

ASTOUNDING

SCIENCE-FICTION

TITLE REGISTERED U. S. PATENT OFFICE

Contents for April, 1942, Vol. XXIX, No. 2

John W. Campbell, Jr., Editor, Catherine Tarrant, Asst. Editor

<i>Serial</i>	
BEYOND THIS HORIZON—	Anson MacDonald 9
First of two parts A thoroughly unusual tale, with a hero who is a professional inventor of super-pinball games, in a world where men paint their fingernails, have elegant manners—or get shot down offhand!	
<i>Novelettes</i>	
SILENCE IS—DEADLY	Bertrand L. Shurtleff 58
Radio is a novelty, became a convenience, and is an absolute necessity. If you could cause an absolute radio silence—	
CO-OPERATE—OR ELSE	A. E. van Vogt 78
It would be possible for men to encounter, fight and live among a highly intelligent animal—and not know the creatures were civilized!	
MONOPOLY	Vic Phillips and Scott Roberts 116
It isn't a tyrannical ambition ordinarily, that builds up a monopoly—trouble is, it's the ambition of every tyrant to take over one!	
<i>Short Stories</i>	
"IF YOU'RE SMART—"	Colin Keith 51
A logical question for the business sharper—"If you're so smart, why ain't you rich?" The scientist's answer was logical, too—	
STRAIN	L. Ron Hubbard 72
Military operations are teamwork on a huge scale—and the failure of one man on the team, under strain, may mean disaster.	
THE EAGLES GATHER	Joseph E. Kelleam 93
The blasting, ruinous work of the mercenaries was done; now there was no one with money to hire them. So they fought for scraps—	
<i>Article</i>	
THE FATAL COLORATION	Willy Ley 98
A fact article on the most recent work on the Decline and Fall of the Saurian Empire. Ever see a snake sunning itself? Sure? Ley suggests you were probably mistaken!	
<i>Readers' Departments</i>	
THE EDITOR'S PAGE	6
IN TIMES TO COME	114
Department of Prophecy and Future Issues.	
THE ANALYTICAL LABORATORY	50
An Analysis of Readers' Opinions.	
BRASS TACKS	107
Concerning Purely Personal Preferences.	
PROBABILITY ZERO	111
Calling All Liars!	

Illustrations by Kolliker, Rogers and Schneeman

Cover by Rogers

OUT THIRD
FRIDAY
EACH MONTH
NEXT ISSUE ON
SALE APR. 17th
\$2.50 per YEAR
25c per COPY

Printed in the U.S.A.

Monthly publication issued by Street & Smith Publications, Incorporated, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City. Allen L. Grammer, President; Henry W. Ratson, Vice President; Gerald H. Smith, Secretary and Treasurer. Copyright, 1942, in U. S. A. and Great Britain by Street & Smith Publications, Inc. Registered at Second-Class Matter, February 7, 1935, at the Post Office at New York, under Act of Congress of March 3, 1879. Subscriptions in Countries, in Post Office at New York, elsewhere \$3.25 per year. We cannot accept responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts or artwork. Any material submitted must include return postage. The editorial contents of this magazine have not been published before, are protected by copyright and cannot be reprinted without the publisher's permission. All stories in this magazine are fiction. No actual persons are designated either by name or character. Any similarity is coincidental.

STREET & SMITH PUBLICATIONS, INC. • 79 SEVENTH AVE., NEW YORK

"What makes you like cats so much, Mr. Mac?" I asked him.

The old miner looked at me and scratched his chin. "Well," he said, "they reminds me o' my leetle pets on Pallas. They was something like cats—same kind of head, sort o'—and the cleverest leetle fellers y' ever saw. All dead!"

I felt sorry and said so. Mac heaved a sigh.

"Cleverest leetle fellers," he repeated. "They was four-dimensional pussies."

"Four-dimensional, Mr. Mac? But the fourth dimension is time." I had learned that the year before in the third grade.

"So you've had a leetle schooling, hey?" He took out his pipe and filled it slowly. "Sure, the fourth dimension is time. These pussies was about a foot long and six inches high and four inches wide and stretched somewheres into middle o' next week. That's four dimensions, ain't it? Why, if you petted their heads, they wouldn't wag their tails till next day, mebbe. Some o' the big ones wouldn't wag till day after. Fact!"

I looked dubious, but didn't say anything.

Mac went on: "They was the best leetle watchdogs in all creation, too. They had to be. Why, if they spotted a burglar or any suspicious character, they'd shriek like a banshee. And when one saw a burglar today, he'd shriek yesterday, so we had twenty-four hours notice every time."

My mouth opened. "Honest?"

"Cross my heart! Y' want to know how we used to feed them. We'd wait for them to go to sleep, see, and then we'd know they was busy digesting their meals. These leetle time pussies, they always digested their meals exactly three hours before they ate it, on account their stomachs stretched that far back in time. So when they went to sleep, we used to look at the time, get their dinner ready and feed it to them exactly three hours later."

He had lit his pipe now and was puffing away. He shook his head sadly. "Once, though, I made a mistake. Poor leetle time pussy. His name was Joe, and he was just about my favorite, too. He went to sleep one morning at nine and somehow I got the idea it was eight. Naturally, I brought him his feed at eleven. I looked all over for him, but I couldn't find him."

"What had happened, Mr. Mac?"

"Well, no time pussy's insides could be expected to handle his breakfast only two hours after digesting it. It's too much to expect. I found him finally under the tool kit in the outer shed. He had crawled there and died of indigestion an hour before. Poor leetle feller! After that, I always set an alarm, so I never made that mistake again."

There was a short, mournful silence after that, and I resumed in a respectful whisper: "You said they all died, before. Were they all killed like that?"

TIME PUSSY

By George E. Dale

This was told me long ago by old Mac, who lived in a shack just over the hill from my old house. He had been a mining prospector out in the Asteroids during the Rush of '37, and spent most of his time now in feeding his seven cats.

Mac shook his head solemnly. "No! They used to catch colds from us fellers and just die anywhere from a week to ten days before they caught them. They wasn't too many to start with, and a year after the miners hit Pallas they wasn't but about ten left and them ten sort o' weak and sickly. The trouble was, leetle feller, that when they died, they went all to pieces; just rotted away fast. Especially the little four-dimensional jigger they had in their brains which made them act the way they did. It cost us all millions o' dollars."

"How was that, Mr. Mac?"

"Y' see, some scientists back on Earth got wind of our leetle time pussies, and they knew they'd all be dead before they could get out there next conjunction. So they offered us all a million dollars for each time pussy we preserved for them."

"And did you?"

"Well, we tried, but they wouldn't keep. After they died, they were just no good any more, and we had to bury them. We tried packing them in ice, but that only kept the outside all right. The inside was a nasty mess, and it was the inside the scientists wanted.

"Natur'lly, with each dead time pussy costing us a million dollars, we didn't want that to happen. One of us figured out that if we put a time pussy into hot water when it was about to die, the water would soak all through it. Then, after

it died, we could freeze the water so it would just be one solid chunk o' ice, and *then* it would keep."

My lower jaw was sagging. "Did it work?"

"We tried and we tried, son, but we just couldn't freeze the water fast enough. By the time we had it all iced, the four-dimensional jigger in the time pussy's brain had just corrupted away. We froze the water faster and faster but it was no go. Finally, we had only one time pussy left, and he was just fixing to die, too. We was desperate—and then one of the fellers thought o' something. He figured out a complicated contraption that would freeze all the water just like that—in a split second.

"We picked up the last leetle feller and put him into the hot water and hooked on the machine. The leetle feller gave us a last look and made a funny leetle sound and died. We pressed the button and iced the whole thing into a solid block in about a quarter of a second." Here Mac heaved a sigh that must have weighed a ton. "But it was no use. The time pussy spoiled inside o' fifteen minutes and we lost the last million dollars."

I caught my breath. "But, Mr. Mac, you just said you iced the time pussy in a quarter of a second. It didn't have *time* to spoil."

"That's just it, leetle feller," he said heavily.

"We did it *too* doggoned fast. The time pussy didn't keep because we froze that hot water so darned fast that *the ice was still warm!*"