. Kane," I said, "allow me to present my wife, Joan. Joan, this is Cardin Kane who lives upstairs. Mr. Kane is a scientist."

THE two shook hands and suddenly Peter stepped forward.

"I'd like to meet Mr. Kane too, Martin," he announced. I introduced them, and the two men, standing in the center of the living room, nodded to each other.

"Mr. Barrows," asked the scientist smoothly, "is an old friend, Mr. Gaye?"

"A very old friend." Peter had answered for me. "Martin and Joan are very dear to me, and there's nothing I'd not do, Mr. Kane, to save them from any evil!"

"Evil?" Kane's eyebrows lifted a fraction. Then he turned to Joan and smiled. "You're most fortunate, Mrs. Gaye," he said, "to have two such stalwart defenders!"

Joan was silent.

"Tell me, Mr. Kane," said Peter then, "how does your scientific work progress?"

Kane seated himself comfortably in an easy chair.

"My work progresses superbly," he replied in a soft voice. "I have spent the

days of my life on it, and I am, I believe, close to achieving my purpose!"

Peter had remained standing, and his body appeared tensed, almost as if he were preparing to spring.

"That must be most gratifying," he observed. "And the nature of your work, Mr. Kane? Won't you tell us a little of that?"

"I," Kane returned, "have something of the artist in me. I prefer not to expose my poor labors until they are in a fit condition to be exhibited. At the moment they are, so to speak, incomplete, and I should find it almost cruel to bare them to the public gaze!"

Peter nodded, lips compressed, eyes narrowed and intent.

"And how does *your* work progress, Mr. Barrows?"

For a tiny space of time there was silence and the two men eyed each other like expert swordsmen. Each time they spoke I seemed to hear the sliding ring of crossed rapiers.

"My work," said Peter slowly, "is so prosaic, Mr. Kane, that I hardly think you'd be interested. Government clerks have always appeared in society's eyes as a particularly down-at-heel lot whose lives have not for one moment the least spark of originality. I am one of that shabby crew, and my work is uninspired and routine to the extreme, just as yours must be exciting and adventurous!"

"Something tells me," Kane responded, "that anything you would be connected with would have somewhere in its heart a seed of danger!"

Peter smiled.

"All life bears a seed of danger," he said.

Kane rose.

"I must be getting back to my tasks, Mr. Gaye. I'm glad to have met your charming wife, and I'm glad to have met—Mr. Peter Barrows."

Peter bowed.

"The pleasure," he said, "is two-edged!"

Between the two I felt a subtle current flowing. Suddenly it blazed forth in words.

"Like a sword?" Kane had spoken.

"Like a sword," Peter replied. "Good night, Mr. Kane."

Kane walked to the door.

"Good night," he said.

AND the room was left to ourselves once more.

Peter turned to me and spoke gently.

"You have a most interesting neighbor, Martin!"

I grew hot with anger.

"Why did you bait him so, Peter?" I demanded. "I've never known you to express open resentment so clearly!"

"On the contrary," Peter corrected, "your Mr. Kane has my wholesome respect and admiration."

"You faced each other like enemies!"

Peter looked thoughtful.

"I shouldn't like to think of you as his friend, Martin," he said.

"I agree," Joan put in, "and I'll be more honest than either of you! If ever I hated a man on sight, I hated Cardin Kane!"

I began to feel that my neighbor was being unjustly treated.

"Kane," I remonstrated, "is a strange man, I admit, but all men are strange who've spent their lives on a certain piece of work, and who've been scoffed at for their pains!"

Kane's existence has been hard and bitter. It's not surprising therefore that he's withdrawn and secretive in his manner!"

"I don't like him," Joan repeated very bluntly.

"Well, my dear," I said, "you must have your own way about that, but since Kane's

our neighbor I do hope you'll try to conceal your dislike as much as possible!"

"May I endorse that?" said Peter.

"You?" Joan turned on him sharply. "I thought that you were on my side!"

"I've changed my mind. I now think that Kane might make a most interesting friend for Martin. A new type of human! Change is good for the soul!"

"Peter Barrows," Joan exclaimed, "you know that you hated the man just as I did! Would you make him *your* friend?"

"No," Peter replied slowly, "but I'm not Martin, am I? I'm only speaking for him."

Joan looked both amused and exasperated.

"What are you trying to do?" she demanded. "Mystify us?"

She turned to the radio and switched it on.

"There's a Toscanini concert," she explained. "I'd much rather listen to that than to either of you!"

However she was doomed to disappointment. The static was so loud that we were unable to hear a note.

"That's funny," I said, looking helplessly at the instrument. "We're supposed to have the newest static-eliminator on that set!"

Joan switched it off.

"Nothings right tonight," she murmured pensively, "except the moon and the stars! The evening's lovely! I'm going to walk in it! Anybody coming?"

"May I?" Peter smiled.

"Why not? And we can leave Martin to the tender affections of his Mr. Kane! I don't need a hat, Peter! Come on!"

The two headed for the door.

"Sure you won't come, Martin?" he asked.

I felt irrationally furious.

"To the best of my knowledge I haven't been asked," I replied huffily, "but if that's an invitation, consider it rejected!"

Joan ruffled my hair into my eyes.

"Watch out for the mad magician upstairs!" she advised, and arm in arm with Peter, departed.

Standing at the window, I watched them stroll down the Drive. The night was warmly fragrant, and, having turned down the chance of a walk which I should have enjoyed, I naturally felt restless. Again I tried the radio, but the static was even worse. Suddenly it occurred to me that I might return Kane's visit and, incidentally, see something of his work at first hand. I considered this, staring across the river at the moving electric sign which told the time every two minutes.

"The time is now," it insisted, "9:58."

I started for the door.

OUTSIDE Kane's door I paused, for within were two voices, the scientist's and another's. I knocked, and with my knocking the voices ceased. For almost a minute I waited and was on the verge of knocking a second time when the door opened and a flood of harsh white light from the apartment dazzled me.

The scientist was standing in the entrance, his pale hair a golden shining halo in the radiance, his frail shirt-sleeved form even younger and less mature than before. My appearance apparently did not surprise him, for he ushered me in politely and gave me a chair.

"I thought you might return my call," he said, "and I'm glad to welcome you. Your friend has gone?"

I explained that Peter and Joan were out walking.

"Ah," Kane surveyed me shrewdly. "And you have come to learn something of my work, haven't you, Mr. Gaye?"

I nodded.

"Very good," Kane, seating himself in a chair facing mine, pressed the tips of his fingers lightly together. "First, Mr. Gaye, I must have from you a pledge of secrecy."

"Secrecy?"

"For the time being. Soon, of course, what I am about to reveal to you will be common knowledge, but until then—one likes to be sure of one's little theatrical effects!"

I gave him the promise he wished.

"Good. You must not speak of this even to your wife, nor to the interesting Mr. Barrows!"

"Very well."

Kane sat motionless, his gray luminous eyes reaching my face unblinkingly.

Suddenly—sharply—he spoke.

"This world we see is not all, Mr. Gaye. This world of tables and turnips—of watches and weddings—of bread and battles! This does not comprise all creation does it?"

I shook my head.

"There is much not visible to the naked eyes. The astronomer, for example, has calculated the existence of heavenly bodies which even the strongest telescopes cannot discern, and the physicist has communed with beta and gamma rays invisible to even the most powerful microscope."

I assented.

"So it would seem that this human plane upon which we live is but a small island surrounded by a vast unseen world. The unseen world of the astronomer, the unseen world of the physicist, and—"

"And—?"

"And the unseen world of the psychic!"

I experienced a spasm of disappointment. Psychic phenomena had never attracted me particularly, and I had always felt most psychic investigators to be either fools or charlatans.

This reaction was not lost upon Kane.

"You are skeptical of these things?" he inquired smiling.

"At least," I replied, "I have never had reason to be otherwise."

"In the Middle Ages," Kane mused, "a radio broadcast would have seemed

witchcraft! In ancient Rome gunpowder would have seemed essentially Jovian. In the Stone Age wheels would have seemed miraculous. The marvel of one age is the commonplace of the next!"

"But psychic investigation has been carried on during *all* ages," I objected, "and never successfully!"

Kane raised his hand.

"I wouldn't say that, Mr. Gaye. As a matter of fact, certain ancient peoples did establish contact with a world apart from our own."

"Go on," I encouraged.

"We think of the psychic, the invisible world," he stated, "as immaterial, as existing on a thought-basis rather than on a basis of matter."

"Yes?"

"We have been wrong!"

The silence which followed this announcement was profound.

"You mean," I said finally, "that what we have called the spirit world actually exists in a physical state, palpable and visible?"

"I do."

A thought flashed through my mind. When I had stood outside Kane's door, I had heard two voices in conversation. Now Kane appeared to be alone. I mentioned this.

"You're quick, Mr. Gaye," he replied. "You did hear two voices. One was mine, the other belonged to a scholarly priest of my acquaintance, a certain Brother Carolus Pius."

I looked about the room helplessly.

"But where is he?" I asked.

"Brother Carolus," Kane replied very softly, "was burned at the stake in the marketplace of Lyons in the year 1526!"

ALTHOUGH Kane's introductory remarks had prepared me for something of this sort, the shock was, nevertheless, great. I looked at him carefully to make

sure that he wasn't indulging in some obscure scientific joke.

He was in deadly earnest.

"Brother Carolus Pius has been in constant communication with me," he went on, "for about two years. When I first contacted him, we could converse only in a very limited manner by means of ecclesiastical Latin, which meant that I understood about one word in three! Later it developed that Brother Carolus was an English monk who had traveled to France to spread certain heretical doctrines among the French Catholic peasantry, and that eventually he had been burned for his beliefs. He was, however, a man of strong spirit and unshakable will. Consequently he left certain documents buried in the crypt of a ruined Basque abbey. Last summer I went abroad and unearthed them. Just a minute."

Turning to an oaken chest he withdrew from it a large bulky package wrapped in rubberized cloth. This he placed on a table and unwrapped.

As the coverings fell apart, an indescribable odor filled the room, an odor of decay and ancientness, an odor which spoke of damp cloisters in forgotten monasteries, an odor which brought with it the chiming of ancient bells and the muttering of Popish prayers, an odor of magic and death.

"He had collected his entire writings in a single volume which he bound himself," Kane was saying. "This is it."

Before me on the table lay a large flat book covered in heavy unpolished leather. Kane opened it at random. The pages were of heavy parchment, and the writing was black, crowded, and crabbed.

"Can you read it?" I asked.

Kane shook his head.

"It's written in a Latin cypher," he explained. "So far I've been unable to persuade Brother Carolus to give me the key."

Tenderly rewrapping the ancient vol-

ume, he returned it to the chest. Then he went back to his seat.

"To continue,—in my conversations with Brother Carolus, I discovered, as I have said, that he was English. From that time on we spoke in English, and during that time I managed to purge his speech of many archaicisms which made him almost incomprehensible to modern ears. Now we chat quite naturally."

"And Brother Carolus belongs to the spirit world?" I asked.

Kane shook his head.

"Not to your idea of the spirit world," he said. "On his death something happened to him which happens only to the exceptionally bold and powerful souls of this world. Brother Carolus was translated into the Ninth Dimension!"

I probably looked very foolish, for the other continued quickly.

"As you know, this world of ours exists on a basis of three dimensions: length, breadth, and height. We have often spoken of a fourth dimension perpendicular to these three, and certain modern thinkers have decided that this fourth dimension is Time. No one, however, has gone further than that. No one has even considered the possibility of additional dimensions. I alone have studied such a possibility! I have found nothing concerning the fourth, fifth, and sixth dimensions, but I have discovered the seventh, eighth, and ninth! These represent various planes of existence, and were our eyes constructed better than they are, were our sensory perceptions keener, we should be able to perceive all these dimensions. However, as it is, the ninth-dimensional world which greatly resembles our own is completely invisible to us, despite the fact that it exists within the area of space covered by our earth and its envelope of atmosphere! The fact is that the world of the ninth dimension exists in a great curving plane in the highest reaches of the stratosphere!"

"But," I objected, "if that is so, it must be between ourselves and the sun. Why doesn't it affect us?"

"It does," Kane replied. "Popular opinion is that tides are caused by the influence of the moon. Actually, since the ninth dimensional world revolves more slowly than our own, its lag produces a gravitational retrograde pull. That is the true cause of tides!"

I was so utterly bewildered by the magnitude of the man's statements that I found myself captivated. Still, deep within me some grain of doubt continued to exist, for an instinct made me say, "I suppose you're the only person able to hear Brother Carolus?"

Kane looked surprised.

"*You* heard him, didn't you, when you were standing outside the door?"

"By what means do you get in touch with him?" I asked. "Through a medium?"

Kane shook his head.

"Through something much more everyday." Crossing the room, he opened a door. "Through a radio operating on a higher frequency than has hitherto been thought possible. Look."

JOINING him at the door, I saw beyond what appeared to be a radio, ordinary in everything except its cabinet, which appeared to be made of some material resembling heavy asbestos.

"It *is* asbestos," Kane replied in answer to my question. "The higher frequencies generate terrific heat. If the instrument were not insulated, it might easily start a fire."

Having thrown a switch on the instrument panel, he adjusted two knobs. I instantly heard a low roaring that resembled the sound of breakers on a distant coast. Quietly Kane picked up a small microphone formed of some unfamiliar rose-hued metal.

"Earth calling," he said softly. "Earth

calling — Earth calling — Earth calling! Come in, please!"

The roaring sound grew louder. Kane adjusted a dial.

"Earth calling—Earth calling! Come in, please!"

I scarcely dared breathe, so tense was the atmosphere in that quiet Manhattan room, and my heart was pounding frantically. The roaring stopped. There was a moment's stillness, and I became aware of a voice stealing through the speaker—a voice faint, rounded, but mellow.

A voice from the Sixteenth Century!

"Master Kane," it said, "what is your message, pray?"

Kane's eyes glowed.

"Just a little experiment," he replied.

Again the voice filtered through.

"Excellent! The lack of experimentalism was the downfall of Greek science. It rejoices my heart to see that you are wiser!"

"That's all," said Kane. "Good-by, Brother Carolus."

"Benedicite, Master Kane!"

Again the distant roaring filled the room. Kane flipped the switch. Silence swirled about us.

The scientist's face was queerly twisted.

"Are you convinced, Mr. Gaye?"

I nodded, for I could still hear in my head the whispered echoes of that voice which belonged to a monk burned alive more than four-hundred years ago!

"Imagine," Kane went on, conducting me back to the living room, "what it would mean for us to be in contact with men such as that constantly. Imagine the searchlight which a conversation with them would turn on all our wonderings about the after-life!"

Throwing himself into a chair, he sat biting his lower lip and clenching his hands.

"And this I have done alone in the face of universal ridicule!" he breathed. "This I have fought for over the opposition of

vain men, of greedy men, of jealous men!" He seemed to have forgotten my presence as he sat contemplating the pictures which danced through his seething brain. Suddenly his body twitched, and he returned from his dream. "You've seen what I have done, Mr. Gaye, and you're convinced, aren't you? And you will tell no one anything of what you have seen? Good. You know at this moment more of my work and of myself than does any other person in this world! On your shoulders may some day fall the task of interpreting my motives—if by that time interpretation is wanted or even possible!"

Abruptly he rose.

"Good night, Mr. Gaye," he said ushering me to the door. "Good night. You have been present at a miracle! No matter what may come, you have had this moment!"

Standing there, his slenderness was almost ethereal, and his light eyes burned into mine like acetylene torches. Then the door closed, and I was left dazzled and bewildered, alone in the dark hallway.

As I made my way down to my own apartment, I kept puzzling over two things he had said. The first was "The task of interpreting my motives *if by that time interpretation is wanted or even possible!*" and the second was "No matter what may come, you have had this moment!"

Something in these phrases troubled me, but it was not until I had my hand on my own doorknob that I managed to localize my feeling. For in a staggering flash I saw that Kane had been talking *as if life as we know it were doomed!*

When I re-entered my cozy apartment, my face was cold with the sudden sweat of terror!

THE next day passed quietly enough, although my whole being was in a tempest of excitement and dread. I had spoken no word of my visit to Joan or to

Peter, and no outward clue suggested to either that I had experienced anything out of the ordinary.

After dinner that night a note was slipped under my door. It read:

My dear Mr. Gaye:

I should be gratified if you would visit me at about eleven this evening. I shall have important work to do, and I should like your presence in the twin capacities of assistant and chronicler.

I am,

Very truly yours,
Cardin Kane.

I kept this note from Joan, and during the following two hours managed to chat with her calmly and quietly, but ever my eye strayed to the flashing time-sign across the river, and ever within me I felt the leaping vibrant surge of adventure. Finally the shining letters of the sign proclaimed that the time was now 10:50 and, rising, I suggested casually that I should be the better for a brief stroll before bedtime. Joan agreed, and, fighting to control my excitement, I left her to hasten upstairs to Kane's door. My soft knocking brought an instant response, and Kane welcomed me in.

"I am overjoyed, Mr. Gaye," he said in his mellow voice, "that you were able to accept my little invitation. This night is my most important, and I felt the need of an observer who would later transmit an unprejudiced account of tonight's happenings to the future world." He stared keenly at me. "Did you notice anything unusual yesterday or today?"

I referred to the extraordinary amount of static on the radio.

"Ah," Kane replied quickly, "that's what I meant! The terrific influence my own high frequency set has on the surrounding district makes it probable that

every radio in the neighborhood behaved as yours did!"

"Does that mean," I questioned, "that you were in constant touch with Brother Carolus?"

Nodding he took me into his laboratory. Great shades covered the windows and somewhere I could hear a low hum, as if from a generator.

Kane perched himself on a high lab stool and faced me.

"Mr. Gaye," he said, "this night is of all nights my zenith! For years I have planned this moment and now it has come! What I do tonight will rock the world with wonder! Around us seven million souls are peacefully relaxing at the end of another day and the vast city grows bright and gentle with evening! But here in this room I am preparing to jolt their sodden lives to the core! From pole to pole mankind shall hear my name, and those who jeered will bow, while those who laughed fall at my feet!" His light eyes were blazing with a fantastic fire and his voice rose to a high-pitched scream, as he said, "In letters of fire my name shall blaze across the heavens, and the seven million shall wake!"

For an instant of silence he sat panting on his stool.

"Mr. Gaye," he continued more calmly, "have you read anything in the papers recently about an unusual discrepancy in the electrical output of New York Standard?"

"Why, yes!" I cried. "Only the other day I—"

He silenced me with a glance.

"The world of the ninth dimension is a world in many ways similar to our own with this exception. Their substitute for oxygen as a source of physical energy is electricity. In quantity of electricity alone is their world less rich than our own. Had they sources of electrical power equal to ours, we should have known of them years

ago. By tapping the generators of the New York Standard Electric Company, I have for almost two months furnished them with an unbroken stream of power through the medium of an extremely sensitive antenna which operates from there!"

He pointed to a fireplace at the end of the room. A jungle of wires led from a huge transformer to the insulated base of a metal rod which disappeared up the chimney.

"That rod," he explained, "is my own contrivance. It is telescopic, and whenever I fear that its tip may be visible from the street, I contract it slightly. At night, however, the thin sensitive tip is quite invisible, and consequently I allow it to project as much as six feet above the chimney top. At this moment the tip reaches up into the dark, and from it a steady stream of power is flowing to the ninth dimensional world of Brother Carolus!"

For a moment I was too stupefied to speak.

"But," I said finally, "why do they need it? They must have sufficient to exist on!"

Kane laughed nervously.

"Oh, they have, Mr. Gaye," he chuckled. "They have! This supply is extra!"

"To what purpose?"

Kane's face slipped into a pattern of grimness.

"In order," he said slowly and impressively, "for them to break free of their own world and visit ours!"

"You mean that we shall be able to see them?"

"Exactly."

"But when?"

Kane arose and walked to the receiving set which he switched on. He picked up his microphone.

"Earth calling—Earth calling—" he began. "Come in, please—Come in please."

The voice which drifted down to us was thinner and harsher than that of Brother Carolus.

"Kane? Is it Kane?"

"Yes."

"What do you want?"

"What time are you starting?"

"You'll sight us at exactly midnight!"

Kane switched the instrument off and turned to me.

"Does that answer your question?" he asked softly.

I nodded, stupefied.

He crossed the room and raised the shades covering his two broad windows. Before us lay the peaceful curving Drive, the soft easy-flowing river, dark and polished, the darker palisades, and the broad arching night sky.

"The time is now 11:45," the sign twinkled tirelessly.

"Fifteen minutes more," Kane mused.

"Who," I asked, "was that who just spoke?"

Kane's face seemed oddly distorted.

"That voice," he replied, "was the voice of one of their leaders, Carlo Scarpa, a thirteenth-century forger who died screaming on the rack!"

"But why should he be among their leaders?" I exclaimed. "Why not some great saint or benefactor?"

Kane's voice trembled like wire drawn too tight.

"Because the good are weak and only the evil are strong! The ninth dimensional world is a world of splendid and glowing evil! All the arch villains of history reside there, and they are the most powerful spirits of all Creation!"

THE wide stretch of the Western sky looked threatening. Every few moments fitful lightning blazed russet, bloated, stabbed the dark.

The time was now 11:50.

"They should come," he said pointing to the heavens, "from that direction!"

He stood with his back to me, staring out like a mystic at the expressionless

night. Suddenly I had a vision of this ghastly horde already preparing to approach our green and pleasant earth, this army of thieves and murderers, of liars and blasphemers, of traitors and torturers. I suddenly sensed the power and goodness of the innocent seven million lying all about us. I knew then that, no matter what the cost, Kane's plan must be shattered and these bloody legions of evil repulsed!

I stared at the scientist's slender back and in a lightning moment of resolve my unpracticed fingers were at his throat. He whirled about like a mountain cat and drove at me savagely, striking, tearing, gouging! I hadn't fought any man since my fifteenth year and consequently I was out of training, but the holiness of my cause lent me strength.

For a few blind seconds we wrestled back and forth, toe to toe. Anything went in that desperate battle high above the streets of New York, and many were the rules that were broken! Kane's light body was deceptively powerful and he knew many tricks against which I had no guard. But I was bigger than he, and my superior weight told at first. We strained and panted, yet we were silent for there was no word to be said in this contest between hopeful life and lunatic death! I was gaining the upper-hand, though my muscles cracked with the effort, when suddenly I felt a sickening dagger of pain shoot through my body and I fell, face down on the floor. Kane seized my wrists and bound them with heavy rope. Despite my last feeble efforts he did the same to my ankles, and kicked my tortured body into a corner.

The time was now 11:55!

"Kane," I pleaded desperately, "stop that current!"

His lips curved with scorn as he wiped a slender trickle of blood from his mouth.

"You're like the rest," he said. "You

fear evil and you fear its power! What do I owe the earth that I should defend it? No, let them come!"

His eyes scorched me.

"Only five more minutes, Mr. Gaye," he went on. "I should have killed you were I not more anxious that you should first see approach the inheritors of earth! That window should provide a perfect view! After they have come and commenced their rule, I shall arrange for your speedy execution, for there is little doubt that I shall be raised to a position of great eminence! In the meantime, watch the west, Mr. Gaye—watch the west!"

He threw the radio switch. An impersonal, sexless voice was heard.

"Calling Earth—Calling Earth."

The scientist grabbed his microphone. "Kane speaking!"

"We are ready to depart."

Kane glanced at me triumphantly.

"I am waiting," he said.

I writhed wildly at the knots but they held firm.

"They have taken off," the voice announced. "The first contingent of multi-dimensional ships have taken off. I can still—wait!—they've disappeared! They are entering your dimension! Watch the west!"

The time was now 11:56! Kane adjusted a dial.

"Let's see what our own little world is saying and doing in their death hour," he suggested. Dance music filled the room, music from one of the Broadway night-clubs. "How gay! I shall soften it slightly, and we shall have the remarkable privilege of listening to emanations from two worlds. The world about to conquer—and the world about to die!"

NOT soon will those mad minutes pass from my memory, those minutes while Cardin Kane and I listened to murmurous dance music from Broadway as we

awaited an invasion from another world! While the glittering letters across the dark river spelled out the fateful passage of time!

Kane stood at the window, peering eagerly into the dark night.

Dramatically a voice crackled through the ether.

"Calling Earth—Calling Earth—Have you seen our ships, Kane?"

"Not yet."

With vivid suddenness the terrestrial radio music halted as an agitated voice cut through.

"We are interrupting this broadcast to bring you a special bulletin! We have just been informed that the New Jersey towns of Flemington, Flagtown, Roycefield, and Raritan are all in flames! The source of the conflagration is unknown! Please stand by for further bulletins!"

The music flowed on. Dumbly I looked at Kane. His whole body was shaking with excitement.

"Our friends are approaching," he said.

THE music jerked to a halt again and the voice of an announcer reached us.

"The mysterious conflagrations just reported have spread in a straight line through the towns of Somerville, Plainfield, Rahway, and Elizabeth! Elizabeth is now completely aflame! No explanation of the holocaust is known, although motorists report having seen a vaguely luminous patch in the western sky, which appeared to be proceeding in an easterly direction! Please stand by!"

Kane laughed in a high whinnying manner.

"It seems," he chortled, "that the ninth dimension has means of destruction which we earthbound creatures have never dreamed of!" Suddenly his body stiffened and his lean arm pointed to the window. "Look, Gaye! Look!"

High in the western night I could just

make out a faint glow. It was of the palest apple-green.

"They're coming, Gaye! They're coming!"

I fought fiercely and the strong ropes cut deep into the flesh of my wrists and ankles until I could feel my hands and feet warm and damp with flowing blood. I had to break loose! I had to smash the source of electrical power before—

The radio interrupted.

"Flames have engulfed Newark! Journal Square is a roaring furnace!"

Somebody pounded heavily on the door.

Kane stood in the window like a statue.

"Look!" he shouted. "They're here!"

Suddenly the Palisades were blackly silhouetted against a rose curtain of flame. The time-sign across the river flickered and vanished. It looked as if all New Jersey were burning fiercely. Then high above in the night I saw the invaders!

THEY were approaching in disk-like conveyances at a terrific speed. The ships seemed made of some luminous metal, a brilliant apple-green in color. There were seventeen of them sweeping down the sky—flying in a W-formation. They were headed directly for Manhattan!

Again came the pounding on the door.

"Let us in Kane!" It was Peter! "For God's sake—"

"Peter," I shouted.

"Whatever they pass they set ablaze!" Kane drowned me out. "It is the most formidable machine of death ever devised!"

Both radio speakers, ethereal and terrestrial, clamored together. Above them cut Peter's high challenge.

"I'm going to shoot the lock! If you're inside Martin, watch out!"

My answer was unheard for the shattering explosion of Peter's revolver. The lock shot from the door and landed crash-

ing on the floor halfway across the room. I fought at the ropes.

The Green Invasion was lower now, and terrifyingly close! The whole lurid sky was filled with their luminous green disks, and I saw that they were *gigantic!* They were less than half a mile west of the river!

Kane had thrown himself against the door in an effort to withstand Peter's assault. For a precious ten seconds the door held.

Suddenly Peter broke through, leaping across the room like a tiger and his fingers were on Kane's throat!

They fought savagely, silently. The room was filled with the noise of the invaders' engines.

"The antenna in the fireplace, Peter," I shouted. "Smash it!"

Suddenly from the door another figure streaked into the room. It was Joan! In a flash she was at the fireplace tearing at the tangle of wires. The Green Invasion was above the river now, and a matter of hundreds of yards from New York. There was a smashing explosion and the whole night was as white as noon. I saw the green ships rear up toward the zenith like leaves in a tempest. For an instant the sky was blood-colored. Then dark swept in with a rush. When our eyes were accustomed to it we stared. For the night was empty. Below the scalded Hudson frothed and bubbled and heaved. Above, a high lonesome wind tore through the night.

The Green Invasion had been defeated!

On the floor Peter's hands were sunk deep in the scientist's neck. Joan plucked at his shoulder and Peter looked up. His eyes were dazed as his strangling fingers slowly relaxed. With a ripe heavy thud

the gold-crowned head fell back against the floor. Cardin Kane lay still in the center of the laboratory from which he had directed the destruction of mankind. Already his unhappy soul was no doubt entering that nine dimensional world, the existence of which he had been the first to discover.

OF WHAT happened thereafter there is little need to write here, for the facts are too well known through the account which Peter wrote for the official use of the Intelligence Department and which has since been placed within the public reach.

It is interesting to note, however, that the Department had assigned Peter to the case two months earlier, when the first suspicion as to the true cause of the electrical leakage was guessed, that Peter had quietly found the area in which the leakage was occurring, that he had finally discovered the actual house, and that, for his own uses, he had persuaded Joan and me to move there.

The toll of death and devastation in New Jersey was appalling, but money for public works and rehabilitation of the ravaged area was raised through a nationwide campaign. One shudders to think of what might have happened had Joan reached the antenna a minute later, and had the approaching ships reached Manhattan Island!

The danger seems to have passed now forever, yet even tonight when Peter, Joan and I dine together I know that our eyes will often wander heavenwards, ever on the watch lest again the Green Invasion appear high in the calm emptiness of the Western sky.