

NOV.

# **SUPER SCIENCE STORIES**

25¢

*THE BIG BOOK OF SCIENCE FICTION*

**THIS STAR  
SHALL BE  
FREE**  
by **MURRAY  
LEINSTER**

**GATEWAY  
TO DARKNESS**  
by **FREDRIC BROWN**

MANY OTHERS



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VOL. 6

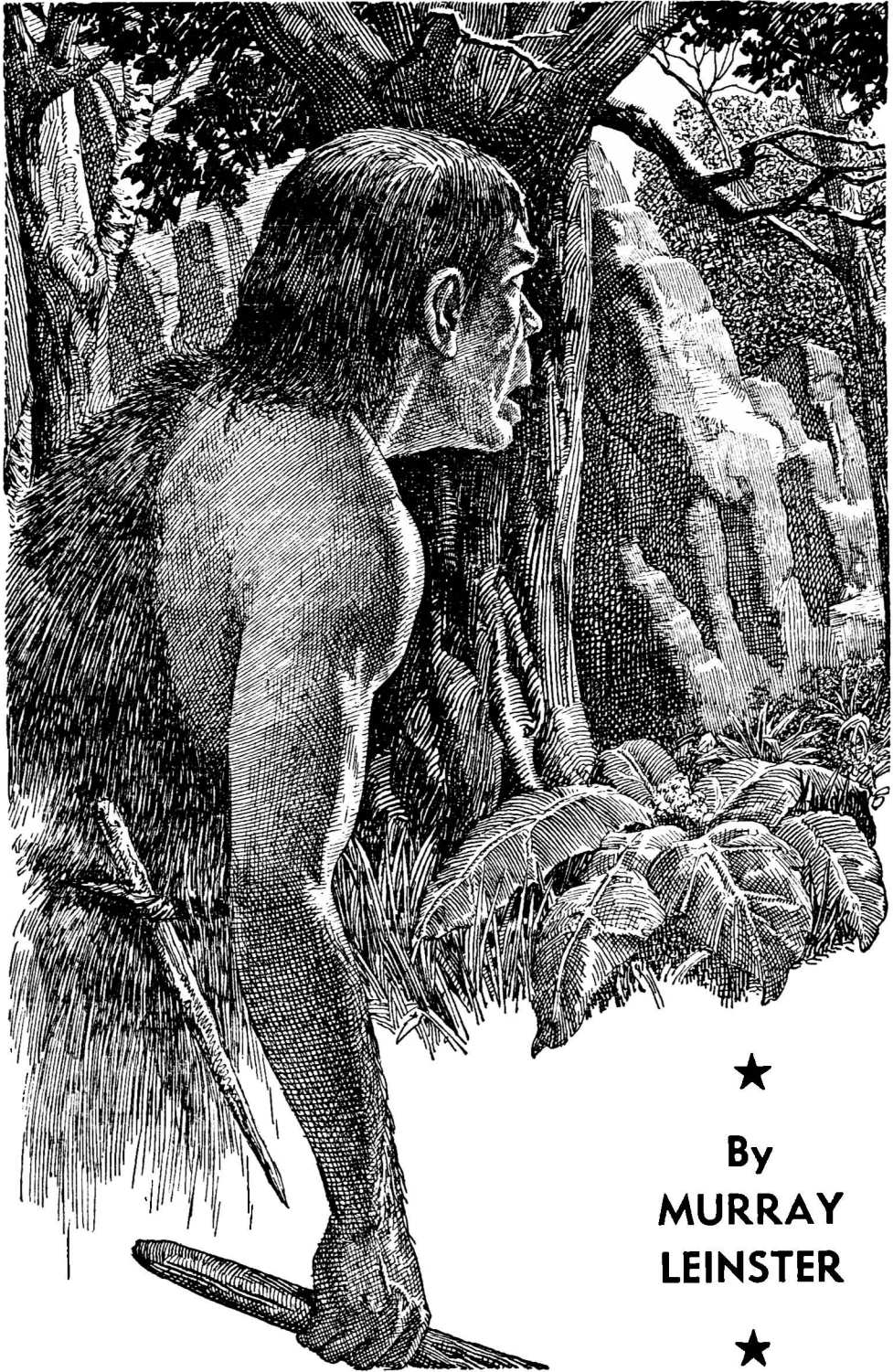
NOVEMBER, 1949

NO. 1

<b>★</b>	<b>TWO POWERFUL NOVELS</b>	<b>★</b>
★	<b>GATEWAY TO DARKNESS</b> ..... <i>Fredric Brown</i>	10
	Alone he waited, against the unyielding stars, for the final struggle in man's eternal dream of conquest—on a world grown too small to conquer—by Man grown too great to survive!	
★	<b>PARASITE PLANET</b> ..... <i>Neil R. Jones</i>	104
	"Give us back the secret that has been dust these thousands years—or, as living metal statues, adorn our halls through all eternity!"	
	<b>AN UNUSUAL NOVELETTE</b>	
★	<b>THIS STAR SHALL BE FREE</b> ..... <i>Murray Leinster</i>	48
	Tork was a simple man of the caves. How could he dream that the star box held the power to make his people gods—or only a lost memory in stone?	
	<b>SHORT STORIES</b>	
★	<b>THE TIMELESS MAN</b> ..... <i>Frank Belknap Long</i>	40
	It hardly mattered what miracle of time and space had given him life once more—for in either era, Holden was the Timeless Man!	
★	<b>CHILD OF VOID</b> ..... <i>Margaret St. Clair</i>	62
	Tiny wizards waited at the threshold of the universe, ready to pour a deluge of madness over the Earth—if only young Eddie would let them!	
★	<b>IMPOSSIBLE</b> ..... <i>Ray Bradbury</i>	72
	Formless as wind or water, he took the form of any lost dream—and there was no holding back even when the shape of longing was—impossible!	
★	<b>APPOINTMENT FOR TOMORROW</b> ..... <i>John D. MacDonald</i>	82
	Even as he prepared to fight the cold, errorless science of the doomsday men, Larkin knew that—for him—there was no escape in this world!	
★	<b>THE SLEEPERS</b> ..... <i>John Wade Farrell</i>	96
	Only two men dared look beyond the dream that enthralled Mankind!	
	<b>DEPARTMENTS AND FEATURES</b>	
★	<b>FANDOM'S CORNER</b> ..... <i>Conducted by James V. Taurasi</i>	6
	<b>LAWRENCE PORTFOLIO</b> .....	39
★	<b>THE SCIENCE FICTIONEER</b> ..... <i>Conducted by Frederik Pohl</i>	80
	<b>MISSIVES AND MISSILES</b> ..... <i>The Readers</i>	89

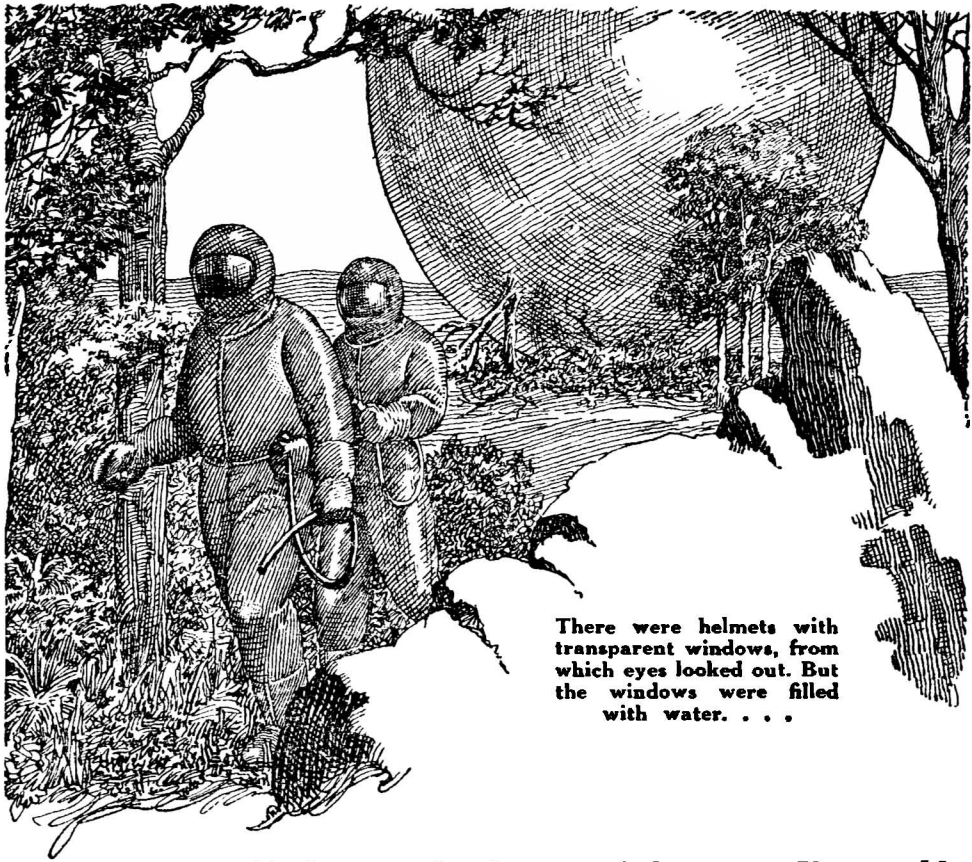
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Published bi-monthly by Fictioneers, Inc., a subsidiary of Popular Publications, Inc., at 1125 E. Vaile Ave., Kokomo, Indiana. Editorial and Executive Offices, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. Henry Steeger, President and Secretary, Harold S. Goldsmith, Vice President and Treasurer. Application for entry as second-class matter is pending at the Post Office at Kokomo, Indiana. Copyright, 1949 by Fictioneers, Inc. This issue is published simultaneously in the Dominion of Canada. Copyright under International Copyright Convention and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. All rights reserved, including the right of reproduction, in whole or in part, in any form. Single copy, 25¢. Annual subscription for U. S. A., its possessions and Canada, \$1.50; other countries, 35¢ additional. All correspondence relating to SUPER SCIENCE STORIES should be addressed to 1125 E. Vaile Ave., Kokomo, Indiana, or 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. For advertising rates, address Sam J. Perry, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. When submitting manuscripts and/or stamped, self-addressed envelope for their return, if found unavailable. The publishers will exercise care in the handling of unsolicited manuscripts, but assume no responsibility for their return. Printed in U. S. A.



By  
**MURRAY  
LEINSTER**





There were helmets with transparent windows, from which eyes looked out. But the windows were filled with water. . . .

*Tork was a simple man of the caves. How could he dream that the star box held the power to make his people gods—or only a lost memory in stone?*

# THIS STAR SHALL BE FREE

**T**HE URGE was part of an Antarean experiment in artificial ecological imbalance, though of course the cave-folk could not guess that. They were savages with no interest in science or, indeed, in anything much except filling their bellies and satisfying other primal urges. They inhabited a series of

caves in a chalk formation above a river that ran through primordial England and France before it joined the Rhine and emptied into the sea.

They did not understand the urge at all—which was natural. It followed the disappearance of the ship from Antares by a full two hours, so they saw no con-

nection between the two. Anyhow, it was just a vague, indefinite desire to move to the eastward—an impulse for which they had no explanation whatever.

Tork was spearing fish from a rock out in the river when the ship passed overhead. He was a young man, still gangling and awkward. He wasn't up to a fight with One-Ear, yet, and had a bad time in consequence. One-Ear was the boss male of the cave-dwellers' colony in the cliff over the river. He wanted to chase Tork away or kill him, and Tork had to be on guard every second. But he felt safe out on his rock.

He had just speared a fine ganoid when he heard a howl of terror from the shore. He jerked his head around. He saw Bent-Leg, the other adult male, go hobbling in terror toward his own cave-mouth, and he saw One-Ear knock two of his wives and three children off the ladder to his cave, so he could get in first. The others shrieked and popped into whatever crevice was at hand, including the small opening in which Tork himself slept when he dared. Then there was stillness.

Tork stared blankly. He saw no cause for alarm ashore. He ran his eyes along the top of the cliff. He saw birch and beech and oak, growing above the chalk. His eyes swept the stream. There were old-men's stories of sea-monsters coming all the way up from the deep bay (which would some day be the English Channel). But the surface of the river was undisturbed. He scanned the farther shore. There were still a few of the low-browed ogrès from whom Tork's people had taken this land, but Tork knew that he could outrun or outswim them. And there were none of them in sight, either.

All was quiet. Tork grew curious, and stood up on his rock. Then he saw the ship.

It was an ovoid of polished, silvery metal. It was huge, two hundred feet by three hundred, and it floated tranquilly a

hundred yards above the tree-tops. It moved to the stream, and then drifted smoothly in a new direction up the river. It was going to pass directly over Tork's head.

It was so strange as to be unthinkable, and therefore it smote Tork with a terror past expression. He froze into a paralytic stillness, staring up at it. It made no sound. It had no features. Its perfectly reflecting sides presented to Tork's dazed eyes a distorted oval reflection of the river and the stream-banks and the cliffs and all the countryside for many miles around. He did not recognize the reflection. To him it seemed that the thing's hide was mottled, and that the mottlings shifted in a horrifying fashion.

It floated on, unwavering, as if its mass were too great to be affected by the gentle wind. Tork stood frozen in the ultimate catalepsy of a man faced with terror neither to be fought or fled from. He did not see the small, spidery frameworks built out from the shining hull. He did not see the tiny tubes moving this way and that, as if peering. He did not see several of the tubes converging upon him. He was numbed, dazed.

Nothing happened. The silver ovoid swam smoothly up above the river. Presently the river curved, and the ship from Antares went on tranquilly above the land. A little later it rose to clear a range of low hills. Later still, it vanished behind them.

**W**HEN he recovered, Tork swam ashore with his fish, shouting vaingloriously that there was nothing to be afraid of. Heads popped timorously into view. Children appeared first, then grown-ups. One-Ear appeared last of all, with his red-rimmed eyes and whiskery truculence. There were babblings. Then—they died down. The cave-folk could not talk about the thing. They had no words for it. There were no

precedents, however far-fetched, to compare it with. They babbled of their fright, but they could not talk about its cause.

In an hour, it appeared to have been forgotten. Tork cooked his fish. When his belly was quite full, a young girl named Berry stopped cautiously some yards away from him. She was at once shy and bold.

"You have much fish," she said, with a toss of her head.

"Too much," said Tork complacently. "I need a woman to help eat it."

He looked at her. She was most likely One-Ear's daughter, but she was slim and curved and desirable where he was bloated and gross and bad-tempered. An interesting, speculative idea occurred to Tork. He grinned tentatively.

She said, "One-Ear smelled your fish. He sent me to get some. Shall I tell him he is a woman if he eats it?"

Her eyes were intent; not quite mocking. Tork scowled. To let her give such a message would be to challenge One-Ear to mortal combat, and One-Ear was twenty years older and sixty pounds heavier than Tork. He tossed the girl a fish, all cooked and greasy as it was.

"I give you the fish," said Tork grandly. "Eat it or give it to One-Ear. I don't care!"

She caught the fish expertly. Her eyes lingered on him as she turned away. She turned again to peer at him over her shoulder as she climbed the ladder to One-Ear's cave.

At just about that time the urge came to Tork. He suddenly wanted to travel to eastward.

Travel, to the cave-folk, was peril undiluted. They had clubs and fish-spears which were simply sharpened sticks. They had nothing else. Wolves had not yet been taught to fear men. The giant hyena still prowled the wild. There were cave-bears and innumerable beasts no man of Tork's people could hope to cope with

save by climbing the nearest tree. To want to travel anywhere was folly. To travel eastward, where a saber-tooth was rumored to den, was madness. Tork decided not to go.

But the urge remained exactly as strong as before. He summoned pictures of monstrous dangers. The urge did not deny them. It did not combat them. It simply ignored them. Tork wanted to travel to the east. He did not know why.

After half an hour, during which Tork struggled with himself, he saw the girl Berry come out of One-Ear's cave. She began to crack nuts for One-Ear's supper, using two stones. One-Ear's teeth were no longer sound enough to cope with nuts.

Tork looked at her. Presently an astounding idea came to him. He saw that the girl glanced furtively at him sometimes. He made a secret beckoning motion with his hand. After a moment, Berry got up and moved to throw a handful of nutshells into the stream. She stood idly watching them float away. She was only a few feet from Tork.

"I go to the east," said Tork in a low voice, "to look for a better cave than here."

Her eyes flicked sidewise to him, but she gave no other sign. She did not move away, either. Tork elaborated: "A fine cave. A deep cave, where there is much game."

She glanced at him again out of the corners of her eyes. Tork's own eyes abruptly burned. He said, greatly daring: "Then I will come and take you to it!"

The girl tossed her head. Among the cave-folk, property-right in females—even one's own daughters—preceded all other forms of possession. Were One-Ear to hear of this invasion of his proprietary rights, there would be war to the death immediately. But the girl did not move away; she did not laugh. Tork felt vast pride and enormous ambition stir within

him. After a long, breathless instant the girl turned away from the water and went back to the pounding of nuts for One-Ear. On the way her eyes flickered to Tork. She smiled a faint, almost frightened smile. That was all.

But it was enough to send Tork off within the next half-hour with his club in his hand and high romantic dreamings in his heart—and a quite sincere conviction that he was moving eastward to find a cave in which to set up housekeeping.

Because of this, the journey became adventure. Once Tork was treed by a herd of small, piggyish animals rather like the modern peccary. Once he fled to the river and dived in because of ominous rustlings which meant he was being stalked by something he didn't wait to identify. And when, near nightfall, he picked a tree to sleep in, and started to climb it, he was halfway up to its lowest branch when he saw the ropelike doubling of the thickness of a slightly higher branch. He got down without rousing the great serpent, and went shivering for three miles—eastward—before he chose another tree to sleep in. But before he went to sleep he arranged these incidents into quite heroic form, suitable to be recounted to Berry.

**T**ORK went on at sunrise. He paused once to stuff himself with blackberries—and left that spot via nearby trees when something grunting and furry charged him. In mid-morning he heard a far-away, earth-shaking sound that could come from nothing but saber-tooth himself. Then he heard a curious popping noise that he had never heard before, and the snarl ceased abruptly. The hair fairly stood up on Tork's head. But the urge to move eastward was very strong indeed now. It seemed to grow stronger as he traveled. No other creatures seemed to feel it, however. Squirrels frisked in the trees. Once he saw a mon-

strous elk—the so-called Irish elk—whose antlers had a spread of yards. The monster looked at him with a stately air and did not flee. Tork was the one who gave ground, because the cave-folk had no missile weapons save stones thrown by hand. He made a circuit around the great beast.

Then he abruptly ran into tumbled ground, where there were practically no trees but very many rocks. It would be a perfect place for lying-in-wait. Also he saw the mouths of several very promising caves. If the urge had not become uncontrollably strong, he would have stopped to investigate them. But he went on. Once his sensitive nostrils smelled carrion, mingled with the musky animal odor of a great carnivore. Mentally he went into gibbering terror. In his mind he fled at top speed. But the urge was incredibly strong. He went on like someone possessed. He had freedom to dodge, to creep stealthily, to take every precaution for silence and to avoid the notice of the animals which had no need to fear one club-armed man. He could even run—provided he fled to eastward. It was no longer possible for him to turn back.

The urge continued to strengthen. After some miles he became an automaton—a blank-faced gangling figure, sun-bronzed and partly clad in an untanned hide. He carried a club and in his belt there was a sharpened stick which was his idea of a fish-spear. He trudged onward, his eyes unseeing, automatically adjusting his steps to the ground, apathetically moving around great masses of stone in his way. He was, for a time, completely at the mercy of any carnivore which happened to see him.

He did not even falter when he saw the great, silvery ovoid which had passed over his head the day before. He marched toward it with glassy eyes and an expressionless face. Yet the shape was vastly more daunting on the ground than in

the air. It was still absolutely mirror-like on its outer surface. It still seemed featureless, because the spidery mounts of its scanning-tubes were tiny. But its monstrous size was more evident.

It rested on the ground on its larger, rounded end. Its smaller part pointed upward. It was three hundred feet high—three times the height of the tallest trees about it, some of which had been crushed by its weight as it descended. Their branches projected from beneath it. It was a gigantic silver egg, the height of a thirty-story building, and a city block thick. It rested on squashed oak-trees in completely enigmatic stillness, with no sign of life or motion anywhere about it.

Tork walked up to it stiffly, seeing nothing and hearing nothing. He moved into the very shadow of the thing. Then he stopped. The urge abruptly ceased.

Pure terror sent him into howling, headlong flight. And instantly the urge returned. Twenty yards from the outward-bulging silvery metal, he crashed to earth. Then he stood up and stiffly retraced his steps toward the ship. Again compulsion left him and he wailed and fled—and within twenty yards he slowed to a walk, and turned, and came back in blind obedience.

Ten times in all he tried to flee, and each time returned to the shadow of the motionless, mirror-like ovoid. The tenth time he stood still, panting, his eyes wild.

He saw his own reflection on the surface of the thing. He croaked at it, thinking that here was another captive. His image made faces at him, but no sound. He could not make it answer. In the end he turned his back upon it sullenly. He stood shivering violently, like any wild thing caught and made helpless.

Half an hour later he saw something moving across the ground toward the great silver egg. There was a faint, faint sound, and a gigantic curved section of the egg opened. Sloshing water poured out and made puddles. There was a smell as of the ocean. The approaching thing, a vehicle, floated nearer, six feet above-ground, with strange shapes upon it and a tawny-striped mass of fur which Tork knew could be nothing but saber-tooth. Tork trembled in every limb, but he knew he could not flee.

Just before the vehicle floated into the opening made by the dropped curved plate, two of the shapes descended from it and came curiously toward Tork.

He shook like an aspen-leaf. He half-grasped his club and half-raised it, but he was too much unnerved to attack.

The shapes regarded him interestedly. They wore suits of a rubbery fabric bulging as if from liquid within. There were helmets with transparent windows, from which eyes looked out. But the windows were filled with water.

The creatures from Antares halted



some paces from Tork. One of them trained a small tube upon him, and immediately he seemed to hear voices.

"We called you here to be kind to you. We saw you yesterday, standing upon a rock."

Tork merely trembled. The second shape trained a tube upon him, and he heard another voice. There was no difference in the timbre, of course, because Tork's own brain was translating direct mental impressions into words; but he knew that the second figure spoke.

"It is an experiment, Man. We come from a far star, mapping out worlds our people may some day need. Yours is a good world, with much water. We do not care for the land. Therefore we do not mind being kind to you who live on the land. . . . You have fire."

Tork found his brain numbly agreeing. He thought of fire, and cookery, and the two creatures seemed to find his thoughts interesting.

"You have intelligence," said the first creature brightly, "and it has occurred to us to make an experiment in ecology. How do you get food?"

Tork grasped only the final sentence. Again he thought numbly. Gathering nuts. Picking berries. Spearling fish with a sharpened stick. Digging shellfish. Small animals such as rabbits and squirrels, knocked over by lucky stones. He thought also of One-Ear, who had been well-fed enough yesterday merely to demand fish. On other occasions he had come bellowing, club in hand, and chased Tork away from the food he had gathered for himself.

"That is bad," said the voice in Tork's mind, but it seemed amused. "We shall show you ways to get much food. All the food you desire. We shall show you defenses against animals. It will be interesting to see what comes of an ecological imbalance so produced. You will wait here."

THE TWO shapes moved away—they floated a little above the ground, Tork noted dazedly—and entered the ship. The curved plate closed behind them. There was a whistling of air somewhere. To a man of later millennia, the sound might have suggested a water-lock closing, being filled with water so that water-dwelling creatures could swim from it freely into the liquid-filled interior of the ship from Antares. To Tork, it suggested nothing.

Nothing happened for hours. Then, suddenly, Tork saw a great elk moving steadily and hypnotically toward the ship from Antares. It reached a spot less than fifty yards from the ship's side, and seemed suddenly to be released from compulsion. It turned and bounded away; then its flight slackened and stopped. It came back toward the ship. Fifty yards away, again it tried to escape, and again was recaptured.

Tork watched, wide-eyed.

Rabbits appeared, hopping toward the ship. They appeared by dozens and then by hundreds. The steady advance, converging from all directions, came to a halt in milling confusion at a fixed distance from the gigantic glistening egg.

The curved plate opened again, and again there was a great sloshing of water and the smell of the sea. Four or five shapes emerged, floating above the ground. Even before he saw tubes trained upon him, Tork was aware of fragments of thought-conversation.

"I acknowledge that an experiment on land cannot possibly affect our later use of this planet." Another intonation, indignant: "But it is cruel! Give these creatures unlimited food and the means of defense and you condemn their descendants to starvation!" Then other voices said disjointedly, "I insist that a new ecological balance of low birth-rate will result—" "Land-animals are of no concern to us—" "Stability of nature—"

"Some new factor will nullify the experiment absolutely—"

Tork was a savage. He was of the cave-folk, and he had never come into contact with an abstraction in his life. Because these were thoughts, he perceived them. He even understood them. But they had no reference to any of the other things in his mind or experience. So they lingered only like the fragments of a dream.

The creatures placed a sort of box before him. It seemed to Tork like a stone. There was a pattern of color leaning against it which after laborious study he discovered to be a reduced appearance of a human being. It was the first picture he had ever seen. Actually, it was a picture of him—the key pattern of the urge which had brought him, if the matter were fully understood. But he heeded the mental voices, referring to the box he thought a stone.

"This is a device which projects a desire. Since you are merely a man, we have stabilized the device so that it projects one desire only. That desire is of coming to the place from which the desire is projected. We drew you to this place by tuning the projection to you. It made you wish to come here."

Tork's brain assimilated the information after a fashion. Very patiently, the mental voices corrected his impressions. They went on:

"This device will now project only that desire, but we have left the tuning variable. Any human may change the tuning now. Stand close to the device and think of an animal, and the device will tune to animals of that sort and make them wish to come wherever the device may be."

Tork thought of saber-tooth, and cringed. The mental voices were amused, again.

"Even that is arranged. Here is a picture of a man. Look at it and you will think only of a man, and the device will only call man to you. Here also is a pic-

ture of an elk. Place this by the device and look at it, and your thoughts of elk will tune the device, so elk will wish to come to you. Rabbits—"

Tork was frightened. It would be pleasant enough to be able to make squirrels or rabbits—he saw hundreds of rabbits now, out of the corner of his eye—come to be knocked on the head. But an elk? What could a man do with an elk? An elk could trample and toss—

"Naturally," said the voice in his mind, with some dryness, "we give you safety from animals also, if you change your habits to make use of our gifts. We have made spears with points of stone, which you can soon learn to duplicate. With the picture-device you can draw animals to you, and with the spears you can kill them. Moreover—"

The voices in his mind went on and on. There were a bow and arrows. There were stone knives. For the purpose of the experiment, each instrument save the hypnotic device itself had been carefully designed to be understood by primitive minds.

"We of Antares seek new worlds for our race to inhabit. We have chosen your world for later use, and shall remain upon it for perhaps a hundred of your years, to survey it. We shall be able to see the first results of what we do today. Then we shall go back to our own world, and when we return we will see the final result of our gifts to you. What happens on the land, of course, will not affect our use of the seas."

Another mental voice interrupted, protesting that the man was not given a fair chance to refuse the gifts. The instructor went on drily: "Your species can now multiply without limit. We think that you will overrun all the land and destroy all other animals for food, and ultimately destroy yourselves. But we are not sure. We are curious to learn. You can refuse the gift if you choose."

Tork blinked. He understood—temporarily. But he was human and a savage. The prospect of unlimited food outweighed all other possible considerations. He was frightened, but he wanted all the food that could be had. Definitely.

Instructions continued. Presently Tork understood the spears, and was naively astonished. He understood the bows and arrows, and was amazed. He grew excited. He wanted to use the marvelous new things. He felt that the shapes were amused by him.

The land-suited figures floated back to the water-lock of the ship. It closed. He was left alone. He fingered the weapons. Another great plate lowered. But this was not a lock; it was a window. A vast expanse of transparent stuff appeared. Behind it was water, and in the liquid the Antareans—no longer in their rubbery suits—swam within the great metal egg, watching.

Tork, newly instructed, examined the beautifully fashioned stone point of a spear, and then lifted the spear as he had been told to do. He remembered sharp-pointed, sharp-edged stones he had seen. He remembered stones breaking when struck together. He knew he could make a point like this. But—

He was a savage. He went to that extraordinary circular confusion where rabbits hopped hypnotically toward the great silver egg, and at a certain distance were released and turned to flee, and again became subject to the irresistible urge to approach it. Tork went out to them, his mouth salivating.

He made a monstrous slaughter before it palled on him. Then he saw the elk. Fifty yards from the ship it stopped, and stared about it, and bounded away. It turned and came back toward the great ship until suddenly it stopped and stared. . . .

Tork killed it while it marched toward the ship in dazed obedience to the urge.

Then he went crazy with triumph. He gorged himself upon the raw flesh, and went back to the shadow of the ship—in his triumph he knew no more fear—and squatted down before the device he had been given. He thought of Berry. Inevitably his thoughts went also to One-Ear and to the other members of the cave-colony by the river. He wished each one of them to see his triumph and his greatness. With a reeking mass of raw meat beside him, he gloated over their admiration of him when they should come. . . .

THEY came. Berry remembered that Tork had gone to the east. She wished to follow him. One-Ear wished to go to the east. Somehow, in his fumbling brain, the urge became associated with notions of vast quantities of food. The women wished to go east. Seeking unconsciously for a reason, they decided that their children would be safer there. So the colony of cave-folk took up the march.

They did not all reach the giant egg. Bent-Leg succumbed to a giant hyena who tried to carry off one of his children. A woman died when she fell behind the others. The rest heard her shriek, but that was all. And there was one small boy missing when, moving like automata, the rest of the cave-people walked with blank faces and empty eyes to within yards of the grinning, triumphant Tork. Then they were released.

There was confusion and panic such as he had felt, until he seized them one by one and held them fast while he boasted and explained. Then they still cringed fearfully for a while—but there was food. One-Ear drooled when Tork thrust a monstrous haunch of elk-meat upon him. He squatted down and wolfed it, tending to snarl and glare with his wicked, red-rimmed eyes if anyone drew near. But there was food for all. More, there were

weapons. Tork shared them, expansively. Small boys killed rabbits. Women used the new stone knives and skinned them.

More humans came. They were not members of Tork's tribe, but fortunately Tork's people were so stuffed with food by the time the strangers came that they felt no inclination to rise and kill them. They howled with laughter at the strangers' release, instant panic and flight, and return and release and panic again. Presently, with vast amusement, they explained and offered food. The strangers stuffed themselves. Behind the great transparent window the Antareans swam and watched. The strangers were shown the new weapons. They wanted to try them. Tork languidly called more animals to be killed for demonstration—and food.

There was such festival and such feasting as had never before been known in the brief history of man. By the end of the second day, no fewer than fifty humans either gobbled at more food than they had ever seen before in their lives, or else slept the noisy slumber of repletion, while the Antareans watched.

On the third morning, without any notice, the ship rose quietly from the ground and sped skyward. A thousand feet up, it slanted toward the west, toward the great ocean in which an exploring party from Antares would be most interested.

The humans' first reaction to the de-

parture of the ship was panic. But Tork went to the box—the stone-that-calls-animals—and tried a new picture. He thought of graceful, timid deer. The device called a herd of the spotted creatures, and the cave-folk killed them, and were reassured.

The feasting might have gone on indefinitely, but that Tork was a savage and therefore like a child. He kept the neighborhood of the camp so crowded with food-animals that other creatures came of their own accord to prey on them. When the brutish roaring of the cave-bear was heard, terror fell upon the people. They seized the weapons and such food as they could carry, and they fled. Mostly, they scattered.

But Tork's own tribe naturally stayed together. It fled back toward its normal habitation, Tork carrying the stone-that-called-animals.

Tork and Berry dissuaded the new members of the tribe from looking covetously upon Berry. Berry, in fact, used a spear upon an admirer who was pressing Tork too hard with a club. But nevertheless, when Tork took possession of the one cave that had been empty in the chalk-cliff, Berry uttered a purely formal outburst of shrieks as he dragged her inside to begin housekeeping.

Her father, One-Ear, did not go to her rescue. He was stuffed to bursting with deer-meat, and he merely cocked a toler-

ant, sleepy eye when his daughter was thus kidnapped from his very presence. In any case, he knew that she would have used a spear or knife on him or anybody else who interfered, so he merely belched slightly and settled back to slumber.

So Tork and Berry were married. But the end of the Antarean experiment was not yet.

Those who had been called to the shadow of the silver ship and there released, spread through the land. Most of them had not joined Tork's tribe. They had new, modern, priceless weapons. Non-possessors of beautiful, up-to-date flint spears tried to do murder for their possession. Their owners did a little murdering on their own. Possessors of spears and arrows which would actually cut and pierce were supermen. And in time it became apparent that a man who practiced and gained skill with the even more scientific bow and arrows was in a better position still to win wives and influence the next generation. So every human who saw or heard of the new weapons craved them passionately.

But, being humans and savages, they did not think of making them for themselves. They tried to get them from Tork and his tribe. At first they journeyed to the chalk-cliff village and asked for the new weapons, naively. For a little while, Tork was flattered and open-handed. Then he began to run short of worked flint. He grew stingy. He gave no more away. Then envious men grew desperate. They stole a spear here, an arrow-head there. . . . Tork had to establish a flint curtain, permitting no visitors in his village. He was unquestioned chieftain now. One-Ear had become too fat either to hunt or fight. And then furtive, burning-eyed sneak-thieves hung about the village. Some had traveled for weeks through dangers to make the flesh crawl, merely in hope of a chance to steal a spear or flint knife or arrowhead. They developed

great adeptness at such sneak-thievery.

There came a day when Tork's own personal spear was stolen from the mouth of his own cave. The thief was a youth of an unknown tribe who seemed to appear from nowhere. He dashed to the spear, seized it, and dived overboard with it. He swam underwater, rising only to gasp for breath, until so far offshore as to be out of range of thrown stones. Stone-tipped arrows were far too precious to be fired into the river. He got away.

**S**OMETHING had to be done. Tork needed that spear. Berry—being now a wife of some months' standing—upbraided him shrilly for his carelessness. Tork went gloomily into the deepest recesses of his cave, to think. The stone-which-called-animals was there. He regarded it miserably. He thought of the creatures who had given it to him. . . .

And Tork, the cave-man, had the inspiration which, in the bumbling, unintentional manner in which men achieve their greatest triumphs, actually determined the future of the human race.

There was a ship from Antares upon Earth. Its crew mapped the Earth's oceans for later colonists. The Antarean civilization was already a hundred thousand years old and very far advanced indeed. Men had just been introduced to flint spears and knives and arrows by the Antareans as an interesting experiment, to see what would happen. But Tork had an inspiration. He thought about the Antareans—while he squatted by the stone-which-calls-animals! It was the greatest single inspiration that any man has ever known. But for it, Earth would be an Antarean colony, and man—Man would be at best a tolerated animal on the continents the Antareans had no use for.

Tork squatted by the Antarean device and remembered the Antareans in their water-filled suits. Then he thought about them as they had looked in the huge

transparent window, paddling in the monster aquarium which was their ship and looking out at the cave-folk. The effort made his head hurt.

Presently he called Berry to help him think.

Presently Berry grew impatient. She had housewifely tasks to perform. She told Tork that there should be a picture to look at; then he could keep thinking of them without trouble.

It had long been a pastime of cave-children to press one hand against the cave wall and outline the out-spread fingers with charcoal. It produced a recognizable picture of a hand. Tork essayed to trace his memory of what Antareans looked like, on the wall. The result was extremely crude; but while he worked on it it was easy to keep thinking about Antareans.

Berry disapproved his drawing. She changed it, making it better. Presently One-Ear, wheezing, came amiably into the cave of his son-in-law and was informed of the enterprise. His sharp, red-rimmed eyes perceived flaws even in Berry's artistry. He was the first human art-critic. Other members of the tribe appeared. Some criticized. Others attempted drawings of their own. A continuous session of artistic effort began—with everybody thinking about Antareans all the time.

Of course, the Antareans felt the urge. Perhaps at the beginning it was very faint. But the cave-folk's memories of the Antareans grew sharper as they improved their drawings. The tuning of the device improved. And the impulse to move toward the calling device grew stronger. At best it was nagging. In the end it grew unbearable.

So there came a day when the great silver ovoid appeared in the sky to westward. It came swiftly, undeviatingly, toward the cliff-village. It landed on the solid ground above the caves. Instantly it

had landed, it was within the space where the call did not operate, and its crew was freed of the urge. The ship took off again, instantly. But instantly it was back in the overwhelming grip of the device the Antareans themselves had made. It returned, and took off and returned, and took off and returned. . . .

Presently it settled down solidly on the plateau above the river. Tork went beaming to meet the land-suited creatures who came out of the water-lock. Two figures floated toward him, menacingly. Voices came in his brain, unreasonably irritated. One said severely: "Man, you should not use the calling device we gave you to call *us!*"

"We need more spears," said Tork, beaming, "and bows and arrows and knives. So we called you to ask you to give them to us."

Crackling, angry thought came into his mind. The Antareans raged. Tork could not understand it. He regarded them blankly. More Antareans came out. He caught comprehensible fragments of other thoughts.

"So long as they think about us we are helpless to leave! We cannot go beyond the space of freedom. . . ." Another voice said furiously, "We cannot let mere animals call us! We must kill them!" Another voice said reasonably: "Better destroy the device. That will be enough. After all, the experiment—"

Then a dry voice asked, "Where is the device?"

The creatures fretted. Tork stood hopefully, waiting for them to give him spears and knives and arrow-heads. He was aware of highly technical conversation. The Antareans located the device. It was deep in the sloping chalk cliff below the ship. But in order for an Antarean to get to it, he would first have to go away from it, to get down the cliff. And he could not go away from it!

A crackling mental voice suggested that

they call the humans to them—away from the device. But the same objection applied. In order to approach a similar device inside the ship, the humans in the caves would have to go away from it, and they couldn't do that, either. It was a perfect stalemate. The Antareans were trapped.

They even considered blasting the cliff, to smash the instrument they had presented to Tork. But anything that would smash the device would blow up the ship. The hundred-thousand-year-old Antarean civilization was helpless against the naive desires of cave-men who simply wanted more pieces of worked flint.

"Man," snapped a voice in Tork's mind, "how did you creatures keep your thought steadily upon us so that we were called?"

"We made pictures of you," said Tork happily. "It was not easy to do, but we did it."

He beamed at them. There was pained silence. Then a mental voice said bitterly: "We will give you the spears and arrows, Man, if you will destroy every one of the pictures."

"We will do that," promised Tork brightly, "because now we can draw them again when we need you."

He seemed to hear groans inside his head. But the Antareans were civilized, after all. He seemed also to hear wry chucklings. And the dry voice said, inside his skull: "It is agreed. Go down and blot out the pictures of us. We will give you what you wish. Then we can go away."

"And—you will never be able to summon us again, Man! We had intended to stay on this earth for a hundred of your years, and if our experiment seemed too deadly to you, we would have stopped it. But now we will not take that risk. Your species is a land-species, and we are of the sea, but we think it best that you disappear. We have given you the means to

destroy yourselves. We will depart and let you do so. Now go and blot out the pictures."

Tork went happily down into his cave. He commanded the wiping-out of the pictures of Antareans. Within an hour the ship was gone. And this time it rose straight into the sky, as if it weren't coming back.

At first Tork was made happy by a huge new store of worked flint; but within two months disaster fell. The pictures of animals—so needful when using the Antarean device—blew into a cooking-fire and burned. Then there was deep mourning, and Tork and Berry and all the tribe tried earnestly to call back the ship to get a fresh supply.

But nothing happened.

This was catastrophe; they could no longer call animals to be killed. But then Berry suggested re-drawing the burned pictures on the cave's walls, and again art was attempted, by men working from the motive which has produced most of the great art-works of earth. . . to get something to eat.

The Antarean device worked just as well with pictures of the cave-folk's own drawing, as with those the Antareans had provided. But of course the Antareans could not know about it, because they had left the planet altogether. . . .

Tork and Berry lived long lives and had many offspring, all of whom thrived mightily because of the Antarean experiment. Of course, the experiment was not ended. In time, the tribe in the chalk-cliff village had increased so much in numbers that there was lack of room for its members. Colonies were sent out from it, and they thrived, too. And every colony carried with it three distinct results of the Antarean experiment in ecological imbalance.

One was stone weapons, which in time they rather painfully learned to make for themselves. Another was the belief that it

was a simple trick to call animals to be killed. The actual Antarean device—being tucked away in the back of Tork's cave—in time got covered over with rubbish and in two generations was forgotten. Since it needed no attention, it got none. In time, when its power grew weaker and its effect less, nobody even thought to uncover and tinker with it. And the third result of the Antarean contact with Tork's tribe was the practice of drawing and painting pictures of animals on cave-walls. The art of those Cro-Magnon artists is still admired.

The experiment still went on. Men learned to make weapons. Presently they discovered metal. The spears and arrowheads became bronze, and then iron, and presently gunpowder replaced bow-strings to hurl metal missiles. Later still there was the atom bomb. In the art line, there were Praxiteles and Rodin and Michael Angelo and Picasso. . . . And the consequences of the experiment continued to develop. . . .

**A** GOOD thirty thousand years after the time of Tork, the Antareans decided that they needed the oceans of Earth for the excess population of several already-colonized planets. They prepared a colonizing fleet. The original survey was not complete, but it was good enough to justify a full-scale expedition for settlement.

More than two million Antareans swam in the vessels which launched themselves into space to occupy Earth. It was purely by accident that members of a society of learned Antareans, going over the original survey reports, came upon the record of the experiment. The learned society requested, without much hope, that an effort be made to trace the ancient meddling with the laws of nature, and see if any results could be detected.

The Antarean fleet came out of overdrive beyond Jupiter and drove in toward Earth with placid confidence. There was blank amazement on board when small spacecraft hailed the newcomers with some belligerence. The Antareans were almost bewildered. There was no intelligent race here. . . . But they sent out a paralyzing beam to seize one ship and hold it for examination. Unfortunately, the beam was applied too abruptly and tore the Earth ship to pieces.

So the many-times removed great-great-grandchildren of Tork and Berry and the others of the cave-folk tribe—they blasted the Antarean fleet in seconds, and then very carefully examined the wreckage. They got an interstellar drive out of their examination, which well paid for the one lost Earth ship. But the Antarean learned society never did learn the result of that experiment in ecological imbalance started thirty thousand years before.

In fact, the results aren't all in yet.