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# **AMAZING STORIES**

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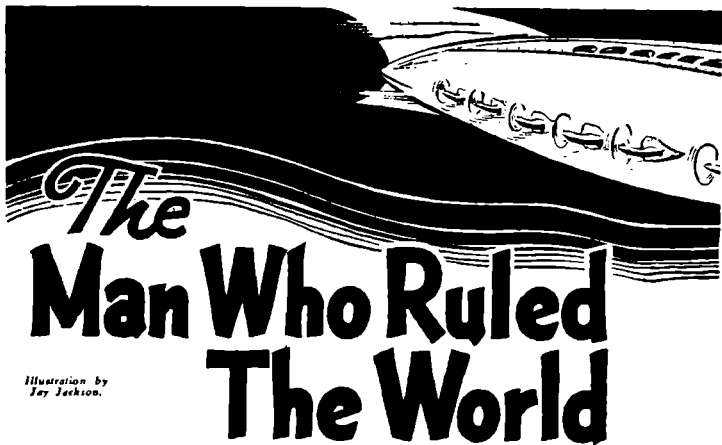
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# The Man Who Ruled The World

Illustration by  
Jay Jackson.

By **ROBERT MOORE WILLIAMS**

A new Genghis Khan comes out of Tibet, crushing the nations beneath his iron dictatorship—until Richard Moulton braves the horrors of the robot drug in a daring attempt to liberate the enslaved world

## CHAPTER I

### A Secret Meeting

**R**EMEMBER this, it is better to have your tongue ripped out by the roots than to talk of our mission. We have made a vow, and death shall not deter us in the keeping of it. Good luck—and if we fail, may we meet again in a better land than this.”

Silently the five young men wrung hands. Their calm, poised faces showed no trace of what was going on behind those high foreheads, their eyes showed no glint as a key to the mind behind. Resolution was in the set of their jaws,

emotionless resolution that no fate could sway.

“Dick, we’re with you to whatever the end may be. We’ll carry on as long as one of us is left.”

The first speaker, tall, red-headed Richard Moulton, replied.

“Thanks, George. I know that I can rely on all of you, and that we can rely on each other. Now it is time to leave . . . let us go.”

One by one, furtively, by different exits, they left the apartment house in San Francisco. Men were here, and a few women, workers hurrying to the hutches where they lived. About these people, in their blank faces, in their studiously careless pose, in the way they



"Obey or I destroy!" shrieked the voice of Genghis Khan II

darted glances out of the corners of their eyes, could be detected a feeling of fear. Nowhere tangibly expressed yet everywhere subtly implied was horror, a terror of something that was with them by day and never left them by night.

One by one, the five who had been together in the apartment house arrived at what had been the water front in the days of long ago when ships had plied these waters.

On a steel platform that rose wide and spacious from the edge of the bay, nestled in its cradles one of the ships of the year 2038. It tapered from a blunt nose through six hundred feet of length to a thin, pointed rear, where a rudder projected. Set at regular intervals along the side, encircled by a band of metal were small, multi-bladed propellers, with motor housings behind them. Ports in the side of the liner from which dangled swinging ladders, were open. Up an inclined ramp leading to the platform, men were guiding loaded electric trucks.

A small and curiously silent crowd was watching the ship. These people kept their distance both from the liner and from the guards that constantly patrolled around it.

As Dick Moulton descended from a gyro-car and moved forward to accost one of the guards, a half-shudder, half-sigh passed through the watching ranks. The words came clearly to them.

"Richard Moulton, reporting as per order from the committee on allotments."

The face of the guard was blank, utterly blank. No trace or hint of an emotion was visible anywhere. "Follow me," was the curt order, and the guard turned and walked toward the ship. The two entered it, were swallowed up. A tremor ran through the

watchers.

An old, white haired, stooped man sighed. He spoke to an equally aged individual beside him.

"Good looking fellow."

"Yes. Strong, too. As strong as I was when I was young. Looked to be intelligent, too."

The sentences were clipped, short, as with suppressed emotion.

"Look!" cried the first speaker. "There's another."

"Arthur Jergsbane" . . . came another clear, unafraid voice.

Silently the two watched this second man disappear into the ship. Later other men came, and women. Two individuals were brought down in chains, escorted by men in uniform, and delivered into the custody of the guards. Not every person took with equanimity the decision of the committee on allotments.

A scream came from the slowly advancing line, and a young girl broke and ran . . . straight into the waiting arms of a guard who clutched her impassively. Sobbing hysterically, beating frantically at him with helpless hands, she was dragged back. With no sign of brutality, just that blank, emotionless efficiency of motion, the guard lifted her in one strong arm and strode purposefully up the ramp. Reaching the ladder, he climbed inexorably aloft, bearing her struggling, fighting form up to the port. She beat a moment at his muscular shoulders and breast, then subsided in limp despair.

The count stood at eighteen, fourteen men and four women, before the ports of the ship were closed, signifying that she had gathered not only her material freight but her human cargo as well.

The last port clanged shut, a hum rose from inside the vessel, and she rose straight up into the air. Her speed con-

stantly increasing, she shot away into the gathering night, out toward the broad Pacific.

The onlookers followed her as far as their eyes could go into the darkness. When she had vanished the old man spoke again.

"Curse him! Curse him! Curse him!"

His companion added, viciously, though his old voice creaked. "Ten thousand times ten thousand curses on his head. Some of those men were as clean cut as any you ever saw . . . May the evil that Genghis Khan II has done come home to him!"

"Robots!" the first old man snarled through clenched gums. "Robots! Inhuman monsters made from men and women . . . heartless, soulless brutes . . . Curse Genghis Khan II forever and forever!"

As the cracked voice rose in a strident scream, a hand was clapped over his mouth, and a cautioning voice said: "Take it easy. His spies are everywhere."

The old man slapped the hand away. "I don't care if they are!" he shouted. "Let them take me, if they want to. They took my son and my grandson, and made them into robots that wouldn't recognize their own father. God only knows what has happened to them. With the last breath in my body, I'll curse his rotten soul."

"And so will the rest of us, all that's left of the human race. But take it easy. No good comes of mouthing curses. Maybe our time will come. . . ." The fist of the old man's companion stiffened was shaken at the sky.

\* In the first part of the Twentieth Century the trend toward dictatorships was clearly seen. It was in 1940 that China, then one of the most densely populated countries in the world, fell beneath the iron heel of the Japanese, and became subjugated as never before in her history. That

## CHAPTER II

### A Dictator Rises

UNQUESTIONABLY Genghis Khan II looked back at the past when he formed his empire. He took a page out of the Twentieth Century when he set up his dictatorship, but he went farther than any man had ever gone and extended his sway over the entire world. He could do it. He had the power.\*

The earth at that time was just emerging from the dim ages of barbarism. It was split into a number of nations ruled by monarchs or by the people themselves. Gradually these national groups were dominated by dictators made up either of one man or a group of men. Under such leadership nationalism was fostered and bitter wars were frequent, of several of which we have records, involving the entire globe with a tremendous resultant loss of life and destruction of property.

This intolerable condition continued until 1980 when the down-trodden people of the world revolted and set up a form of international government, with headquarters and courts of arbitration in Geneva, a city in the Alps. A more or less free exchange of goods and information was possible under this system and the race of man, freed from its terrible wars for the first time in history, prospered amazingly.

The essentials of life were easily obtained, for the soil was still fertile and its productivity was increased by nitrogen wrenched from the air in vast hydro-electric establishments. Race riv-

was the first of the real dictatorships, one founded on savage war and bloodshed. Dictators became the trend, first in other countries, then in America, who seemed just to drift into it. Those last presidents, Roosevelt, Lewis and others, held powers that grew more important as the years passed.—Ed.

alries were things of the past, war was outlawed, the unfit were retired, the insane and the mentally deficient were sterilized or painlessly put to death, religious fanaticism was practically non-existent, and science had a free hand and unlimited resources with which to work.

Tel-vision and world-wide radio communication in an international language brought the peoples of the world into immediate contact with each other, forever removing the causes so prolific of disagreement before this time. But this new order of things used power in immense quantities, and while every available drop of waterfall was harnessed and the winds and the tides put to use, including solar radiation and the utilization of the difference between surface and sub-surface sea water, and while the few remaining coal and oil supplies were rigidly conserved, it seemed science could not produce the amount of power the world needed.

The temperature regulators of the temperate zones, that exercised such a remarkable influence on the weather, ate up billions of watts of power alone. But they were worth it. And the people of the world accepted the situation, confident that some day their science would find a method of tapping intra-atomic energy or of utilizing interspatial energy that was known to exist in unlimited quantities.

It was never a question of finding energy—space and matter were full of it—but of getting it in a usable form. The men and women of the world were willing to accept the rigid economies imposed by the Bureau of Power and to waste no energy that might be conserved. They saw what was happening and were willing to do their part toward averting a power famine. And they knew that sooner or later some scientist

would discover a method of loosing the energy known to exist and that they would get the benefit of it. So they honored their scientists and gave them free rein and allowed them to use what they needed of the meager power supply. It was a socialistic, humanitarian world that existed then, one that the peoples of today look back upon with sighs of regret.

For the faith of the people in their scientists was justified. The limitless field of intra-atomic energy was tapped. And therein is the story.

Genghis Khan II did it. Up, high up in the highland of Tibet, in a section of the world far removed from the center of civilization, he and a group of companions had been working for years. The group, an outgrowth of a religious order, had existed for centuries, no one knows exactly how long. A few pedants knew of its existence, but paid it no attention, for thousands of similar groups, devoted to the future of science, were in existence all over the globe.

Nor did the world know anything about them for a full decade after Genghis Khan II saw the first hint of the secret of atomic power in the heating of a cathode that should have remained cold. When he had completed the process, brought it to perfection, a handful of sand provided him with enough power to lift his first duro-vane—that light metal the tensile strength of which has not been accurately ascertained even yet—ship into the air.

The first hint of its existence came when the captain of a freight Zeppelin swore that he had seen a huge ship high in the air over the Himalayas. His estimate of its size and height made him the Baron Munchausen of his day. People inquired what he had been drinking. Later they had cause to remember their laughter.

In the dawn of a bright May morning in 2032, the city of Geneva, wherein the supreme council of the federated races of the globe was sitting, awoke to find it had acquired a visitor overnight. A keen-eyed youngster, up early, discerned in the blue heavens overhead a majestic ship floating at ease. The populace was soon made aware of this interesting phenomenon. An enterprising news company put it on the tel-visors, and a plane was sent up to find out what it was all about.

The plane reached its ceiling and dropped back to earth to report that the liner was at least 70,000 feet in the air and that it was tremendously large. Officials, determined to ascertain the meaning of this visit, flashed worried messages to other cities. Nobody knew anything about the matter. There was a great surplus of curiosity but an utter dearth of information.

At this point all the news companies took up the tale. Ships carried tel-visors as high as they could and the population of the world that was awake got a glimpse of the silver globule that hung so innocently in the air over the seat of their government.

What did it mean? Amazed conjectures popped from startled scientists to the equally amazed and incredulous millions. A theory instantly suggested, gaining immense popularity, was that the earth was being visited by creatures from somewhere out in space. Mars and Venus were suggested as possible homes for this ship. Man had long believed that some of the planets were inhabited and numerous attempts had been made to construct space ships, all of which had failed for lack of power. Perhaps the Martians had succeeded in traversing the void that lay between their planet and the earth.

Following this line of reasoning, at-

tempts were made to communicate with the globule suspended over Geneva. But it stayed at its post and answered nothing. For three days it remained at the 70,000 foot level and during these days the population of the world nearly went crazy. This was unquestionably the epoch-marking event of all time and nobody knew anything about it.

But there was no hint of animosity. The earth would gladly welcome visitors from out in space. Peace had reigned for so long that thoughts of hatred had almost disappeared. And even if some one had suggested destroying the ship, there was no weapon capable of propelling a missile to its height. Very few weapons of any kind existed. The world had grown away from the use of instruments of war.

For three days the ship hung motionless while the earth went into one frenzy after another. But as the dawn of the fourth day came racing westward over the globe, information was forthcoming. The radio systems, carrying news and entertainment were blotted out by a powerful signal that paralyzed all receiving sets. Then came a voice, harsh, strident, a voice that gloated with a sure knowledge of its own power.

*"People of the world, hear my voice. I am Genghis Khan II. I am master over all things upon the earth and you will live or die as you obey my commands and do my bidding. You are required to furnish me with the raw materials I demand and the man power I order. Three days are given in which to accede to my commands. An attempt to defy me will result disastrously.*

*"People of the world, render unto your ruler the homage that is his due."*

The voice cut off.

One can well imagine the consternation that message left behind it. Master! It was a word new to that period.

Rather it was an old word out of the barbaric past of the previous century. But Genghis Khan II, ego-maniacal throw-back, revived it.

Supreme authority over the entire globe was vested in the council sitting in Geneva, with subsidiary councils sitting in the various geographical areas. It was in no sense a representative government, nor did it pretend to be. Members of the supreme council held their posts for life; there was no honor higher than that, nor any work more arduous. Each member devoted his life to solving the ills of man.

The supreme council, composed of philanthropic-minded humanitarians, simply could not believe that Genghis Khan II meant what he said. Nor could they definitely connect the voice coming in over their radio systems with the silver ship that hung over Geneva. They suspected that some crank, with a powerful but illegal radio installation, was taking advantage of this opportunity to work a scare for his own devious ends. Especially were they inclined to believe this when the ship over the city failed to answer radio messages flung at it.

But when the three day period ended, there came a repetition of the demand and the council was left in no doubt that the voice came from the ship over the city. For now Genghis Khan II listened to their agonized cries for a parley, and gave them twenty-four hours to accede to his demands. During this time he proposed to give them a demonstration of his power. Within the next hour, came the message, he would blow the Rock of Gibraltar out of its strait. And the ship disappeared from Geneva, travelling at incredible speed.

Exactly forty-nine minutes later, the news came flashing from a startled

Spain that an air-ship had appeared over Gibraltar and that the historic rock had been blown into fragments! This once mighty fortress had been dismantled decades before, its guns removed and its garrisons taken away. It was only a spot of interest to sightseers and fortunately only two such parties were on it at the time. Thirty-one men, women, and children died instantly. Nearby Spanish and African towns suffered heavily from the shock, houses being thrown down and much glass broken.

Before two hours had elapsed, the ship was back over Geneva and the assembled government was again listening to the strident tones of Genghis Khan II, that mysterious personage who had suddenly sprung into such prominence. He was telling them that if they still doubted his power, if they suspected that he had planted mines in Gibraltar with an eye to making this demonstration, he would be glad to give his attention to any object they cared to select. He suggested they name the Matterhorn, or, if they preferred, he would be glad to fly over to London and blow to bits the ancient capital of the Britons. It was all one to him, he explained. Either the peoples of the world acceded to his demands or he would regard them as targets for his atomic bombs. He even went so far as to tell the horrified world, which had been switched into the circuit, that these atomic bombs, one of which had demolished Gibraltar, were only a mild weapon compared to some he had in stock.

Many geographic groups, including all of Europe and South America, with the evidence of the destruction of Gibraltar before their eyes, gave in. Probably they thought that in time they could find a way to circumvent Genghis Khan II. At any rate, they saw



no reason for committing suicide. But Australia and North America, still the home of the world-girdling dominant white races, blew up in indignant fury. They had never taken orders from anyone and they were determined not to start now. The rest of the world could capitulate. They proposed to hold aloft the flag of freedom, and die if necessary, but die as free men, not as slaves.

Thus they died. The message announcing their refusal to accept the new ruler was hardly off the air, when the gleaming ship left Geneva, headed west and traveling fast. Genghis Khan II dropped three atomic bombs on New York City. "Obey or I destroy," shrieked the voice of Genghis Khan II as his ship flew over the ghastly scene of destruction.

Coming westward, he then loosed one over Chicago and one over Los Angeles. Then he pointed the nose of his ship out over the Pacific, toward Australia, leaving behind him a dazed and suffering nation, with millions of its population that had been concentrated in these areas, dead and dying. The power of those atomic bombs was terrific. The old-time nitric acid base explosives were harmless in comparison.

Not only was there a tremendous shocking power in these bombs, but they released an electric potential of millions of volts backed by a heavy current flow that literally burned to a cinder everything within a half mile radius of where they landed. The intricate maze of current carrying wires took up part of the charge and distributed it over a wider area, resulting in additional loss of life and destructive fires.

Australia met a similar fate. Melbourne was literally blown off the map.

North America and Australia officially capitulated then. They agreed to furnish out of their remaining re-

sources such raw materials and man power as Genghis Khan II demanded for the construction of that tremendous city and sky dome he was planning in Central Tibet.

But their capitulation was only official. Every man, woman and child in these broad lands hated the new dictator with an undying hatred. Like a miasmatic fog the cloud of hate rose over the land. It was concealed, for his spies were everywhere—he gave men the choice of dying or doing his bidding—but it existed as hatred had never before existed in the history of the world. Millions of Americans would cheerfully have died a death of torture if they could have taken the World Ruler with them. For ten minutes, five minutes, one minute alone with Genghis Khan II, unnumbered men would have shed their heart's blood.

But the years went by and he still lived. Moreover his grip on the suffering world became stronger with each passing year. Up over the City of Genghis Khan II in a large sky dome constructed of duro-vane and suspended by the same secret method he used in keeping his mighty ships aloft, the Dictator lived, denying admittance to anyone who might threaten his presence. He knew he was hated and he was taking no unnecessary chances. The sky dome was impregnable and he never left it. But he never felt really safe until he discovered the damnable drug which, injected into the blood stream, caused men to become robots, with no mind of their own, but forever subservient to the commands of their master. Thousands of these robots then swarmed the City of Genghis Khan II; they attended to the machines in the sky dome and were the only creatures admitted there. They formed the crews of his air liners and obeyed his commands without question.

Only then, did the Ruler feel safe.

He declared himself a god and ordered human sacrifices made to him at regular intervals. Men were forced to abase themselves before his statue, before his image placed in every town and city on the globe. They knew that if they did not abase themselves, they would die. And they preferred to live, not because there was any pleasure in life, but because they hoped that some day they would have the opportunity of sating their hate.

Grass grew where the streets of cities had been and wild weeds were springing up in the once fertile fields. The jungle was creeping back to reclaim what man had wrenched from it. Science, culture, and learning were becoming practically non-existent.

For all who opposed him, Genghis Khan II had one reward: annihilation. After a few years he was not openly opposed.

But the people of the world had a common bond, and when men have a common bond, they unite automatically. In this case their bond was hatred of their master. Around this unanimous hatred an organization had been perfected. Through his spies the World Ruler had hints of the existence of this organization, but no definite knowledge. His emissaries had captured several men and women suspected of belonging to this organization but even the keenest torture that his diseased mind could invent wrung no confession from their dying lips.

The first definite sign of organized resistance came one night in June, in the year 2039. A great ship had dropped down at dusk at a city in Mexico to take on tropical fruits, ores, oils, and a few unhappy men and women chosen by lot and destined to make the trip to Tibet to become robots after an injection of

the serum that robbed them of their minds.

The soft tropical night had fallen by the time this ship finished loading. It rose majestically into the air, its robot crew laid it on its course for its Tibetan home, and then it vanished. It simply disappeared into the night. There was no storm, and even if there had been, it could have weathered the strongest gale. None of these ships had ever crashed. Their performance had been perfection plus. But this one was gone, and its robot crew with it. Genghis Khan II raged when the news was brought to him. Perhaps he saw the first letter of the writing on the wall. He ordered a world-wide search and his spies pried into every nook and cranny on the globe. But the liner had vanished.

## CHAPTER III

### A Daring Theft

AS the ship rose high over Mexico its robot captain fixed the course it was to follow. It carried a crew of some eighty men, but as its operation was almost purely automatic, the greater part of the crew were sent to their quarters as soon as the course was laid. The captain, his lieutenant, the radio operator, the lookouts posted fore and aft, two men watching the G-rays and three more in charge of the atomic power pulsators were all that remained awake. No hint of expression showed on the faces of these men. They were robots. And yet in the eyes of the captain occasionally showed a steel-gray glitter incompatible with the emotionless robot. And as the ship hummed softly through the star-sprinkled night, its crew asleep in their bunks, the second in command voiced a question:

"Is this the hour?"

The captain stole a glance at the robot lookout gazing calmly into the night.

"This is the hour," he answered. His jaw tightened.

Casually the lieutenant moved toward the lookout, whose back was turned to him. Swiftly he picked up a short steel bar lying on top of the control panel. And with this he struck the lookout, who died without a sound, without ever knowing what hit him.

The captain made no comment. Together they stowed the lookout in a bunker.

"Lock the doors of the sleeping quarters," the captain said. His subordinate moved off, to return shortly. He nodded. Not a word was spoken, except a pungent, "Good," from the leader. And an equally terse, "Come on."

The controls locked, the ship moving automatically, they walked down the long central runway to the lookout posted aft. Apparently it was a routine inspection and the man merely glanced up when they entered. Again the bar leaped out and a man died. They left him there, locking the door behind him.

In the radio room, the operator gave

them no opportunity to get behind him.

"You have reported on schedule?" asked the captain.

"Yes, sir. Position, course, and speed. Just a few minutes ago, sir."

Their eyes met. "This is the hour," the captain said.

The operator leaped from his seat as if he had been shot out of a gun. No robot, this. Nor any weakling either. "Is everything ready?" he snapped. "What do I do?"

"Everything is ready. You don't do anything except stay here at your instruments. If any queries come through, report that all is well. If the guard at headquarters demands that you snap on the tel-visor screens in other parts of the ship, tell him you burned a tube and blew a transformer and haven't had time to repair the damage."

A protest formed on the lips of the operator, but the words died before they were uttered. He stiffened to attention. "Yes, sir," he said.

They left him. Three men were in the room where the atomic power pulsators were housed. The captain held in his hand an odd-shaped device made of metal. Operated by a powerful spring,

it threw a tiny disruptive pellet. The captain fired three times. Flesh was splattered all over the room. Blood was everywhere. Three men were non-existent.

But the noise attracted the attention of the two men in the adjoining G-ray room. One of them flung open the door and entered, the other following. The first robot did not clearly understand what had happened, but he knew that whatever it was, it was wrong, and with a startled squeal he turned to flee. The man behind him took in the situation at a glance and swung a heavy fist to the jaw. The robot went down. The man who had swung the fist looked with questioning eyes at the other two.

"This is the hour," said the captain. "Stand aside."

There was a soft pthut and an explosion. The head of the stunned man on the floor disappeared. The other two looked at the officer.

"That was necessary," he said. "We're taking no chances. Men must die that men may live. These fellows in their normal condition would have died gladly to aid us in our task. That is all." He nodded to the man who had been in the G-ray room. "You take charge of the power pulsators as well as the G-ray machines. If you run into difficulties, signal the control room."

The subordinate saluted. Certainly these men were bound by an iron discipline.

The captain spoke to his second in command. "You stand guard in the corridor outside the sleeping quarters of the crew. If anything happens, you die there, but before you die, see that no robot is left alive."

The lieutenant saluted.

The ship swung from her course and pointed her blunt nose northwest by north, toward Colorado, moving at a

speed near the five hundred mile an hour mark, as her powerful propellers cut the air.\*

## CHAPTER IV

### A Mountain Cave

THE stolen ship paused high in the air over a peak in western Colorado. All lights had been dimmed when it left Mexico but now it showed a single light in a series of intermittent flashes. Strangely enough, from the western side of a peak below, after an interval came answering flashes. The ship dropped down until the precipitous wall of the peak rose up above it, a sheer barrier of weatherbeaten granite.

Slowly in the side of this cliff yawned a dark blotch as though large doors were opening. A single light flashed for a second, the ship nosed softly forward into the darkness, moved into a large cavern, and behind it the lights of the stars were blotted out as the heavy doors swung slowly shut. The ship dropped to rest on the floor of stone, and when the outer doors were closed, floodlights illuminated the cavern. From everywhere people came hurrying toward the liner, led by a statuesque figure with waving white hair. As they drew near, a port opened, and the robot captain stepped out. He spoke to the white haired man, a single syllable:

"Dad."

Thaddeus Moulton clasped the hand of his son in a fierce grip and squeezed until the bones popped. But the young man did not notice. The next day he

\* Colorado was largely waste land now in 2039. Once it was a rich ranching and mining district but it had the misfortune to fall under the displeasure of Genghis Khan II, who laid waste its cities and countryside. Only bandits and hunted men skulked through the hills where once a powerful people trod.—Ed.

would idly wonder how he had hurt his hand, but he would never remember the incident. He wrung the hand of his father, motioned toward the ship, and said:

"Here she is."

Chokingly, haltingly, came the answer. "You have done splendidly, my son. Men will remember your name with gratitude. But of yourself!"

"Your preinoculations did the work," Richard Moulton answered. "The robot forming drug didn't take. It played havoc with my nervous system for a few days but after that I was all right. But many times the things I saw in that cursed city made me wish the drug had taken effect. . ." The gray eyes flashed fire.

"And the others?" the old man questioned gently.

"They're in there at their posts. All except Preston." The mouth became a straight hard line. "He . . . well, the Ruler had him eliminated. He didn't like his look . . ."

Not a sound was uttered for a second. Then from the back of the growing group a growled curse arose. Other voices took it up until the cavern resounded to this hymn of hate.

Hate had inspired the construction of this cavern. Into it Thaddues Moulton, premier expert in electro-chemistry of the old world, had gathered the most able remaining scientists of the earth and had formed the first organized opposition to the dictatorship of Genghis Khan II. Out of an old abandoned working, where formerly men had dug for silver, working in secret, they had enlarged this tremendous cavern and had set up their laboratories to search for a method of ridding the earth of the domination of its cruel master. They had sunk turbines in the narrow gorge of a nearby river and from this

concealed source they drew their current.

Their immediate aim had been to discover the source of Genghis Khan II's amazing power, but in this quest they had been baffled. They were forced to admit that although the Dictator was a madman, he was a genius as well. Then Thaddeus Moulton had conceived the idea of stealing the secret and had deserted his field of electro-chemistry to search for a drug that would offset the injection use by Genghis Khan II to make robots out of men. He had succeeded, and his son and four others had gone as ostensible robots to steal one of the air liners if they could obtain the secret in no other way.

Thaddeus Moulton could scarcely restrain himself from plunging immediately into the machinery room of the liner, but when informed of the robot crew and human cargo, he gave orders for the release of the latter, with the stipulation that they were not to leave the cavern. The robots he ordered released one by one, to undergo treatment to restore the normal functioning of their minds, and after seeing that his orders were being executed, he followed his son to the compartment in the center of the ship where the atomic power pulsators were housed. Richard pointed toward the shields.

"The power pulsators are within those housings but I've never seen them and have no idea of how they operate. The Dictator doesn't trust even his robots too far. These housings are opened in the shops by robots who have charge of the pulsators. I was only a navigator and didn't get a look-in at how they worked."

"What does he use as a source of power?" asked the elder Moulton, peering abstractedly at the bulky power plant.

"Stone or metal or anything, so long as it's powdered. I found that out, but that was about all. It wouldn't do for a robot to appear curious, not if he wanted to retain his head."

"Powdered stone! Hah! Open up this thing, Dick. Here's a lock and you as captain should have a key."

"I *should* have, but I haven't. Gen-ghis Khan II is not exactly a trusting soul. I'm afraid you'll have your troubles getting inside these. The shielding is duro-vane and I know of nothing that will cut it. It's the toughest metal known."

Moulton smiled grimly. "We haven't been exactly idle while you were away. Thornton discovered a tool that will cut duro-vane like a knife going through cheese. He discovered it accidentally, but it counts as much as if he had intended to do it."

It was the younger man's turn to stare. "Tell me about it," he urged.

"It's fairly simple, once you know how it works. Duro-vane owes its toughness to a molecular interlocking that somehow increases the field of force that holds the molecules together. I know it's impossible. That is probably why it happens. Thornton accidentally focused an extremely high frequency directional radio beam—its length was down in millimeters so you know how high the frequency was—on a sheet of duro-vane and the metal crumbled like dirt. He almost had a fit when it happened.

"This beam not only disrupts the interlocking effect, but it breaks down the normal force that holds them together, the molecules, I mean. Thornton experimented and discovered that only one frequency has this power. We made extensive experiments in determining how effective this beam is at a distance and if it could be controlled,

and the results indicated that we might use it to blow some of the Dictator's ships out of the air. It has a distinct greenish tinge. But we'll go into that later.

"I'll have Thornton here in no time and we'll have a look at the secret of atomic power." Here Moulton issued a crisp order to a young man who had followed closely behind him and who served as combination aide and errand boy to the elderly scientist.

"Tell me more about this ship," Moulton continued to his son. "What method is used in lifting it? I've torn my hair many a night trying to understand how these tons of metal are raised into the air so easily."

"It's as much a mystery to me as it is to you, even if I do have a good groundwork in science. I explained why I couldn't be curious. About all I know is that several tanks of some kind of gas are arranged along the top side. They're sealed and have no connection with the operation of the ship . . ."

Moulton stared at his son in ill-concealed disgust. "You're not trying to tell me that a gas lifts these tons of metal! Gas can only be employed as a lifting agent to the degree that its weight is less than the weight of volume of air it displaces. Then the air forces the gas to rise and if the container is not too heavy, the gas will carry it up too. But this liner weighs hundreds of tons and no gas will lift it."

"I know," doggedly persisted the younger man. "But gas lifts this ship. Let me explain how the controls operate: when we are on the ground and wish to rise, we merely move a lever in the control room. Seemingly this actuates relays, for these atomic pulsators immediately start developing a heavy load. As the power comes on, everything in the ship gets light, and when

we start rising our normal weight comes back. I think Genghis Khan II has discovered a method of doing something to gravity, reducing it to nothing. Then the small gas tanks will lift the ship because there is practically nothing to lift. When the gravity goes off, a magnetic field is set up in the floors of the ship. The fact that we are required to wear shoes shod with iron indicates that this is probably true. I think the ship rises because it and its contents weigh practically nothing when the current is turned into the G-rays."

"By the nine gods!" exclaimed the older Moulton. "Can it be possible that he discovered some method of shielding gravity?"

A brisk little man came bounding into the room now, followed by four other men who were carefully carrying several bulky instruments. A fifth man entered, trailing a cable leading to some source of current.

Thornton glanced curiously around the room, his eyes running over the meter panels and the bulky housings of the power pulsators. "Hah!" he said. "I never thought I'd live to see the day when I could get inside one of these power plants. Dick, you have done a marvelous job. The world can be proud of you. I was busy when you brought the ship in or I would have been on hand to welcome you." He turned to Thaddeus. "What did you want me for? Your aide said I was to come and bring my chisel. Have you got something you want opened?"

"Yes," Thaddeus answered. He explained to Thornton what needed to be done. The little man nodded vigorously, examined the lock, and gave orders for the placing of his apparatus. The cable was plugged in and a switch was snapped. A powerful transformer hum broke out, a series of tubes flamed

a brilliant purple. A faint greenish glow came from the end of a metal cone. Thornton carefully adjusted the power output so the rays would be restricted in range and focused the green glow on the gray metal around the lock. The younger Moulton was greatly amazed to see the tough metal crumble out and the entire lock break away.

"That gadget really works!" he exclaimed.

Thornton glowed with satisfaction as he snapped off the power. "It does the job. Probably that ego-centered father of yours told you I discovered it by accident, and if he did, he's one of the biggest liars living today."

Dick laughed, the first time in years. For the first time in years the world seemed normal and a laugh in order. Then he remembered the shadow that hung over the earth. And the laugh died.

Thaddeus Moulton paid no attention to the remark. He had rolled back the shielding, and with exclamations of surprise, was peering at the power pulsators. All gathered around him, attempting to peer over his shoulders. He twisted his head to bark a question.

"Dick, is this machine running?"

"Yes, it's supplying current to meet the needs of the ship when she is at rest. The output is very small, however."

"Turn on more power. I want to see what happens."

Cautioning his father and the others to be careful, for tremendous currents were generated in the pulsator, Dick stepped to the auxiliary control switch set in the meter panel. He moved it slightly. Instantly the faint but noticeable hum coming from the pulsator leaped in pitch. He moved the lever and the hum became louder, also rising in pitch. Thaddeus stared intently at

the apparatus revealed by the removal of the duro-vane shielding. Finally he waved his hand and his son shut off the power.

The old man stood up and turned to face the expectant group, a look of mystification and awe on his face. He chose his words carefully.

"As we suspected, but were unable to discover for ourselves, Genghis Khan II has discovered a method of releasing atomic power. I, of course, cannot be certain without making a detailed investigation, but it looks to me as if the apparatus is simplicity itself.

"A grayish powder is forced under pressure from a minute jet directly into a beam from a cathode of a vacuum tube containing at least six elements. Evidently the tube is a part of a high frequency alternator of some sort. At any rate the cathode emits a beam of reddish light through a little window in the side of the tube. As the powder strikes this beam of light it disappears, and as it vanishes a blue glow comes into existence. I suspect that this blue glow is pure energy, power divorced from any form whatsoever. Closely surrounding this glow is a coil of extremely heavy wire. I think this coil receives a charge from the energy existing inside it; in fact, this coil seems to be an absorbing device for transforming the energy into a useful flow."

For a second there was silence. Then Thornton protested. "But Thad, if that blue glow is pure energy, why should the coil be necessary? Why should it be in there at all?"

Moulton snorted. "Your remark proves that your discovery of a method of cutting duro-vane was accidental. How in thunder could you use pure energy if you had a bucketful? The energy that is created, transformed, set free, charges that coil, resulting in a

flow of current. And until you have a flow of current you cannot transform energy into mechanical action."

Thornton sniffed but gave in. Dick had come over and was peering at the apparatus. "Where does all that energy come from? Is it present in the powder ejected from that jet?"

"It is," was the answer.

"But the power developed in these pulsators is almost beyond belief. Is it all contained in that grayish powder?"

"I know of no other source. I think this is what happens there: the powdered material strikes the light beam—or disruptive beam, whatever it is—and the electrons revolving around the nuclei of the atoms are forced to jump from their regular orbits and to jump inward toward the nucleus. As these electrons jump, they emit a definite amount of energy, which the old-time scientists called, for lack of a better term, a quantum. And since this dust contains practically an infinite number of atoms and consequently almost an infinite number of electrons, the quanta emitted are almost infinite; at any rate, they are sufficient in number to build up a large amount of free energy, which, when absorbed by the encircling coil, is turned into a current thus realizing the aim of the whole process.

"As to the exact action of the light, of its power to force the electrons to jump inward, I can scarcely hazard a guess. It may be that it acts only as a catalyst. At any rate it has the special property of releasing the forces that normally hold the electrons in their orbits.\*

\* There is nothing preposterous in light having this quality. We know of several instances where special elements or groups of elements possess special powers. The carbon atom, for instance, alone of all the elements, possesses the power to build up into complex molecules. This property is the fundamental basis underlying the existence of all life



During the days that followed, while the Ruler's agents were ransacking the globe for the mysteriously missing ship, the group of scientists hidden away in the bowels of a mountain in Colorado calmly disassembled and inspected the mechanism of the missing liner.

Four atomic pulsators were in the power room. One of these they tore down and subjected to the most careful scrutiny. Jergsbane, who had occupied the head of the chemistry department at the University of Minnesota, set to work analyzing the powder that was converted into energy. His report was terse, "Ordinary limestone, powdered." But when the electrical experts tore down the vacuum tube and took to him for analysis the cathode that emitted the reddish light, he ran test after test and shook his head after each one. "That cathode is platinum, but probably it would work as well if it were made of tin. It's the coating that contains the secret. And until that is analyzed, we'll have trouble in building an atomic pulsator. I'll carry on, but I won't promise success. The cathode is probably coated with one of the rare earth-metals, perhaps with an element that we haven't discovered as yet. Perhaps it's a compound. The analysis presents difficulties, to say the least."

Meanwhile Moulton and Thornton had been working with the G-rays. To their consternation they were slowly but surely being forced to the conclusion arrived at by the younger Moulton, that

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on earth. If the carbon atom had not possessed this power, life, as we know it, would not have developed. Iron, with twenty-seven electrons, and the adjoining elements, made up of twenty-six and twenty-eight electrons, possess the power of permanent magnetism. The eighty-two to ninety-one electron group is the seat of all radio-activity. Thus it is easy to postulate that certain elements, under certain conditions, are capable of emitting light or a system of waves and corpuscles similar to light, which will *loosen* the force that holds the electrons in their orbits.—Ed.

the G-ray machines made possible the lifting of the ship, an end accomplished through bending the gravitational forces.\*

Outside a voice was heard bellowing loudly for Moulton, who roared an answer. Jergsbane came hurrying in.

"What's happened?" Thaddeus snapped. "Have the Dictator's spies nosed us out?" He voiced the universal fear of the men and women who lived in this cavern.

"I've got it!" Jergsbane shouted.

"Got what, you excitable Swede?"

"The coating on that cathode!"

This was really exciting news. Upon the analysis of that coating depended the construction of atomic pulsators and upon the construction of the pulsators depended the revolt against Genghis Khan II. The eyes of the two scientists glowed with eagerness.

"What is it?" Moulton asked.

"I don't know."

Thaddeus stared at Jergsbane as if he contemplated jerking his head off. Thornton looked like he would gladly assist in the operation. Each was preparing to word a thunderous rebuke when the chemist continued.

"I don't know what it is, but I know where we can get all of it we need. A year or so ago there was brought to me for analysis a sample of earth from a mining pit in western Colorado. It contained, among other things, a small amount of material exactly similar to the coating on that cathode. I couldn't analyze the stuff and I filed it away and forgot all about it. When I was work-

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\* As was later brought out, the apparatus examined by Moulton and Thornton was connected to the outer hull of the ship, and insulated from the inner. Thus, the G-rays set the outer hull to vibrating in frequency, and this, combined with the fact that the outer hull was also strongly magnetized, resulted in gravity being bent around the ship.—Ed.

ing on that cathode, I suddenly remembered the sample. What do we care if we don't know what it is? We can use it anyhow!"

Then, in the G-ray room of the stolen liner three scientists indulged in an abandoned dance. A war dance. For at that moment war was unofficially declared.

## CHAPTER V

### Revolt at Last

**I**N the months that followed, the tortured earth continued groaning under the dictatorship of Genghis Khan II. His suspicions had been greatly aroused by the loss of an air liner and he shrewdly guessed that somewhere on the globe its secrets were being pried into. As to the use that would probably be made of the stolen knowledge, he did not have to guess. He knew he was hated, he saw the conflict impending, and he got ready.

His robots constructed many of the gigantic liners, armored and deadly. Robot battalions guarded the land approaches to his City on Tibet. By day and by night a succession of ships constantly circled the sky-dome that hung over the city. He himself sat in this dome and stared out at his defenses and felt almost safe. Robots were not allowed to approach his person. His orders were delivered by radio.

Tel-visor screens kept him informed on what was happening over the earth. When he desired to speak to one of his commanders, and wished that conversation to be especially secretive, the man was brought up to the dome. He entered one room while the Dictator stayed in another. Tel-vision and loud speakers were the only connections between the two. Only the robots who

served as his personal attendants were allowed near his person and these never left the dome. The slightest suspicious move and they were killed. He took few chances. But ever and anon his instruments recorded strange vibrations coming from different spots on the surface of the earth. Genghis Khan II suspected what these portended and daily he got more irascible and nightly he planned added defenses.

The attack came as the dawn broke over the City of the Dictator one December day. From out of the sun, a slender ship came knifing down at incredible speed. It flashed over one of the lumbering guard ships circling the sky-dome, a greenish ray flicked out like a finger of doom, the nose of the guard ship crumbled where the beam struck, and the liner crashed to earth.

The diminutive hornet, that had attacked it, leaped away and was gone. It was the leap of the wolf attacking the lumbering bison. The liners were fast, very fast, but the attacking ship was flying so fast that the speed of the liner seemed inconsequential. Behind the diminutive ship leaped a streak of roaring flame, pushing the blunt nose through the air.

The news was instantly flashed to Genghis Khan II. He saw his smashed liner on the tel-visor screens. It lay a twisted mass of duro-vane with the nose sheared off where the beam had struck.

Then out of the sun came another ship, and another, and another. Each leaped down and away and as each scuttled off, an air liner fell crumbling to earth behind it. The heat rays with which these guard ships were armored, the rapid firing guns hurling atomic missiles, chased vainly after these lashing fighters.

The Dictator, frantic at the sight of his guard being cut to flinders, radioed

orders calling to his protection his ships from all parts of the earth. From every quarter his air liners came bravely flying, manned by their robot crews.

There was something magnificent in the way these unthinking, unreasoning, human beings went down to death. A mighty ship would come hurrying up, there would be a thundering whine of rockets, a streak of metal, a green ray, and the liner would go crashing down like a plummet. Ah, those robot crews, how calmly they died. But the men manning the rocket ships knew they had to die. There was no other way. It was slaughter, but it had to be done.

And the robots were not without protection. Once a heat ray directed at random caught a rocket ship just before the green ray flashed out. Plenty of current flowed down those minute parallel beams. The rocket ship flared into almost instant incandescence, and it took the long plunge downward, a screaming mass of white hot metal. The liners of the Dictator were deadly—they had long held the earth in subjugation—but they were outmaneuvered by the screaming rocket ships.

The robot battalions on the ground stared uncomprehendingly at the battle raging up above. Who dared dispute the will of their master, they wondered. Vainly they attempted to train their heat rays, their atomic missile projectors, on the rocket ships. As well might they have tried to stab the mist of the morning. Speed, speed, and more speed, those ships had. They stood on their tail and climbed up to heaven, climbed clear out of sight, climbed as easily and as rapidly as they flew horizontally. Then down to earth they dropped and a duro-vane liner crumbled.

Under their attack the guard ships fell one by one. As the liners bent on

rescue came up, they met a similar fate. Ever in the history of the world speed has triumphed.

Then the rocket ships calmly started flying in circles high above and around the sky dome, wherein Genghis Khan II sat in rage and growing panic. Perhaps he expected an attack on the dome, but none came. With the failure of the attack to materialize, he realized that in all probability they were saving him for a different fate.

The thought of capitulation never entered his mind. Too well he knew what his fate would be if he fell into the hands of those angered men and women whom he had enslaved. Exquisite would be the torture they would invent for his passing. He would die, oh yes, but he would die slowly, in as horrible a manner as the combined hates of millions of people could devise.

He saw what he thought to be one of his own ships appear high in the heavens. The rocket ships left off their circling and approached it, but they made no move to attack. Then the Dictator knew that the end was near. This was his own ship, the one that had vanished. As he had suspected, the rebels had captured it. Now would follow the attack on the sky dome. Judging from the way the green ray had sliced through his ships, the sky dome, constructed of duro-vane, would not offer resistance to it. Genghis Khan II never doubted but that soon a green ray would reach out and the sky dome would crumble beneath him. So he prepared to play his one remaining trump, his hope of escape when all other hopes had failed.

Housed in the sky dome, ready for instant and prolonged flight, was a blunt nosed speedy flier, the fastest ship on the earth—or so the former world ruler thought before he saw the rocket fliers.

When the liner moved slowly toward him, and the rocket ships had climbed out of sight in preparation for a power dive, Genghis Khan II, seeing that the end was near, opened the doorway out of the dome, slipped into his flier and hurled the speedy little ship out. Somewhere on the globe he would find sanctuary. Somewhere he would be safe.

The rocket ships, lost in the blue above, did not see the flier slip out. But the men in the liner saw the tiny projectile leap from the dome and they hurled their ship after it. The escaping Dictator laughed. This was faster than any ship ever invented, almost as fast as those devils that had destroyed his guard ships. They could not catch him now. He hurled his screaming flier along, a bare thousand feet above the ground.

But when they had stolen his secret of atomic power and had unlimited energy at their disposal, the scientists of the cavern had devised, besides the greenish disintegration ray, another effective weapon, which they had planned to use on the sky dome. But now they had another quarry. Genghis Khan II felt his ship slow down as the magnetic ray struck it, felt it lose speed and swing back toward the liner coming toward it. But before he could bring his weapons to bear on the opposing ship, the two were locked together by the magnetic beam. The rebel liner opened a port, and Thornton's chisel snipped a small hole in the flier. Before the Dictator realized what was happening, while he was still attempting to bring his weapons to bear on his captor, he found his ship filled with gas. The master of the earth quietly dropped off into unconsciousness.

Locked together, this oddly assorted pair, captor and captive, turned back in the direction from which the larger

had come. Two of the rocket ships followed as guards. The others took up their patrol around the sky dome. With constantly increasing speed, the stolen liner moved away, carrying with it the flier containing the unconscious body of the captured Ruler.

Again the doors of the mountain cavern rolled back. Like Siamese twins the rebel ship and its captive moved in, while the two rocket fliers turned on their tails and pushed themselves out of sight in the sky above, where they took up positions as guards.

The captive was extracted from his ship much as a sardine is extracted from its can, by removing the protecting metal. When the people in the cavern got a glimpse of his unconscious body, a murderous growl arose from their throats until the entire cavern resounded to this song of hate. Here he was, this man who had killed their friends and relatives, who had made slaves of free men, who had forced men to become hunted creatures moving only by night, living within caves, forever shut off from the light of the sun. Here he was, the man into whose hands had been given the ability to lift the human race to undreamed heights, but who had perverted this ability to his own use. Here he was, this fiend. And the people growled. "Let us tear his flesh from his bones with red-hot pincers," they screamed. "Let us tear off his fingers and his toe nails and pour molten lead on these quivering surfaces. Let us break, slowly but surely, every bone in his body."

When the tel-visors still in use in the world were electrified by a broadcast from the cavern and the helpless Dictator was shown to the goggling populace, a chorus of hate rose to the skies, and all the fliers on the earth were jammed

to the guards with men and women who had but a single idea, to get to this cavern in the Rockies to help destroy the man who had held them in subjugation. Only the robots, milling aimlessly without a leader, failed to take part in this hegira to the Rockies to witness and assist in the death of a tyrant.

But the scientists were too wise to be swayed by hate and in the end their ideas prevailed. Their captive was not killed. He was not even tortured. He was given an injection of his own drug, made into a robot, and set to work repairing the damage he had done. His genius was unquestioned. Robbed of

his will to do harm, he was incarcerated in a laboratory, heavy guards were set over him with orders to destroy him utterly if his normal mind showed signs of returning, and he was kept there, toiling away at the problems facing a devastated world about to be rebuilt.

In the years that have elapsed since that momentous date, humanity has come out of its hiding place, cleared its tangled fields, reset its temperature regulators, and normalized its robot population. Again air liners sail serenely through the skies.

Again there is peace and happiness over the smiling earth.

THE END

# Meet the Authors

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**ROBERT MOORE WILLIAMS** *Author of*  
**The Man Who Ruled the World**  
*(Page 10)*

**I** READ my first science-fiction yarn about fifteen years ago. The story started me reading this type of fiction. Still do it. Read all the science-fiction magazines from cover to cover. As an amateur, I read all the factual science I can find, from bugs to brass. Like to know why things happen.

Was graduated from the University of Missouri, School of Journalism, in 1931. Carried all the science I could work into my course, from meteorology to anthropology. Wish I had carried more.

Spent the past year writing fiction on a full-time basis. Expect to spend the next thirty years doing the same thing. Now thirty years of age.  
—Robert Moore Williams.