



WORLDS of SCIENCE FICTION

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All Stories New and Complete

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*It's been said that the soul is the
form that makes the body—which may
just possibly explain what happened
on that fatal day at Ivy College . . .*

THE OLD GOAT

BY CHARLES L. FONTENAY

DR. ANGSTROM was known to his students and many of his colleagues on the faculty as "The Old Goat." Very appropriate, that name. He had the disposition of a goat with dyspepsia, he had the cold blue eyes of a goat, he had the wagging whiskers of a goat. Perhaps it's in memory of Dr. Angstrom that Ivy College has a goat for its mascot now.

Dr. Angstrom was even more goatish than usual that day last summer when half a dozen top scientists in the field gathered to

see his preview experiment on matter transmission of a live animal. He had been working hard for weeks on the transmitter and keeping up classes at the same time, which did not improve his disposition. Besides, he had a real goat for an experimental animal, and goats are notoriously hard on the nervous system.

This particular animal, at the moment the scientists entered, was straining at his rope, trying to get a mouthful of a tablecloth which graced a nearby table full of jars and retorts. Failing this, the goat exhibited that typical lack of discrimination in matters edible and began to chew on his rope.

I felt a little out of place among all these giant brains. My reason for being there was that I had been serving, during my college career, as sort of a factotum and fetch-and-carry man for Dr. Angstrom, and I was to take notes for him. I had acquired considerable affection for The Old Goat. Maybe that's one reason I hate to see his great scientific work kept under wraps because people still insist it's dangerous.

"I have proved to my own satisfaction that the matter transmitter works," Dr. Angstrom told the assembled scientists. "I have made a number of transmissions of inanimate matter. In theory, it should work just as well for animate objects and I have invited you to be present at the first test of this theory.

"I need not go into detail with you about the basic theory of matter transmission. The transmitter itself picks up the atomic and elec-

tronic 'image' of the object inside it, much as a television scanner picks up a scene, except that it is done in three dimensions instead of two. This is made possible by the four-dimensional element which is the heart of the apparatus and was made available to us through recent intra-atomic research.

"The receiver picks up the image as a television receiver does, except again in three dimensions. The matter is not duplicated because the transmitter strips down the object within it as it transmits.

"Now the question that has been raised by some scientists about the transmission of animate objects is whether the 'soul' or 'life force' can be transmitted. I consider this question ridiculous, and will prove it so. It is my contention that such 'life force' is not a thing apart from the physical shell."

The matter transmitter was a large closed cylinder on one side of the room. The receiver was a similar cylinder on the other. Both were raised slightly from the floor.

As sort of *hors d'oeuvre*, Dr. Angstrom transmitted a large chunk of lead across the room, then a glass jar. In each case, the object was placed in the transmitter and a moment later removed from the receiver across the room. There was no possible way for it to have been moved across the intervening space except by broadcast transmission.

"As you see," said Dr. Angstrom, "I have eliminated the necessity for a switch by building the switch into the door of the transmitter. As soon as the door is closed, transmis-

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THE OLD GOAT

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sion occurs. Now we shall send our animate object."

He untied the goat and, with some difficulty, hauled the animal by its collar to the transmitter. There the goat balked and Dr. Angstrom, having got its head through the door, got behind it and shoved heartily, hanging onto the edge of the door so he could shut it quickly when the goat was inside.

As goats will, the goat suddenly changed its mind and leaped into the transmitter. Caught off balance, Dr. Angstrom fell in after it—and the door, given a last frantic jerk, slammed on them both.

There were gasps of horror and

alarm from the scientists, but I held up my hand to calm them.

"There's no danger, gentlemen," I said. "It's just as well this way. I happen to know that Dr. Angstrom's next step, after proving to you with the goat that animate objects could be transmitted, was to prove that human beings also could be transmitted. He planned to be his own first subject."

With serene confidence, I went to the receiver and threw open the door. Just as I had anticipated, the goat leaped out, unharmed, followed by Dr. Angstrom.

"I told you animate objects could be transmitted successfully," said the goat triumphantly.

"Baa!" said Dr. Angstrom, and began eating the tablecloth. ● ● ●