



Weird Tales

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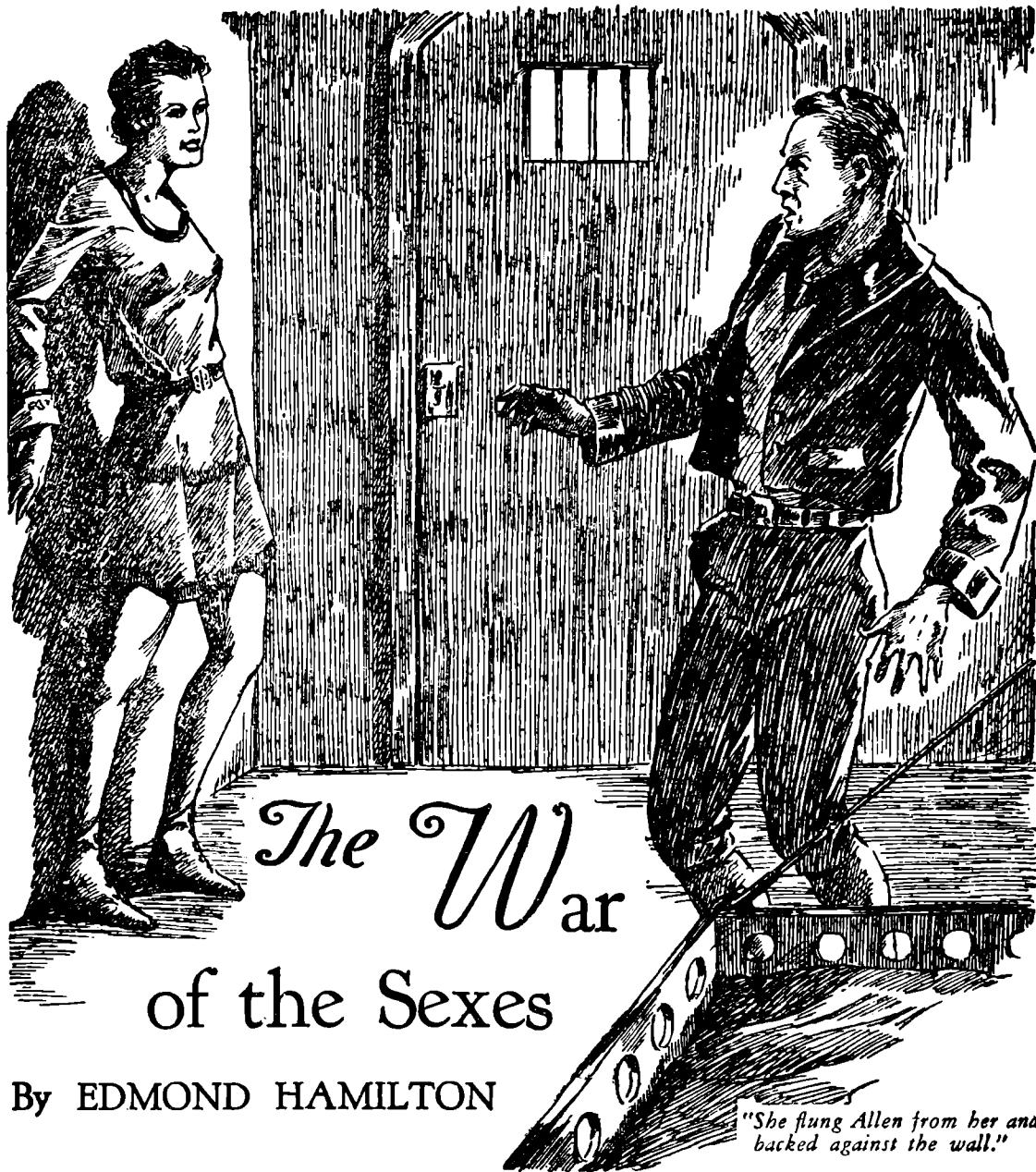
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WEIRD TALES ISSUED 1st OF EACH MONTH



The War of the Sexes

By EDMOND HAMILTON

*"She flung Allen from her and
backed against the wall."*

*A tale of twenty thousand years in the future—a loveless world in
which the Males and the Females are engaged in a war
of extermination against each other*

IS THIS the residence of Doctor Daniel Lantin?" asked Allan Rand of the tall, bearded man with penetrating eyes who had answered his ring.

"I am Doctor Lantin," the other told him. "You wish to see me?"

"About your advertisement," Allan said. "My name's Allan Rand—your ad asked for a young man without connec-

tions in search of exciting work, and I thought I might fill the bill."

"Please come inside," Doctor Lantin invited. "My laboratory is in the back of the house—this way."

Allan Rand, inside, went with the other down a narrow hall that opened into a square, white-tiled room. It was windowless, but a great lamp glowed at

the center of the ceiling. There was a desk in the corner and on it a photograph that caught Allan's eye—a picture of a vivid-faced young girl.

Under the ceiling-lamp stood a table and beside it were racks of shining instruments and complicated apparatus with rubber tubing that looked like anesthetic apparatus. Around the walls were shelves of chemicals and jars holding odd specimens of animal life.

"I am a research biologist," Doctor Lantin explained, "and I want a young man with cold-steel nerve and a strong body to accompany me on a scientific expedition I am making soon to the South American jungles."

"I don't know about the nerve," Allan Rand grinned, "but I think my body's strong enough."

"I can soon ascertain whether that is so," said Doctor Lantin. "Will you please stretch out on this table for examination?"

Allan Rand climbed onto the metal table and stretched out. Doctor Lantin bent over him and then came a metallic click, and another. Allan felt with the sound of the clicks that something had fastened shut on his wrists and ankles. He strove to sit up and found that he had been fettered to the table with metal clamps!

"What's the meaning of this?" he demanded indignantly. "You needn't fetter me to this table for an examination!"

"The examination was only a ruse, Mr. Rand," said Doctor Lantin coolly, "and the advertisement also."

"What is this, then—a hold-up?" asked Allan Rand.

"In a sense," smiled the doctor. "Only I am going to take from you, not your money, but your brain."

At Allan's blank look his smile deepened. "For a long time I have believed that a brain removed from a living body

could be kept living indefinitely in the proper serum, just as a chicken-heart has been kept living in serum.

"Of course no one would volunteer willingly to have his brain removed for such an experiment. There was nothing for it but to use an unwilling subject, to lure some one here to be the subject. I inserted my advertisement, and it brought you to me."

A cold sweat broke upon Allan Rand's forehead at Doctor Lantin's words. The man spoke as dispassionately as of the vivisection of a rat.

"But that's murder!" Allan cried. "You can't do such a thing without it being found out!"

"Murder is quite justified when it is committed in the interest of science," Lantin told him coolly. "As to discovery, you have no connections to worry about you and will not be missed. I assure you I am quite capable of disposing of your body once I have the brain out of it."

With the words Doctor Lantin pulled toward him the rack of surgical instruments and the anesthetic-apparatus with its rubber tubing and cone. He then brought a container of thick, clear liquid. Allan Rand saw and strained at his fetters.

"You can't do this thing!" he cried. "Lantin, it's crazy—to try to keep my brain living in a jar of serum!"

Doctor Lantin had the rubber anesthetic-cone in his hand. "It may be I'll not succeed," he admitted, "but I think I will. In any case you'll never know, Rand, for even if your brain does live on in the serum it'll be unconscious.

"A whiff of this anesthetic now," he smiled, "and it will all be over for Allan Rand. Any last words before you go into the darkness?"

He was pressing the cone to Allan Rand's nostrils as he spoke and Allan

felt the stupefying scent overcoming his consciousness. Darkness indeed was gathering swiftly around him but out of that darkness he struggled with a last defiance to answer Lantin's mocking question.

"Last words? My last words are to—go ahead and—be damned to——"

Complete darkness and unconsciousness encompassed Allan Rand.

HE WAS aware of the return of consciousness, his first sensation a racking pain in his head. He groaned, stirred, and then was aware that he was lying on a softer surface than that of the table on which he had lost consciousness. He heard a murmur of voices, and opened his eyes.

Two men were bending over him and for a moment Allan lay motionless, looking up at them. The men were middle-aged, and both were clad in soft blue silk-like jackets and blue, close-fitting knee-length trousers. They wore belts with clasps of white metal, and in a sheath at each belt was a flat white metal rod. One of the men was a head taller and broader-shouldered than the other. Both had intelligent features.

Allan Rand stared wonderingly up at them, and then the smaller of the two men spoke. His words were in English, but an English that seemed distorted and strangely accented, so changed in fact that it was only with difficulty that he understood.

"He lives, Krann! The scientists have succeeded—he lives!" the man was exclaiming.

"Yes, he is living!" conceded the bigger man, Krann. "Never thought I to have seen it, Durul."

Allan Rand struggled to speak, and when he did so, he found that his voice sounded strange, unnatural. "What's all

this about?" he asked weakly. "Where am I?"

Remembrance came to him suddenly, and swift anger. "Where's Doctor Lantin? I remember now—by heaven, Lantin's going to account to me for this!"

"You are angry with some one, lord?" asked Durul.

"Yes, with the bird who was going to remove my brain—who trapped me in this laboratory!" Allan Rand said. "When I find him I'll——"

He sat up as he said that, and then the words died on his lips in sheer amazement as he looked around. He was not in Doctor Lantin's laboratory. He was in a strange room such as he had never seen before.

Its walls were of blue as brilliant as though the room had been hollowed from a gigantic sapphire, the sunlight that streamed through windows in one wall reflected back and forth in shimmering azure lightnings. Just beneath the windows stood the padded metal table on which Allan sat.

He saw that besides Krann and Durul there were three others in the room, clad in blue silky jackets and trousers also. These three stood respectfully beside squat, complicated-looking apparatuses of metal and glass. There were also metal instruments like the surgical instruments of Doctor Lantin, and a square container of thick clear liquid. The three blue-garbed men beside these instruments returned Allan's stare respectfully.

Allan turned to the two men beside him, Krann and Durul, then with a sudden thought turned still further to look from the windows behind the table on which he sat. He looked, felt his mind reeling at what he saw. For outside there stretched in the sunlight not the buildings of the city in which Doctor Lantin's

house had stood, but a different and unearthly-looking city.

A city of blue buildings! Cubical buildings they were, mostly, but their size differed, ranging from small cubes of two or three stories to huge ones whose roofs were like glistening blue plains. This multitude of turquoise cubes extended to the horizon.

The streets between them, even, were blue, thronged with azure-garbed figures. Tapering white aircraft flashed to and fro above the city so swiftly that they were white streaks in the sunshine. Allan was aware as he looked forth that the building from whose window he stared was perhaps the largest in the city, an immense blue cube surrounded by a plaza on which a crowd was gathered.

ALLAN turned from the windows toward the two men beside him. "What's this place?" he asked dazedly. "And Lantin—where's Lantin?"

"You mean the man you saw last?" Durul asked. "He has been dead for twenty thousand years."

"What?" yelled Allan Rand. "What kind of joke is this? Or have I lost my sanity?"

"Lord, you are still sane," Durul reassured him. "But since the man you call Lantin made you unconscious, more than twenty thousand years have rolled across earth."

"Twenty thousand years—it's impossible!" Allan cried. "You can't tell me that I could have lived through all that time, that my body could have been preserved!"

"Your body was not preserved," Durul said, "but your brain was! Twenty thousand years ago your brain was taken from your body by a scientist, and placed in serum. In that serum your brain lived

on long after the scientist himself was dead.

"Other scientists, though, cared for the serum containing your brain, generation after generation of them. In that way for two hundred centuries your brain has lived without consciousness in the serum. And now that it has been put back into a body and restored thus to consciousness, you seem to yourself to have just awaked."

"It can't be true!" Allan insisted, cold fear at his heart. "Why, even if my brain was preserved in that way, my body couldn't have been saved to put my brain back in!"

"I did not say that your brain had been put back into *your* body," Durul answered pointedly. "I said it had been put back into *a* body."

As the full import of his words struck Allan, he looked down at himself for the first time.

He saw that he was clad in blue trousers and jacket like those of the others. But his strong, hard legs—his massive torso—his long, steady fingers and superbly muscled arms and shoulders—these were not of the body that had been Allan Rand's!

He was handed a mirror, and as he stared into it, it almost dropped from his hands. The face that looked back at him from the mirror was no more Allan Rand's than the body—it was a high, aquiline, merciless face with ruthless black eyes and a straight mouth. This unfamiliar face was topped by close-cut dark hair.

Allan let the mirror fall. "Good God, whose body is this that you've put my brain into?" he exclaimed. "Who am I?"

Durul bowed as he answered. "Lord, you are Thur, ruler of the Males."

"Ruler of the Males?" Allan repeated. "What do you mean?"

"Lord, great changes have taken place on earth while your brain slept in the serum. In your day the two sexes, Males and Females, mingled. But for eight thousand years now they have been distinctly separate races, deadly enemies of each other."

"Do you mean to say that a war of sexes has been going on for eight thousand years?" Allan demanded.

Durul and Krann bowed affirmation.

"But how has the human race perpetuated itself, then?" Allan asked.

"I will explain," said Durul. "Until ten thousand years ago men and women lived as in your time, marrying and producing children cared for by their immediate parents. Then a woman biologist achieved ectogenesis, the production of children in the laboratory directly from the human gamete-cells or seed-cells.

"By treating the gamete-cells with a secret reagent she had evolved, she could fertilize them artificially and produce tiny embryos which, in an artificial environment equivalent to the placental arrangement of the human mother's body, grew into normal children.

"This woman biologist found she could produce children of whichever sex she wished, by controlling the number of chromosomes in the gamete-cells used. She chose to produce only female children, and she and the women disciples she gathered around her engaged in the large-scale production of females.

"The females would soon have outnumbered the males and dominated them had not a man biologist discovered the secret of ectogenesis also. He and his male associates determined to restore the balance of numbers and began producing male children on a large scale.

"Swiftly rivalry grew between the two sexes as to which should be dominant in numbers. Antagonism grew so great that

association between males and females fell off. Marriage and the concepts of marriage and love declined until they had entirely disappeared.

"The children of the world were produced entirely by ectogenesis. The female scientists controlled the laboratories in which female children were produced, and the male scientists those in which male children were produced. Each sex produced as many children as possible, still hoping to outnumber and dominate the other sex.

"Sex riots broke out in the cities, males fighting females in the streets. Finally the two sexes separated, becoming two separate races, Males and Females. The rest of earth was gradually deserted as the two races settled wholly in this continent. The Males took the cities in the north, of which this city is capital, while the Females took the cities in the south, several hundred miles from here.

"Soon came open war between Males and Females, the Males going south in their flyers and with their fire-rods raining death on the women's cities, and the Females retaliating. That war has gone on ever since. In war as in peace, the Males have a single ruler, as do also the Females, and you, Thur, are that ruler."

"But I still don't see how it is that I'm Thur," Allan persisted. "Why did you put my brain in Thur's body?"

"For this reason," Durul said. "Thur has been our ruler for ten years and his strong rule alone has held up the Male morale against the constant attacks the Females have been lately making on us. But this morning in landing his flyer on the roof of this palace, Thur was killed, part of his skull being crushed in on his brain.

"Krann and I, who are Thur's chief councillors, knew that once the Males learned their strong ruler was dead they

would lose all courage. We asked the scientists if in some way they could not revive Thur. They said that as only his brain was damaged, putting a new living brain in his skull at once would reactivate Thur's body.

"There was no time to take out the brain of one of us to put in Thur's skull—every second was precious if Thur's body was to be reactivated. But the scientists said they had in their collections a brain kept living in serum for generations as a scientific curiosity. That could be used, they said, and we agreed.

"So the brain living in the serum, your brain, was brought and rapidly installed in Thur's skull, nerve-connections made, the broken parts of the skull fused. Then, when a little time had passed, your brain woke to consciousness in Thur's body. And now, lord, you are Thur, ruler of the Males, and their mainstay against the attacks which Nara, the Female ruler, and her lieutenants, Breela and Dulan, have been making on us. You must help the Males withstand them as Thur has done."

ALLAN RAND—despite that he wore Thur's body he could think of himself only as Allan Rand—was stunned. "And I'm Thur! What a nest of troubles Lantin shot me into—a war of sexes, and me ruler of the Males!

"Tell me, Durul," he said. "Isn't there a chance of stopping this war, of making peace between the Males and Females?"

Durul shook his head, and so did the big Krann. "There is no chance," Krann affirmed. "The Females will not stop their attacks on us until they have wiped out all Males and only Females live on earth."

"And our aim," Durul added, "is the same, to vanquish and destroy the Females so that the future will see Males only in the world."

"And a fine world it would be in either case!" said Allan disgustedly. "All men or else all women—some world!"

"And now, lord Thur," said Durul, "will you not show yourself to the Male crowds outside? Rumors have been spreading all day that Thur is dead, and they need but to see you to be reassured."

Allan hesitated. "All right," he said. "Since I've got Thur's body I suppose I'll have to live up to some of his responsibilities."

With the help of Durul and Krann he slid from the padded table. He tried his legs experimentally. He could walk and move as easily as he had ever done with his own body, he found.

Suddenly Allan wondered what had become of his own body. Destroyed by Doctor Lantin, twenty thousand years ago, he supposed. He felt a hysterical homesickness for that familiar body, a strangeness in inhabiting this of Thur's. But Thur's body now was his—he must make the best of it.

Durul informed him that it was Thur's custom to show himself to his people from a terrace on the palace roof, and Allan acquiesced. Durul and Krann walked with him out of the blue chamber into a turquoise-walled corridor. Along it stood guards with flat metal fire-rods, raising these in salute as Allan—or Thur—passed.

They went through the blue hallways until they reached a shining white stair that wound both upward and downward. They went up this and soon emerged onto the roof of the palace, so vast in extent that it seemed like a great glistening blue plain. Many of the white flyers were parked in regular rows on the roof.

There was a little terrace jutting out at one side of the roof, and Durul and Krann led Allan out onto this. He looked down there from a great height upon the

huge crowds of blue-clad figures that jammed the plaza below. His people, the Males!

And they were all Males. There were youths and even small boys among them, but not one woman.

He appeared on the terrace, and a tremendous shout of joy went up from the Male crowds as they looked up and saw Allan—or Thur.

Their shout was dying, when abruptly it welled up again in a great cry that was different in tone, a crescendo of surprize and fear. The crowd below was not looking now at Allan but up beyond him, pointing excitedly.

Allan looked quickly up with Krann and Durul, and saw a swarm of white flyers diving headlong onto the Male city from high above.

"A Female raid!" yelled Krann. "They'll be turning their fire-rods on us in a moment!"

"Back inside, lord Thur!" cried Durul, but Allan was held motionless by the weird sight.

From the Female flyers, as they swooped plummet-like upon the city, came flashing fire-bursts that cut swaths of scorching death across the crowds of running Males below.

The Males were not running for shelter, though, but toward their own flyers. Already dozens of Male flyers were swarming up to meet the Female craft.

The whole city had become a scene of wild uproar. The Female flyers formed a great upright revolving circle, the individual craft shooting down to loose fire-bursts and then zooming upward again as those behind them took their place. From roofs across the city the Males replied with fire-bursts as their own flyers took to the air.

Krann was running toward one of the

parked flyers on the roof. Allan sprang with him to the craft.

"No, go not, Thur!" cried Durul, clutching to halt him. "You, the ruler, must not risk yourself in this battle——"

"Hell of a ruler I'd be if I was afraid to fight with the rest!" Allan flung at him. "I never dodged a scrap yet—let her go, Krann!"

He had crouched behind Krann on the flat deck of the tapering flyer. Krann grasped its control wheel, shoved a lever with his elbow, and as a mechanism under the flat deck began to hum, the flyer shot steeply upward from the roof.

Krann half turned to yell to Allan. "The stern fire-rods, lord Thur—the triggers loose the fire-flashes!"

There were fire-rods mounted on swivels at prow and stern, and Allan grasped the stern ones, his fingers closing on the triggers Krann had indicated. "I've got them—go ahead!" he cried.

KRANN headed the flyer straight toward the maelstrom-like center of the battle. The big Male kept one hand on the control-wheel and the other on the trigger of the prow fire-rod.

They rushed through the air, then were in the thick of the combat—Male and Female flyers darting, banking, diving all around them. Fire-flashes burned thick from flyer to flyer and craft of either side fell in flames as they were struck.

Allan could glimpse the Females as green-clad figures easily distinguishable thus from the blue-garbed Males. Fire-flashes scorched close past him as Krann swerved the flyer sharply. Two Female flyers were diving on them from above.

Allan swung the stern fire-rods up toward the down-rushing craft, his fingers tense on the triggers. For a split-second he saw clearly the faces of the Females on the diving craft—girl's faces, eyes

steady as they worked their own fire-rods.

Good Lord, he couldn't fire on girls! The thought held Allan's fingers motionless on the triggers and almost caused his death, for in a second the girls on the down-rushing Female flyers loosed their bursts together. Only another lightning swerve by Krann evaded them.

Quick as thought Krann circled back and worked his own fire-rod at the two Female craft before they could regain height. Krann at least had no compunction in firing on the Females—Allan saw the two flyers reel down in flames, hit. Krann drove up again into the thickest of the fight.

But now the combat was scattering. Allan saw that the Female flyers were withdrawing, massing together and heading southward. Their swift raid finished, they were retreating, outnumbered by the Male flyers that had risen to repel them.

One Female flyer flew above the mass of the rest as though directing the retreat. Krann drove headlong toward this. Instantly he was engaged in a single combat with it, the rest of the Female flyers continuing their flight pursued by the Males.

Krann dipped, circled, climbed, in aerial combat with the Female flyer. Allan, clinging to the deck, saw that on the Female craft were two green-clad girls, one working the fire-rods and the other piloting the flyer.

The fire-bursts of the Female craft almost got home, but Krann evaded them, achieved the advantage in height. Instantly his prow fire-rod spat a burst at the enemy flyer. It struck the Female pilot, destroyed her, and the craft reeled pilotless down toward the city.

Krann dived after it. Allan saw the remaining Female on the falling flyer struggling to reach its controls.

She had just done so, was levelling out the flyer in its downward plunge, when it

crashed slantingly along the city's street.

Krann landed close beside it. The Female on the wrecked flyer leapt from it, a small hand fire-rod in her grasp.

But Krann and Allan were too quick for her. They seized her before she could use the weapon. She struggled, and Allan was amazed at the wildcat strength in this girl's lithe, slender body.

But Males in the streets were running to the scene, helped to hold the Female, Allan, panting, stepped back. He saw now that the girl wore jacket and short tunic of green.

Her black hair was close-trimmed and uncovered. Her dark eyes were flaming with wrath and her breast rising and falling as she stood in the grasp of her Male captors.

Through the gathering crowds of Males pushed a group of guards and with them came Durul, his anxious face seeking Allan.

"Lord Thur, you're not hurt?" he cried.

"No, thanks to Krann," Allan said. "And Krann and I seem to have taken a captive."

Durul turned his gaze on the girl. His eyes widened as he looked at her. "Do you know who this Female is?" he cried.

Allan and Krann shook their heads. "It's Nara, ruler of the Females!" Durul cried. "You've captured the Female ruler!"

"Nara!" shouted Krann. A fierce shout went up from the Males around. "Nara captured!"

The girl spoke, her eyes deadly in their hate. "Yes, Nara, you dogs of Males! And sorry I am that I could not kill more of you before this happened to me."

"You'll have the guards kill her at once, Thur?" Durul asked.

"Kill her?" Allan repeated.

"Of course—we Males kill all Females we capture and so do they any of us they

take prisoner. I will give the order to the guards."

Durul turned to do so but Allan's voice halted him. "Don't do it! You can't kill this girl like that!"

Durul and Krann stared at him in sheer astonishment. "Why not? She is a Female—a deadly enemy of all our race."

"Yes, and will be while I live!" exclaimed Nara. "I ask for no mercy from you, Thur."

Shouts went up from the Males around. "Death to Nara! Kill the Female!"

Allan asserted himself. "I am Thur, am I not?" he said coldly to Durul and Krann and the gathered Males. "It is my order that instead of killing this Female you imprison her securely."

For a moment Allan thought that Durul and Krann would rebel at the order. But they did not.

"You are the lord Thur," said Durul bowing. "The order will be obeyed."

He gave a brief order to the Male guards, who led Nara, a slim, defiant figure, toward the great palace of Thur in which Allan had awakened.

ALLAN looked up and saw that the sky over the city was now full of Male flyers returning from their pursuit of the Female flyers. The Male city was alive with excitement.

"The Females got away?" Allan asked, and Durul nodded.

"Most of them did, but many of them we destroyed. And they lost their ruler—this has been a disastrous raid for the Females."

With Krann and Durul, Allan walked back into the palace of Thur. As they entered it a guard reported to Allan.

"We have placed Nara in one of the cells in the lowest level of the palace, under guard, lord Thur," he informed.

"All right, keep her there for the pres-

ent," Allan said. "I'll decide what's to be done with her."

But by the time night came Allan had made no progress toward a decision. He sat with Krann and Durul at a little table set upon the terrace that jutted from the palace's roof. He had eaten with the two Males a supper of synthetic foods of jelly-like consistency, strange but not unpleasant to the taste.

Now he sat looking out. Night lay over the Male city, whose buildings were outlined by the lights that blinked here and there in an irregular pattern. Swift humming shapes came and went in the darkness overhead, patrols of Male flyers on the alert against another Female attack.

"But it will be some time before the Females raid again," said Durul with satisfaction. "Yes, down in the Female cities, Breela and Dulan and the rest of the Females will be sad tonight thinking of their ruler Nara's capture."

"And will be sadder when they hear that we've killed Nara," added Krann, with a sidelong glance at Allan.

"Why are you so set on killing this Nara?" Allan asked. "Why do all you Males feel that you have to destroy every Female?"

"Lord Thur, had your best friends been killed by Females you'd have as much hate for them as we do," said Durul solemnly.

"And the Females feel the same way about the Males," Allan commented. "And just because this damned sex war started it'll be fought until one or the other of the sexes is wiped out."

"That is what we Males are fighting for—to rid the world of the Females!" said Durul fervently. "And to kill Nara will be a step in that direction—she has been one of the ablest Female rulers."

"There is in fact nothing you can do but kill her, lord Thur," Krann pointed

out. "You can not keep her prisoner for ever and you can not let her go back to the Females to make new raids on us."

"Well, I'll decide what's to be done with her," Allan said. "I wish I had the man who shot me ahead into this world, into another man's body and responsibilities and into this crazy war of sexes."

WHEN Durul and Krann had gone from the terrace, Allan sat on, looking out over the night-shrouded Male city and brooding further on the strange situation into which Lantin's mad experiment had projected him. What a world it was into which he had awakened so strangely! A topsy-turvy world, a loveless world in which the sexes had become the bitterest of enemies.

Allan remembered how back in his own time, even, there had been signs of this. The emergence of women from their age-old subjection to the other sex had stirred up no small amount of sex-jealousy. Rivalry of men and women had grown in many cases to antagonism and open enmity. And now that the mating of men and women was no longer necessary for the perpetuation of the race, the two sexes had come to open war and fought, each to wipe out the other.

And if one sex won, destroying the other completely, what would the world be then? A world in which only men or only women existed, a sexless world as devoid of color and warmth as that of some insects. A world in which all the violent emotional contrasts and upsets that had formerly enlivened earth were done away with, a cold, gray, loveless and sexless world!

Allan stood up suddenly. That vision appalled him—yet what could he do? What must he do? His thoughts swung to the girl captured that day, this Nara who was the Female ruler as he, Thur,

was ruler of the Males. Could he, he wondered, get Nara to help him end this senseless war of men and women? Remembering the girl's fierceness, he doubted it. But it was worth trying.

He strode to the stair and passed down it to the lowest level of the palace, guards stationed on the soft-lit landings saluting him with their fire-rods as he passed. There he saw a corridor stretching away, dimly lit, with barred doors along its walls. Two guards stood in it. They saluted as Allan approached.

"In which cell is the Female, Nara, prisoned?" Allan asked.

One of the guards pointed to a door. "In that one, lord Thur."

"You have the key to it?" Allan asked. "Give it to me—I will speak with Nara."

"Shall we attend you, lord Thur?" the guard asked as he handed the key. "The Female is fierce, and we can go with you."

"To protect me from a girl?" Allan smiled. "No, I can take care of myself. Remain here."

He went down the corridor to the metal-barred door the guard had indicated, and stopped outside it, looking into the soft-lit cell.

NARA sat on a metal bunk, her slim, green-clad figure gallantly erect as she gazed out the cell's tiny single window.

As Allan inserted his key and entered the cell, Nara turned quickly. She recognized him and at once her eyes blazed defiance, her lithe body tense as that of some wrathful young tigress.

"Well, lord Thur, was capturing me not enough?" she asked bitterly. "Must you come to gloat over me too?"

"I'm not here to gloat," Allan Rand told her. "I'm sorry for you, Nara."

"Sorry for me?" Nara hissed the words in fury. "I know how sorry you are, you

Male dog! You who have done more than any other Male to wipe out the Females!"

"That's what I came to talk about," Allan said. "You see, I wouldn't want to see the Males wipe out the Females at all."

"You wouldn't——" Nara looked at him incredulously. "Do you expect me to believe that?"

"Why not?" said Allan. "I think it would be rather a dippy world with nothing but men in it, don't you? Or nothing but women?"

"You can not deceive me, Thur!" the girl exclaimed. "I know that for years you have been the worst enemy of the Females."

Allan pondered. "Suppose I told you that I wasn't really Thur at all?" he asked. "That I was really another man—a man from the far past—in Thur's body?"

"A man from the far past in Thur's body?" Nara's brow wrinkled. "I do not understand—but I do know that you are Thur."

"Well, let it pass," Allan said. "But even admitting that I'm Thur, you can put it that I've had a change of mind, that I don't want any more to exterminate the Females."

"But why not?" The girl's anger was lost for the moment in sheer puzzlement. "Why shouldn't you want to kill all the Females?"

Allan laughed, his first whole-hearted laugh since his strange awakening. "Well, we men did sometimes feel back in my own time that we'd like to kill all the women. But more often we felt like kissing them."

"Kissing them?" Nara repeated. "You speak in riddles, Thur. What do you mean by kissing them—torturing them?"

"It wasn't exactly torture," Allan grinned. "It seems that kissing's been

forgotten in all these sex wars, and no wonder. Wait, I'll show you what I mean——"

His arms went around Nara's slim shoulders and drew her to him. For the moment Nara was too taken with surprise to struggle. Allan kissed her, her lips soft and fragrant against his own, her eyes staring amazed into his.

Then suddenly she was struggling fiercely, quickly, with surprising strength. She flung Allan from her and backed against the cell wall, staring at him half in astonishment and half in wrath.

"Not bad, considering it's the first kiss the world has seen for eight thousand years," said Allan.

"And Males and Females did—that—back in the past?" Nara said unbelievably.

"They sure did," Allan said. "And they weren't Males and Females then—but men and women who loved each other."

Nara's face was scornful. "The histories tell of that—the savage times when Females degraded themselves by loving Males."

"What was savage about them?" Allan demanded. "I'd like to see things like that again, instead of this crazy war of sexes you've fought so long."

"You'd like to see Males and Females make peace?" said Nara. "Yet you fought the Females today—took me captive——"

"I did no fighting really today," Allan Rand said, "nor did I mean to make a captive of you. As it was, I kept them from killing you."

"What good was that?" Nara asked. "Better a quick death than a lingering one here in this cell."

"But you're not going to stay here!" Allan exclaimed. "I'm going to let you go, if you'll help me in my efforts to make

peace between the Males and Females."

"Let me go?" Nara said amazedly. "Even you, Thur, could not do that. Durul and the Males would never permit it."

"They won't know anything about it until it's done," Allan told her. "But if I do free you, Nara, will you help me to stop this war?"

Nara considered. "Certainly the war between Males and Females has gone on long," she said. "Though the Males started it——"

"No matter who started it, the thing to do now is to end it," Allan declared. "Will you help me do that?"

Nara hesitated, then suddenly nodded. "Yes, I will help you, Thur——will do all in my power to have the Females make peace."

"Good girl!" Allan's hand closed impulsively on hers. He stood up. "If I get you up to the roof you can get away on one of the flyers?"

Nara nodded quickly. "I can avoid the Male patrols in the darkness without difficulty," she said.

"Then I'll get these two guards out of here and then we'll try it," Allan said. "Wait here."

He went out of the cell into the corridor and approached the two guards, who came to attention.

"You can return to your quarters," he told them. "There's no need for further watch here."

The guards looked surprised but saluted obediently. "The order will be obeyed, lord Thur," they said, and departed.

Allan waited until they were gone and then went back into the corridor. "All clear," he told Nara. "I think we can get to the roof without being seen."

They moved to the door and then he halted her, his hand on her arm.

"Are you sure, Nara, that I made quite clear to you what kissing was, a little while ago?" Allan asked.

Nara nodded puzzledly. "Your demonstration was quite clear, Thur."

"Nevertheless," Allan said unsmilingly, "I think I'd better demonstrate it again. I wouldn't want you going away with any hazy ideas on the subject——"

He drew her slim form close to him again for a moment, his lips again seeking hers, arms about the soft shoulders.

This time Nara did not struggle. It seemed to Allan, indeed, that she kissed him back, and she was white and a little trembling when he released her.

"We'd better get started, or I'll be keeping you here after all," said Allan a little unsteadily. "Come on, Nara."

They went out into the corridor. "If we meet some of your people, Thur, what then?" Nara asked.

Allan shook his head. "They'd probably stop us, for all that I'm their ruler, they hate you Females so. But we'll cross that bridge when we reach it and here's hoping we don't reach it."

They came to the winding white stair that led upward through the palace's levels to the roof. Quickly they climbed, Nara moving as rapidly as Allan could. They passed the landing at the first level, then that at the second, unobserved.

Up through level after level they followed the stair. At the sixth or seventh they stopped suddenly. They glimpsed Males on the landing above.

They waited, Allan searching his brain for an expedient to pass the Males unobserved. He could guess that if he were found helping the Female ruler, Nara, to escape, not even the fact that he was Thur would excuse it. And it might well be that Durul and Krann then would tell the Males that he was *not* really Thur.

But as he paused with Nara in inde-

cision the necessity of an expedient disappeared, the Males on the landing above vanishing as they moved off along the halls of that level. Allan breathed more easily, waited a few moments, and then with Nara's hand in his climbed rapidly up past that landing and past others until they emerged onto the roof.

IN THE darkness of night the roof was a dimly seen flat expanse on which the white shapes of the parked flyers glimmered. Overhead, buzzing craft came and went, Male patrols keeping watch in the darkness for possible Female attackers. The great city of the Males stretched in the distance, a plain of blinking lights.

Allan and Nara moved toward the nearest of the flyers. Nara clambered onto it, hastily examined its controls, then touched some of them and brought from the flyer's mechanism a deep hum.

As she crouched at the flyer's controls, Allan, standing on the roof beside her, leaned toward her.

"You can get past the Male patrols all right, Nara?" he asked, and she nodded.

"It will not be hard, for it will not be the first time that I've slipped between them."

"Then good luck, Nara, and remember that when you get back to the Female cities you must make every effort to get them to agree to peace. I will be doing the same with the Males here."

"I will do it, Thur," she promised. "And will—but look behind you!"

Allan whirled, expecting to see Male guards emerging onto the roof. But no one was there.

He turned quickly back to Nara. In the split-second that he turned he saw Nara's arm raised above his head, one of the flyer's metal control-handles in her grasp. Then the blow descended on Al-

lan's head, his brain seemed to explode in flame, and his senses forsook him.

Only slowly did Allan regain his senses. His first sensation was of a loud droning in his ears, and then he was aware that air was beating on his face. He tried to move and found he could not.

He opened his eyes and looked dazedly around. He was lying on the deck of one of the flyers, bound tightly to one of the stern fire-rods.

The flyer was moving at high speed through hot sunlight. The sun, indeed, was several hours high and disclosed that the craft was flying over a great grassy plain. A girl's slim figure crouched at the controls in the flyer's prow—it was Nara!

Allan remembered now—his setting Nara free, going with her to the palace roof, and then her exclamation, her blow with the control-handle. She had knocked him unconscious, then, and bound him to this gun!

Nara turned, and as she saw that Allan was awake a mocking smile crossed her face.

"Well, lord Thur, awake at last?" she said. "You slept long enough."

"Nara!" muttered Allan. "What does all this mean? You struck me down—bound me——"

Nara laughed, silvery and triumphant laughter. "I did, and I did more than that!" she exclaimed. "I got away in the darkness from the Male city with you, Thur, ruler of the Males, my prisoner!"

"The sorrow of the Females for me, their captured ruler, will be changed to rejoicing soon. For not only did I do what no other Female has done, escape the Males when once captured by them, but I also bring the Male ruler with me as *my* captive!"

"Your captive?" Allan's dazed brain could not comprehend. "But you were going to have the Females make peace

with the Males—you said so when I let you go——”

“And you believed me!” Nara mocked. “Surely, lord Thur, you have lost the craft that was yours in years past, when you could believe such an incredible thing as that I would make peace with the Males. No, Thur, you might have known that no matter what I said, neither I nor any Female could every really want peace with those who have been for ages the most bitter enemies of our race.”

“But I thought somehow you were different,” Allan said, “that you could not hate the Males so. When I kissed you there——”

“When you did what you called kissing,” said Nara contemptuously, “I suffered the indignity only because by so doing I was getting you to set me free.”

“And you fooled me completely!” That fact beat strongest in Allan’s mind. “Fooled me—well, I’ll say that women haven’t changed much after all in twenty thousand years. They can lie and deceive as well as ever. But what are you going to do with me when you do get me to the Female cities?” he asked. “I take it that I’m not going there just for the ride.”

“You will be executed there, of course,” said Nara. “Did you think the Females would let Thur, who has long been their worst enemy, continue to live?”

“I didn’t and I don’t want them to,” said Allan bitterly. “I’ve had more than enough of this crazy damned world and I don’t care about living any longer in it.”

He sank back, his head throbbing with pain. Nara, at the controls, held the craft’s flight steadily onward, southward.

ALLAN’S thoughts were chaotic. Outwitted, fooled, as completely as any man back in his own time had ever been by some smooth-tongued woman! The

girl there at the prow had done it as well as though trained for it by a lifetime of association with men. All her female instincts of deception and betrayal had risen to help her, Allan thought.

He could see what a triumph it meant to her, not only to have fooled Thur, the great ruler of the Males, into letting her escape, but bringing Thur with her as a helpless prisoner. Allan could guess what the real Thur, the Thur whose body he was wearing, would think of such a happening, of how he would have raged.

What difference did it make? he asked himself dully. He was better out of such a world, indeed, as this that Doctor Lantin had projected him into. It had repelled him in his first contact with it, this world where between men and women was nothing but rancorous race-hostility, this loveless world with its mechanical production of children.

He had thought for a brief time that he had discovered something warm and human in it in his contact with Nara, her willingness to help him bring peace to Male and Female, her kisses—but he had awakened now to find Nara too a part of that fierce and loveless world, her softness only sham. Better for Allan Rand out of such a world, indeed!

He closed his eyes. When he opened them again Nara was still guiding the flyer steadily southward.

The grassy plain still extended in all directions without a break. There were no signs of human presence on it. Allan guessed that this was an uninhabited no-man’s-land between the northern cities of the Males and the southern Female cities.

For hours they flew on over these uninhabited spaces, the sun swinging across the zenith and bringing an afternoon heat of increasing fierceness. There was no conversation between them, though Nara came back to the flyer’s stern at intervals

and inspected Allan's bonds. She was taking no chances of his turning the tables, he thought grimly.

He watched the girl from where he lay. Her slim, clean-lined body crouched at the controls, her keen, eager face beneath the dark hair—certainly there was something fine in her appearance, Allan admitted to himself. But he knew how deceptive this appearance was—all this eagerness of hers was to get him to the Female cities where, as the hated Thur, his shrift would be short.

They flew on, and after a time Nara turned to look back at Allan. "Tired of your bonds, lord Thur?" she said. "We will reach the chief city of my people soon."

"Where I'll be free of bonds and life both in short order," Allan said dryly.

Nara looked at him soberly, her mocking triumph of before no longer on her face. "Well, why not? Why should we Females be merciful to the greatest enemy our race has had among the Males?"

Allan made no answer. Nara looked ahead again, but in a second turned back to him.

"Flyers ahead! They are Female patrols—we are near my city."

Dots in the sky far ahead were all that Allan could see, but these rushed rapidly closer and as they did so grew into white flyers moving in an extended line.

These darted toward their own craft, circled and flew level with it. Nara stood up, making signals, and Allan heard exclamations of joy from the Females on the patrol-flyers as they discerned their ruler.

The patrol-ships grouped around the craft of Nara and Allan and sped on southward with it. Allan watched.

Soon he made out the outline of buildings at the skyline ahead. Tall, rectangular structures they were, a far-flung city

much the same in outline as the city of the Males he had seen. But as he drew closer he saw that the buildings were not blue like the Male ones, but green.

Green was apparently as distinctively the Female color as blue the Male. The buildings might have been huge blocks of jade, the streets like rivers of molten emerald. All those Females whom he could see in the streets were clad in green like Nara.

Midway in the city rose a group of tall block-like buildings. Over these buzzed and hummed many flyers, part of the network of patrols that extended over the Female city in every direction. Toward these buildings the flyer of Nara and Allan, and its escort, sped, two of the patrol-flyers going ahead.

By the time the craft of Allan and Nara dipped down to land on the roof of the biggest building, the patrols that had gone ahead had brought a crowd of excited Females out onto the roof. In the midst of this crowd they landed. Nara stepped off the flyer, into the midst of the excited, gesticulating girls and women.

THEY grasped her arms, shouting in joy, for the moment not noticing Allan's bound form. Two tall women came through the crowd to Nara, and from their air of authority Allan guessed them to be the lieutenants of Nara whom Durul had mentioned, Breela and Dulan.

"Nara, you escaped then from the Males!" cried one of them.

"I did, Breela," said Nara. "And I brought one of the Males back with me."

She pointed to Allan. Breela and Dulan and the other Females on the roof stared at him a moment. Then a fierce roar went up.

"Thur!" cried Breela. Thur himself—and you brought him back! The bit-

terest Male enemy we have ever had, in our power!"

"Kill him!" cried one of the Females wildly. "Death to Thur!"

"Yes, death to Thur it shall be!" Breela cried. "You'll have him executed at once, Nara?"

Nara looked at Allan. Allan smiled as he met her eyes, and she turned her gaze from him. "Not yet, Breela," she said. "Put him in one of the cells for the time being."

Breela's brows drew together, and from the Females on the roof came a mutter of dissatisfaction.

"Why not execute him now?" Dulan demanded.

"Because"—Nara hesitated a moment, then went on—"because all the Females in the city should be here to see when their great enemy is killed."

Breela's brow cleared. "It is well thought of, Nara!" she said. "That is a spectacle no Female will want to miss."

"Put him in one of the cells now," she ordered a group of girl guards. "See that there is no possible chance of his escaping."

The guards did not unbind Allan but lifted his helpless form and carried him. As he was borne off he saw Nara led away by Breela and Dulan and the other excited Females.

The girls bore Allan down a stairway and through halls much like those that had been in the palace in the Male city, save that here the dominant motif of green was everywhere present. He was thrust into a small cell, his bonds removed while fire-rods covered him, and then the girl-guards retreated from the cell, locked its door, and took up their station outside.

Allan stretched his stiff, cramped limbs and rubbed his skin where the bonds had chafed it.

He looked about the cell and smiled mirthlessly. The situations were exactly reversed. It was he now who lay prisoner in Nara's palace.

ALLAN lay down, and despite the soreness of his muscles, soon slept heavily. He knew when he awoke that he had slumbered for some hours, and then saw that he had been awakened by the entry of some one into his cell.

It was Nara. She looked at him with an intentness of expression Allan could not fathom. The guards outside were now a little down the corridor, but Nara's fire-rod was in her belt.

Allan smiled. "Well, we seem to have changed places. Your turn now to do a little first-class gloating, Nara."

"I do not wish to gloat over you, Thur," Nara said soberly, "for you did not over me."

"Too bad for me I didn't," said Allan bitterly. "I suppose they're making ready for the general festivities attendant on my execution?"

"They will soon be ready," Nara said. "But I am not going to have you killed, Thur. I am going to let you go."

"You're what?" said Allan, amazed.

"I'm going to let you escape," Nara repeated. "You let me go, when I was in your power. I was wrong to take you captive then as I did, but I will send these guards away and get you out of the city before they kill you."

"And just why are you doing so?" Allan asked.

She looked at him doubtfully, unsurely. "Because you let me go, as I said. I am grateful for that, and——"

"It's only gratitude you feel then?" Allan asked.

Nara's eyes now were even more unsure. "What else could I feel, Thur?"

Allan's arms for a third time grasped

her, drew her unresistingly closer. "It couldn't be love you feel, Nara?"

Nara raised her eyes to his. "A Female could never love any Male, Thur," she whispered. "Yet——"

"Yet?" Allan prompted, his face close to hers.

"Yet I do love you!" she murmured. Their lips met—and then Allan flung Nara back against the cell's wall with all the bitterness that for hours had been growing in him.

"You do, do you?" he exclaimed. "Then you know now what it means to have some one you love deceive and betray you!"

Nara's face was dead-white as she looked at him. Before she could speak, a woman's voice came from the door. "All is ready, Nara. Shall we take the prisoner up now?"

They turned. It was Breela who stood at the door, her face alight with exultation.

"Shall we take him up now?" Breela repeated. "All the city's Females are gathered around this building to see Thur die."

Nara nodded. "Yes, bring him now if all is ready."

She went out of the cell without meeting Allan's eyes. Breela called the guards, and these haled Allan from the cell, their fire-rods constantly covering him. They marched him along the corridor, Nara and Breela going ahead.

Up the stair—Allan's thoughts were whirling—up past level after level until they emerged onto the roof.

Night had come while he slept in the cell, Allan saw, but the darkness over the Female city was dispelled on the roof by brilliant flares. The roof was packed with Females, and down in the wide streets around the building were tens

of thousands more, all looking tensely upward.

As Allan looked around, he felt his heart beating faster despite himself. A queer way for him to end, a queer place—this world of twenty thousand years in the future into which Doctor Lantin had flung him. Allan wondered momentarily what Durul and Krann and the rest of the Males would think by now of the disappearance of their ruler.

He saw Nara standing silently, her face still white, with Dulan and Breela and others of the Females. Breela gave an order.

In answer to it girl-guards marched Allan to the edge of the roof. He heard a tremendous roar from below as the Females in the streets glimpsed their hated enemy, Thur.

The girl-guards moved back from him and he was left alone at the roof's edge. He saw the girls raise their fire-rods. Their faces were coldly exultant.

Allan turned his eyes toward Nara. She was looking steadily at him. Breela, beside her, leaned toward her. "It is for you to give the order to fire, Nara," she said.

"I am not going to give that order," said Nara clearly.

Breela frowned. "But one of us must if Thur is to die, and you as ruler——"

"Thur is not going to die," Nara said. "I have decided."

An amazing babble of murmurs went up from the Females on the roof. Unbelieving were the faces turned toward Nara. Breela was staring at her ruler.

"Take Thur back down to the cell," Nara said. "It is my order."

The guards moved to obey, but Breela's outflung hand stopped them. "Have you become traitress to your race, Nara?" she cried.

"I am ruler," Nara returned, "and I say Thur dies not."

"And I say you are no longer ruler of the Females when you try to save the life of the Females' worst foe!" Breela cried.

She turned to the Females on the roof and those in the streets below.

"Say, Females!" she shouted. "Does the Male Thur die now?"

"Kill Thur and the traitress Nara now!" they yelled furiously. "Death to Thur and Nara!"

"It shall be so!" Breela cried. "Guards, you have heard—seize Nara and place her beside Thur!"

A half-moment the guards hesitated, then sprang toward Nara and grasped her. Unresistingly she let them thrust her across the roof toward Allan.

As the girl-guards went back across the roof, Allan caught Nara to him. She was sobbing.

"It is of no use, Thur," she said. "I tried to save you and could not."

"Nara, you've killed yourself trying to save me!" Allan cried. "You shouldn't have done it—I love you in spite of what I said a little while ago, and you shouldn't have done this."

"It does not matter," she said. "I would not want to live now with you dead, Thur. And this ends us together——"

Allan held her close, despairingly. The yells of the furious Females on roof and streets were now like a single hateful bel-lowing voice in their ears. Across the roof Breela gave an order, and the girl-guards again raised their deadly weapons.

Another moment would see the end for both of them, Allan knew. But before the fire-streaks leapt from the rods, there was a sudden interruption. Down from the upper darkness of the night smote flash on flash of fire, striking across all the Female city!

"A Male attack!" yelled Dulan, pointing to the flyers diving from above as they loosed their fire-flashes.

"It's Durul and Krann!" Allan exclaimed. "They found you'd taken me, Nara, and have come after me!"

"Into the flyers!" Breela was crying. "Quick, before the Males destroy us all!"

Already Females were leaping into the flyers parked on roofs and streets and soaring up into the darkness to meet the fierce Male attack. Swiftly combat was joining above the city, Male and Female flyers diving and circling in the darkness, those struck by fire-flashes coming downward in bursts of flame.

Breela was running with other Females to the flyers, as were the guards who had been about to execute Allan and Nara. Allan saw that for the moment he and Nara were forgotten, and sudden hope flamed in him.

"Quick, Nara!" he cried. "If we can get away in a flyer now——"

They ran to one of the nearest ones, leapt onto it. Allan fumbled frantically at its controls, Nara's hands guiding his. The flyer hummed, started steeply upward into the air——"

"Thur, look!" screamed Nara suddenly.

Allan glanced downward. On the roof they had just quitted Breela had glimpsed their flight, had shouted a quick order to some of the Females. Their fire-rods were already raised toward the flyer of Allan and Nara. The whole scene seemed frozen for a second.

In that second Allan knew that they could not evade the deadly fire-flashes of those rods. He had just time to reach with his arm for Nara, to hold her tightly to him for an instant. Then as that instant passed, fire leapt from the rods below, fire seemed to flame destroyingly through Allan's whole universe, and then

was succeeded by impenetrable blackness.

BLACKNESS—blackness—could he be awaking from death, the death the fire-rods had sent him and Nara? he asked himself. For he was waking, was conscious again of Nara's soft body held tightly in his arms as he had grasped it in that last instant. And then he heard Nara's voice.

"He's coming to, Dad! Look how he grasped me!"

Then a man's voice, chuckling, somehow familiar. "So I see! He can't be so unconscious when he does that."

Allan opened his eyes, then looked about him, bewildered. He was lying flat, still holding Nara tightly in his arm.

Nara it was, indeed, her clear eyes looking into his, her vivid face anxious, but a changed Nara—she wore now not the green jacket and tunic but a dress strange and yet familiar to Allan's eyes, the dress of a girl of his own time twenty thousand years before.

He looked from Nara to the other figure bending over him, the man. He was tall, bearded, his eyes penetrating but having now an amused twinkle in them. Where had he seen those eyes before, Allan Rand asked himself, this man——

"Lantin!" Allan cried suddenly. "By heaven, Doctor Lantin!"

"None other," Lantin conceded. "But take it easy for a little while, Rand."

"But how did you get here to this time——" Allan Rand began, and then his jaw dropped as his eyes took in the room in which he lay.

It was that same laboratory of Doctor Lantin's in which he had lost consciousness when Lantin had been about to remove his brain!

He was lying on the same table, the same instruments beside it, on the desk

in the corner the same photograph of a girl he had noticed on entering the room. But he recognized the girl in the photograph now—it was the girl beside him, was Nara!

"I'm back, then!" Allan whispered. "Back in my own time!"

"Your own time?" the girl asked. "What do you mean?"

"From the time you sent me into, twenty thousand years in the future," Allan explained to Lantin. "I woke there, my brain preserved and transplanted into another body——"

Lantin laughed heartily. "Nonsense!" he said. "You've been lying on this table unconscious for an hour, and that's all. I never did anything with your brain, though my threat to remove it apparently has given you a wild dream in the meantime."

"But it couldn't have been all dream!" Allan Rand protested. "I met Nara here in it——"

"My name isn't Nara—it's Janet Lantin," the girl told him.

"My daughter," Lantin nodded. "You saw her picture on the desk when you came into this laboratory and that's why her image persisted in your dream."

"All a dream!" Allan said dazedly. "But why did you do all this—tell me you were going to take out my brain, and put me under anesthetic?"

"Well," said Lantin, "I told you the exact truth when I said I wanted an assistant for my South American expedition who had strength and a cold-steel nerve. I could see you had the strength, and I used this stratagem to find out if you had the nerve.

"If you'd screamed or whined or wept there when you thought I was about to deal out a horrible fate to you, I wouldn't have blamed you but I'd have known you weren't my man. But instead, even when

you were passing under the anesthetic, you were defiant enough to tell me where to go.

"I meant only to give you a touch of the anesthetic, of course, but the darned thing got out of control for a minute and you got a double portion. It was enough to keep you asleep since then, and I was working to revive you when Janet came in. She lined me out for using such a method to test my assistant, and then helped me. You came back to consciousness and clutched Janet with a death-grasp."

Allan was suddenly aware that he still held the girl in that tight clasp. He dropped his arm quickly.

She smiled at him—Nara's smile—and his heart warmed. "It was an unforgivable thing for Dad to do, Mr. Rand," she said, "but at least you get the position."

"I do?" said Allan. "You're not going on the expedition too by any chance, are you?"

She nodded. "Then I'm mighty glad to take the job," he said.

"But tell me," Janet said to Allan, "what did you mean when you said you met me under another name in your dream?"

Allan reddened. "I'll tell you later," he said. "I'd rather wait until we're a little better acquainted before I tell you how well we know each other."