

# fantastic

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*Here is a sardonic tale which  
proves once again that....*

# TYRANTS NEED TO BE LOVED

By MURRAY LEINSTER

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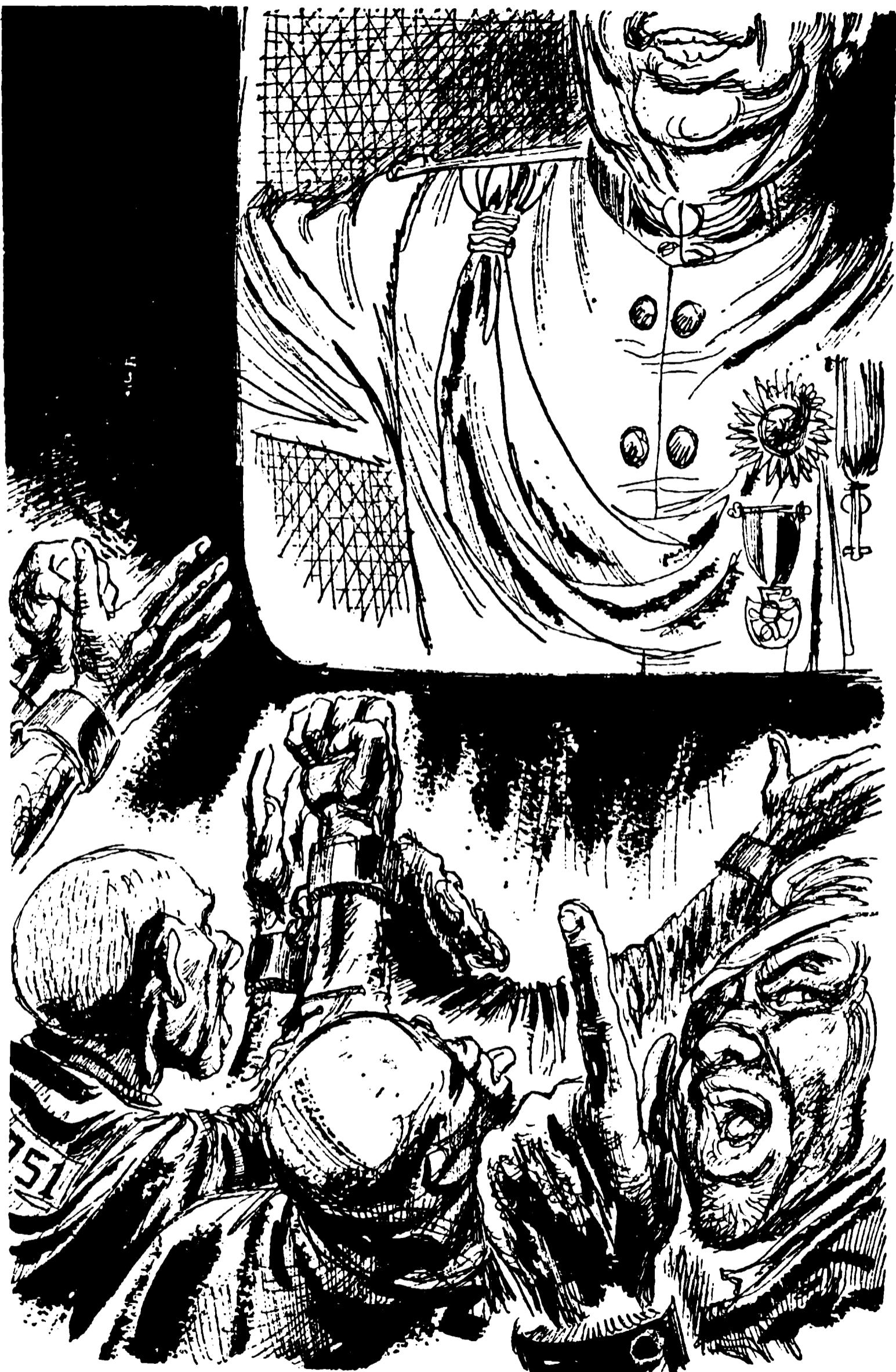
DOCTOR ZOCH had said that nobody wants to be loved as much as a tyrant, because to be all-powerful is to live in constant fear. But to-night Igor felt no love at all for the Ruler. He felt a sickening terror, which he tried to turn into fury for the sake of courage. But it did not work for him.

All of Diane's moons were below the horizon, and the night was pitch-dark, but there was light ahead and his teeth tended to chatter. The light was that rectangular lane of pitiless glare which was the fence about the prison-camp. Doctor Zoch was a prisoner in it. Already Igor could see the fence itself—woven barbed wire—and the guard-towers—raised on stilt-like metal legs—and he imagined that he

could see in the center that huddle of noisesomeness which was the barracks for the prisoners condemned to hard labor on one-fourth rations until they died.

He halted and looked at his companions. Like himself they wore dark clothing, with dark masks and thick dark gloves. Two of them carried stunners—bulky, hand-made objects good for three hundred yards. Two others carried spidery, insulated aluminum ladders. Igor carried other hand-made pocket stunners—they had been developed at the Institute and discreetly kept secret—and a flask for Doctor Zoch if the impossible happened and they got him out of the prison-camp.

"We're getting too close," said Igor, in a tone which sur-



The prisoners loudly denounced the Ruler when he appeared on the screen.

prised him by its steadiness. "We crawl from here."

Teeth chattered for answer. The five of them went down on their hands and knees. They crawled forward. There was only silence everywhere in the night. Now again a search-light on a guard-tower flicked to brightness. Its beam wandered lazily and erratically over the enclosure and the hovels at its center. Then it winked out. It did not search the outside darkness.

They crawled interminably. Igor kept his teeth tightly clamped shut. Doctor Zoch had said that the Ruler, as a tyrant, wanted desperately to be beloved by his people. This event followed from that statement. Doctor Zoch had designed a machine, to be built in the shops of the Parapsychological Institute. He had begun to build it and it was almost finished. But he had reported it and its theory to Research Supervision, and he'd been arrested in consequence. Now Igor and the others had been commanded to finish the job Doctor Zoch could not complete because of his arrest. Obviously, the police could not release him without admitting that they'd made a mistake. But the Ruler wanted the Machine. If it worked, it would make him as much beloved as

any tyrant could desire. It would give him control over even the imagination of his subjects. So Igor and the others had been commanded to complete the Machine that Doctor Zoch designed. It would be fatal to know its workings after it was done, so they needed Doctor Zoch.

One of the crawling figures made a sound. All five stopped. Igor said in the lowest of tones:

"Take your time, but don't pull the trigger until you're both ready. Then say so and pull the trigger. We don't want to waste a second."

There were no stunners anywhere but these. The big ones wavered and steadied. The signal came. Igor and the others leaped to their feet and rushed for the charged barbed-wire fence. They rushed toward the light. They could be seen from two of the watchtowers. There should have come a stabbing, flickering burst of machine-gun fire. They should have fallen, while other guns leisurely pumped more bullets into them. Flares should have leaped up, illuminating everything..

But nothing happened. And there was no alarm. Panting, they reached the fence, under a tower. In the dark space they

set up a ladder. One climbed swiftly and set up the other ladder on the inside. He half-slid to the ground within. The others followed swiftly. All three raced across the brightly-lit area inside the line of electrified fence. They reached the darkness of the massed, matted, filthy buildings which were the shelters for persons suspected of unkind thoughts about the Ruler.

They vanished. And then it was as if the guards returned to duty. A searchlight turned on. It swept along the crazy, unsanitary shacks containing the prisoners. From those shacks smells came out to contaminate the night. From them came moanings of men in exhausted sleep. The searchlight beam flickered back. It went out.

Igor was sickened, inside the barracks. The three of them, of course, turned on their pocket-sized stunners. No prisoner stirred. Because of the stunners they were unaware of them or anything else for the time being—which was good fortune for the prisoners. The three intruders searched fiercely. They found Doctor Zoch, and the sight of him roused fury.

Igor gave the signal, a flicker of light in one of the bar-

racks windows. The three of them went out, half-carrying Doctor Zoch. They rushed him across the brightly lighted ground. One of them swarmed up the ladder. The others passed Doctor Zoch up to him. They got him down on the other side and hurried away toward the outer blackness. The last man followed, carrying both the ladders.

There was no alarm. Presently, a searchlight flicked on in one of the guard-towers. It wavered lazily here and there, lighting the walls of the hovels in which the prisoners remained at night, so long as they continued to live.

The two men who'd used the big stunners crawled away. When far enough from the guard-towers, they also got up and ran, panting, for the waiting car. Incredibly, everything had gone according to schedule. They were still alive. Doctor Zoch was free. There was no suspicion of his escape. The whole thing had been managed because of the stunners. They had made the stunners within the past four days—since Doctor Zoch's arrest—because the Ruler wanted the Machine, and they were afraid to complete it without Doctor Zoch's specific advice.

They were afraid the Ma-

chine would operate as expected.

On one hemisphere of the planet Diane the Ruler reigned without limit to his power. On the other half, things were more satisfactory. But under the Ruler there was terror everywhere. The Ruler himself was afraid, because very many people wished very desperately to be rid of him because he had secret police and prison-camps and used them mercilessly against his opponents. But he had to have them because people wanted desperately to be rid of him. He knew there were plots against him. He suspected there were more than his secret police discovered. There were times when he wished bitterly that he were beloved by his people. It would be very good indeed to stop being afraid.

It seemed that the Institute was near when they were only minutes from the prison-camp. As they entered the city, Igor held the flask to Doctor Zoch's mouth. The old man was pitifully weak, but he tried to protest the risk that had been taken for his rescue.

"Hush!" said Igor gently, "drink this. It is milk and eggs and good brandy. We

have more troubles ahead, Drink, for strength."

"But it is madness!" protested Doctor Zoch. "I am only one man! I would not have lived long! It was madness to risk so much for me! You could not have feared that I would speak!"

Igor tilted the flask. Doctor Zoch drank. Igor felt very strange, very much, he considered, as one would feel when he had newly died. What was past was irretrievable. Nothing could matter any more. The worst had happened. From now on there could be only tranquility or purest horror. One could only wait to find out which.

The car threaded streets. It braked and stopped in darkness. Three of them slipped out like eels. They lifted Doctor Zoch to the ground. The car sped away. Trezk drove it. He took a very desperate chance, did Trezk. He would go back to his tiny house and put into the petrol-tank the exact amount of fuel this night's work had used up. Then he'd burn the plastic bags the fuel had been in, and drink heavily of brandy so he would be convincingly stupefied if the police came to his house in the morning. Drake would be far away by daylight. He'd have disposed of the lad-

ders and masks and gloves beyond any imaginable search.

But Lechy and Igor and Sohn hustled Doctor Zoch through a garden gate. It was pitch-dark. They went ten feet. Twenty. Thirty. They stopped, and Igor bent down and heaved. A flagstone lifted. They descended swiftly, all but Sohn, who remained behind to make absolutely sure that the flagstone would show no sign of having been disturbed when morning came. When that was attended to, he would turn up in a disreputable place, seemingly very drunk and in no condition to have taken part in any conspiracy. The flagstone had been arranged two years before, when Igor discovered the drain going from the Institute to nowhere. It was an old drain, three feet in diameter, and before the Institute was built it had doubtless served some purpose for the buildings then occupying the Institute's site. Now it was a bolt-hole, with its flagstoned exit outside a house that Kett—since dead—had rented on pretense that he meant to throw improper parties in it.

Igor marvelled at their forethought as he tucked Doctor Zoch in the makeshift subway vehicle they had built in the Institute's shops. When they

prepared this, they'd had no real idea that to be a member of the staff would ever constitute a deadly danger. Then they'd been under the Ruler's direct protection. They'd devised the highly convincing demonstration of an appalling weapon that was then needed to avert a war the Ruler couldn't have won. Enemy spies must have found out since that it was a fake, but the Ruler'd gained time to seat himself firmly in power and build up military might nobody wanted to challenge. The Ruler had thought well of the Institute in those good old days. Nowdays. Now . . . well, now things were quite different.

"Just lie quiet," said Igor almost humorously, in the inky and ill-smelling darkness underneath the flagstone. "We will have you home in minutes."

The vehicle moved swiftly through the drain with its three passengers. It ran almost four hundred yards, beneath two streets with policemen on them, and under the line of sentries about the Institute. It rolled silently past the appliance-room and into a spare tank that nobody could imagine was the terminus of a railroad built without the knowledge of the Ruler's spies.

Nobody would suspect anything like this!

Igor checked for presences outside. He opened the tank's manhole, which seemed so firmly bolted shut. He wriggled out and helped Doctor Zoch while Lechy boosted. He got the old man to the floor. Lechy scrambled out of the tank. Igor said:

"The man-hole, Lechy."

"Ridiculous!" said Doctor Zoch, reproachfully. "This is the Institute! You have brought me back here! It is suicide! But it was also suicide to come after me. Why did you, Igor?"

"We need you," said Igor. "The Ruler wants the Machine you designed. But he does not want anybody who could design another to be left alive. So he ordered your murder. When the Machine is finished, he will not want anybody able to duplicate it to be left alive. So he will have us killed. Yet if we fail we will be killed for failure. So we need you to tell us what to do."

"I fear," said Doctor Zoch very sadly, "that all my plan is spoiled. I will be discovered here."

"No," said Igor grimly. "There are sentries all about, inside and outside the building. But we have stunners. We made them from your first test

of the principles of the Machine. So, though nobody could have left the building undiscovered, we did. Nobody could have taken you from the prison-camp. But we did. Certainly no one could bring you here and hide you successfully. But we will. Lechy?"

He pulled out a pocket stunner—it was crudity itself, to look at it—and nodded to Lechy. The stunners had made everything possible. Doctor Zoch had tested the Machine's theory by such an improvisation. He'd proved that those odd-shaped waves which produced the experience of consciousness could be inhibited. Then he went on to design the Machine to enhance them selectively. But the stunners were essential first steps. The Machine would be a powerful stimulator of certain groups of waves. The stunner prevented them. The Machine would produce certain experiences in all the brains within its range. The stunners prevented any experiences at all.

Lechy went up the stairway from the basement. Moving silently, he peered out. He signalled; one sentry in the hall above. He aimed a pocket stunner. He went out the door.

Igor helped Doctor Zoch be-

gin the climb. He almost carried the old man. He tried not to notice the bloody places on Doctor Zoch's face. He did note that touching certain spots made Doctor Zoch wince. Probably broken bones gotten when he was arrested, though he'd offered no resistance. But they might have been broken when he was first beaten to make him confess treason to the Ruler. No sensible man would confess, of course. If one denied everything convincingly, there was a chance that the secret police would end it quickly. Of course, they would never release one. That would be to admit that they'd been mistaken. Nobody could admit to a mistake in the Ruler's service!

Doctor Zoch was pitifully frail. Igor felt an almost maternal yearning over his feebleness as they climbed the stairway. They reached the upper hall. There was a sentry there, uniformed and armed. But Lechy held a stunner on him. His consciousness was suspended. He did not fall, but he did not see or hear or feel or know anything. When the stunner-beam went off, he would not know that he had momentarily ceased to know anything. He looked perfectly natural, even now. But his eyes were blank.

Igor helped Doctor Zoch across the hall under the very nose of the sentry who had no awareness of anything, not even of his lack of awareness. They went through the door beyond the hall. Lechy backed into it, holding the stunner steady. He closed the door and flicked off the stunner. He listened, and mopped his forehead. Only a very few seconds later Igor helped Doctor Zoch to a chair. They had reached his own private quarters in the Institute's main building.

"Now," said Igor, "we bandage you and tape you where needful. I think you should rest. Then we can get to business."

"I do not need rest," said Doctor Zoch faintly. "I had too much pain to sleep, but they did not exhaust me, I would have died too soon. But I insist that it was not wise to bring me here!"

"Hush!" said Igor gently. "I will let you talk presently. First let me wash off this blood. And you have broken ribs, haven't you? . . . Hm. Your hand . . . Your . . ."

Despite himself his voice changed. But Doctor Zoch did not notice. He went suddenly into the deep, deep sleep of weakness and exhaustion.

Over the hemisphere under

the Ruler, parents went anxiously over the home-work papers of their children, lest there be some incautious statement implying less than blind admiration of the Ruler and the State. Children were graded for loyalty. It was an indication of parental attitudes, too. Loyal students never failed of good marks. On graduation, they got the good jobs the State employment offices had to pass out. It was essential that one's children get good grades in loyalty! And loyalty also involved slavish respect for any governmental functionary who wore a uniform.

But the Ruler was not satisfied. Before he could feel really secure he must have the inner loyalty of his subjects, too. To be safe against assassination, he needed to be loved by his people.

As of now, he wasn't.

It was a full general who came to the Institute next day. He arrived as Igor stood before the incomplete Machine with an expression of helplessness on his face. He straightened to attention at sight of the general. The general beamed at him.

"I am General Tilsit," he explained. "Research Supervision. I have been assigned to

the special supervision of the making of the Machine."

"Ah, yes!" said Igor respectfully. "I am apprehensive about the Machine. It is so completely the design of Doctor Zoch and the theory is so complex that it is frightening to try to complete it."

There was silence. Doctor Zoch had been arrested five days before. Officially, the rest was silence. One did not inquire about a person who had been arrested. One did not even ask questions if the police took one's wife or daughter into custody. There was the splendor of the State to contemplate. The Ruler had decreed that no personal sorrow should diminish one's rejoicing in the magnificence of the State. He did not put it that way, but people bitterly understood him to mean that it should make up for murder and brutality, and the madness taught in the public schools, and every foulness practised by everybody who could wrangle a uniformed State position.

The general tapped a cigarette delicately on his wrist. "You do not despair of success?" he asked.

"Oh, no!" said Igor quickly. "The Ruler himself—" and he wondered ironically if he'd seemed to capitalize the pronoun—"the Ruler himself or-

dered the work done. Of course, I shall accomplish anything the Ruler commands me to."

"Except," said General Tilsit, "that he might order an impossibility."

Igor made his face go blank. General Tilsit was talking pure treason. Nobody should admit to any thought that the Ruler might make a mistake! But Research Supervision officials were privileged. They were even ordered to talk treason on occasion. They had trapped many people that way. Kett, poor devil, was one of them. But he'd managed to make the soldiers kill him when they came for his arrest. Igor was not to be tricked so easily.

"I am sorry, sir," he said stiffly, "but I cannot agree that the Ruler could be in error!"

The general lighted his cigarette. Igor knew that he was aware of Doctor Zoch's disappearance from a slave-labor camp, and that he would pounce if Igor showed that he knew it too.

"Tell me about the Machine," ordered the general abruptly.

Igor took a deep breath.

"It has been found," he said carefully, "that there is a complex substance in the brain which breaks down in differ-

ent ways. The result of each breakdown is the experience of emotion. One way of breakdown produces fear. Others yield other emotional experiences—anger, grief, love, and so on."

The general frowned.

"Well?"

"The Machine," said Igor, "broadcasts wave-forms which cause the breakdown of that substance in different ways. In effect, the Machine broadcasts emotions. Anyone within its range will feel whatever emotion the operator desires, the kind of emotion being determined by the wave-form, and its intensity by the frequency. Therefore, it can be modulated and the emotions of an entire population can be made simultaneous. Of course, they will be associated with simultaneous stimuli."

The general looked puzzled. He wasn't. He'd heard all this before. He'd been briefed. But he would trap Igor if he could.

"And what possible use would that be?" he demanded.

Igor said with a fine air of sincerity:

"No intelligent man could oppose the Ruler, sir. But there are stupid ones with emotional associations which lead them to do so. The Ruler himself has mentioned dissi-

dents. His plans for the State and for his people are hampered by individuals who are emotionally driven to oppose him and harm the State. With the Machine, the Ruler can make a speech with everyone in the nation listening, and with the Machine broadcasting the emotions intelligent men already feel when they hear the Ruler speak."

The general regarded Igor out of the corners of his eyes. He hesitated, then spoke.

"What then?"

"Why," said Igor earnestly, "if the Ruler speaks of his enemies, and all his hearers experience overwhelming anger, an association is formed, a conditioning association. Afterward no one will be able even to think of the Ruler's enemies without anger. If the Ruler speaks of his love and care for his people, and they feel overwhelming love as they listen, they will be unable to think of him without experiencing a surge of affection. So everybody will become unanimous in loyalty to him. Everyone will be what the Ruler wishes each of us to be. Everyone will be loyal to the Ruler, even the stupid ones who are now emotionally disturbed."

He hoped that no trace of irony had crept into his voice.

"Pavlov's dogs, eh?" said the general drily.

"It is not the same thing at all, sir!" protested Igor instantly. "That ancient process had no purpose! But this—this is a way to bring every person in the nation into complete accord with the State! It will remove the seeds of crime! It will make treason unthinkable!"

He seemed tense. He was. The general regarded him sardonically.

"Very well. You are convincing. But there will be no work done on the Machine without a Research Supervision general officer present. The Machine will be guarded night and day. No doubt this is it. Now, exactly how does it or will it operate?"

Igor explained the theory and the process. The general listened noncommittally. When he left, Igor's clothing felt clammy from the cold sweat that had poured out on his skin. His life had hung in the balance with every word of his explanation.

The Ruler found the strain excessive. He sent a Cabinet Officer to a prison-camp and had an army colonel shot. Their loyalty had become doubtful, which could be a prelude to conspiracy. He was

bitter because he could not fully trust anybody. Those around him were opportunists, seeking greatness and riches through him. They'd betrayed him in an instant . . . He wished that there was someone he could trust. Even the people would be a protection against conspirators. If they could be persuaded to love him as subjects should love their Ruler, he would have less reason to be afraid. . . .

Igor closed the door of his private quarters. As usual, after a session of work upon the Machine with a Research Supervision general officer glaring at him, and a dozen sentries with loaded rifles in the room, he was nerve-racked but he tried to speak casually to Doctor Zoch.

"You may be pleased to hear," he observed, "that you are dead."

Doctor Zoch said mildly: "How did I die?"

"You crept from your barrack," Igor told him, "and crawled into the camp crematory. There you cut your throat. When the morgue-wagon came around with the bodies of prisoners who had died during the night, they simply dumped the other bodies on top of yours. All

were disposed of together. The prison-camp officials were very pleased to find a prisoner to whom you had confided your intention. They would have been in a nice fix if the Ruler ordered you questioned again, and they could not find you!"

"Poor devil!" said Doctor Zoch sadly. "I hope the guards gave him a loaf of bread. The prisoner would have invented that story in hope of such a reward."

Igor moved restlessly. His nerves were taut and jangling.

"The Machine is nearly finished," he said abruptly. "It could be used at low power tomorrow. You must tell me what to do!"

Doctor Zoch said gently; "You must finish it. Properly. It must work as I said it would."

"Why?" demanded Igor.

"Because," said Doctor Zoch in the same tone, "it has to pass tests. It would not be used at full scale and full power unless it had been proved to work without defect. It is to be used to make the Ruler beloved and his enemies hated. Do you think he will risk that it work backwards, if at all?"

Igor ground his teeth.

"Then it must work exactly as you promised."

"Exactly," said Doctor Zoch mildly.

"It has to be capable of turning everyone within its range into a zombie, a robot, a slave so degraded that he wishes nothing more than to be a slave!"

"In theory that should be its effect," agreed Doctor Zoch. "I designed it. There is no other way to bring about what must happen, unless by bloody war. But I am not a traitor to you, Igor, nor to my fellow sub-citizens."

Igor said irresolutely;

"Will you tell me the trick — the secret part of the device which will make it — make it weaken the Ruler's power? You must have designed it for something like that!"

Doctor Zoch made a movement as if to put the tips of his fingers together in a well-remembered gesture. But one of his hands was heavily bandaged. There were broken bones in it. He shrugged and peered at Igor.

"I will not even say that it will weaken the power of the Ruler. I will say nothing that could be extracted from you under torture." His tone was firm. It was almost brisk.

Igor stared at him. Then he said desperately:

"Then I will finish it. But

if the Machine is to subdue all Diane to the Ruler, with other worlds after it, so that tyrants turn humanity into a race of slaves . . . If that is to happen, you will have to hide very deep in hell to escape the dead who will hunt you through all eternity!"

Doctor Zoch looked somberly after him as he turned away.

The Ruler moved restlessly about his palace. His secret police were on the trail of conspirators who seemed to be linked to persons in his very palace. But some of those hinted at had been so loyal for so long that the Ruler darkly suspected the secret police of trying to remove everybody who would serve him loyally, so they alone could control the State. But he could not be sure! He did not know who was loyal and who was not. . . .

Cautiously, he considered the Machine now under construction at the Parapsychological Institute. Its former head, one Doctor Zoch, had respectfully proposed it as a way by which everybody — everybody! — could be conditioned to perfect loyalty to the Ruler, and bitter hatred of his enemies. The Ruler had dis-

posed of Doctor Zoch because he was dangerous. But the machine — if it could be made — if all his people could be conditioned to impassioned, emotional loyalty. If all his subjects could be made forcibly into his adorers. . . .

He struck a gong. He ordered a report on the progress of the Machine.

General Tilsit sardonically supervised the small-scale test. Troop-carrier loads of prisoners from jails and prison-camps arrived by night at the Parapsychological Institute. They were not only handcuffed but chained to each other, and Igor gagged at the smell of degradation when they shuffled into the lecture-hall of the Institute. Some were sunk in apathy so complete that they were like automatons. But some were bright-eyed scarecrows who defied torture and death and spat at him and at the general as they passed.

Guards herded them into place. They filled half the hall intended for sedate and learned lectures on aspects of the physical nature of consciousness. General Tilsit regarded them sardonically. He nodded to Igor, and he approached the Machine. There was a

screen on which the Ruler's more-than-life-size image would presently appear. There were speaker-units to give out his recorded voice. And there was the Machine.

Igor took his place at the controls.

"You are quite ready?" asked the general. "All is in order?"

"Yes, general," said Igor nervously. "I believe everything is as Doctor Zoch designed it. I have tested everything. But I am nervous. Naturally!"

A squalling minor uproar came from the prisoners. Some of them guessed that a novel and deadly weapon was to be tested on them. They snarled at the guards, at Igor, at everything.

"The Machine's waves," said the general. "The ones that create emotions. They will not go through the walls?"

"No," said Igor. "The walls are metal foil."

"And you and I, will we be affected like the prisoners?"

Igor pointed to a woven copper cage which almost surrounded the Machine. Its open side was toward the prisoners.

"The waves cannot pass that screen," he explained. "They will strike only the

prisoners. They are not reflected."

"Proceed," said the general.

Matter-of-factly he drew a weapon and held it bearing negligently upon Igor. It was, of course, a precaution.

Igor threw a switch. The image of the Ruler appeared on the screen. His deep-sunk eyes seemed to gaze at the chained prisoners, whose degradation was a consequence of his rule. The uproar multiplied. Snarls and catcalls, screamed imprecations and shrieks pleading innocence, all mingled with hissing and oaths to make an horrific din. Some of these men had nothing left to fear, not even the Ruler. They cursed him defiantly.

Then the Ruler's voice boomed out from the speakers. Igor reflected bitterly that the Institute had designed that recorded voice, and the microphone and amplifiers which made it resonant and fatherly and splendidly masculine. The prisoners howled at it.

Then Igor touched the first emotional control on the Machine. Its function was to produce the emotion of awe.

It did.

The record of image and speech, together, lasted half an hour. It was one of the

Ruler's shorter speeches. Igor had a typescript of it, with cues for the operation of the Machine to synchronize violent, appropriate emotions with every word. He felt extraordinary personal sensations as he swayed and ruled the poor devils who were the guineapigs for this test.

When the Ruler's voice died away and his image faded from the screen, the prisoners were changed. They were fanatics. They had roared in ardent echoing of his defiance of foreign enemies. They had wept when he spoke of his sorrow that he needed to ask sacrifices of his people. They shouted crazy, adoring assurances when he begged his people for their loyalty. And the emaciated, half-starved, doomed victims of his rule snarled with rage when he spoke of those who hated and opposed and would depose him.

When the thing was ended, General Tilsit was very pale.

"I walked beyond the copper cage," he told Igor. "I felt the emotions I saw you impose. The thing is astounding! The State the Ruler has founded will last for a thousand years!" He added, "I shall increase the guard over the machine. Hold yourself ready to operate it when the Ruler shall command. There

must be no fumbling. The matter is too important."

Igor swallowed. The guards herded the prisoners back into the courtyard of the Institute and into the troop-carriers which had brought them. They shambled as they walked. Some staggered from weakness. But they babbled to each other with a pathetic enthusiasm of the Ruler and their love for him. On the way back to the prisons where they would die within weeks or days, they piped up feebly, singing in praise of the Ruler.

The demonstration was conclusive. The Ruler heard the report of it, and brooded, and twice made gestures toward the arrest and execution not only of Igor, but of General Tilsit as well. The Machine was very dangerous. But if it were used . . .

The Ruler proclaimed a great occasion. He would make an address to all his people. He would make announcements of an unparalleled kind. He might even grant amnesty to some offenders. He would show his benevolence to all his people and every man and woman and child must see and hear him on penalty of being considered a traitor.

The population of one whole hemisphere of the planet

Diane prepared to obey. The Ruler's speeches did not mean much. There had been too many of them. But nobody wanted the secret police to suspect he hadn't listened.

The sun shone brightly, and white clouds floated in the sky—which was blue as on all human-occupied planets—and there was self-evident preparation by nature itself for so important a matter as a speech by the Ruler. All business stopped. Every store and office closed. There were no schools. All traffic suspended so passengers could stand before one of the great screens set up even in villages for passersby to watch. There were no picnics, secret-police floaters made sure of that! Nobody in the Ruler's domain seriously considered any other activity than seeing and hearing—and being seen to be doing so—while the Ruler's address was in progress.

He spoke from the head of the great white-stone stairway that led up from the Avenue of the State to his palace. The stairs were three hundred feet wide. The columns of the palace portico loomed above them. Flags and banners floated bravely in the sunshine. Tens of thousands of inhabitants of his capital

city thronged to see him in person—at whatever distance—and there was not an inch of ground space or on nearby roofs which was not colored by the garments of his subjects. Loudspeakers were everywhere to repeat his words. All over the hemisphere all other activity stopped while the Ruler spoke.

Magnificent, blaring trumpets sounded. Then drums beat, and the trumpets sounded again.

Then the Ruler appeared on the great stairway before his palace. He was surrounded by his guards and officials, of course, but he appeared convincingly in the midst of his beloved people. They crowded the lower steps within tens of yards of him. He raised his hand gravely, and a roar of sharply supervised applause replied.

(In the Institute, watching a television monitor for his cues and with a script of the Ruler's speech before him for guidance, Igor pressed the first button on the Machine's control-board. It was the button for awe.)

The roar of greeting ceased, and the people of the Ruler, as if involuntarily, bowed down before him.

("Splendid!" said General Tilsit, with a weapon pointing negligently at Igor's body.)

The Ruler spoke, and for a long minute there was a deep and astonishing silence while his words rolled out of many resonant loud-speakers. There was no one before the palace—nor before any of the screens which gave even clearer pictures of the Ruler all over his domain—who did not listen with a feeling of astonished admiration to his beginning. Then there came a feeling of ecstatic joy as he spoke of his love for his people. They cheered, vast volumes of sound before his palace; thin and reedy shouts before the screens in tiny villages. He touched upon his unremitting labor for the welfare of his subjects. An enormous feeling of affection overwhelmed his audience over an entire hemisphere. They shouted again.

(The monitor swept over the crowds, and Igor in the Institute saw rapt and eager faces, flushed and suffused with emotion. He glanced at the script and prepared to rouse frenzied hatred of the Ruler's enemies when they were mentioned. He did. The image on the monitor showed the Ruler's face close-up, and it was triumphant and hun-

gry and eager. It had been a long time since the Ruler could believe in the total sincerity of all who listened to him. Now he knew it again. He had the feel of his audience. It loved him. It adored him!)

The Ruler spoke of those traitors and dissidents who had wished him ill, and the crowd uttered a roaring growl. Had any man present been named as his enemy, the mob would have torn him to bits. But the Ruler assured his people that such folk were very few. They bellowed their joy. He promised them that he would continue to serve them without remission, without respite, without rest, and with unfailing love. And a booming, screaming tumult of hysterical adulation answered.

(General Tilsit put aside his weapon and said with an amazement that was not in the least sardonic: "Think of it! This is happening all over the nation! Everywhere!")

Igor compressed his lips. He followed the script of the Ruler's speech with conscientious exactitude. But a cold sensation ran up and down his spine. The Machine did all that it was supposed to do.

The monitor showed other crowds in other cities, in transports of emotion which

followed exactly the buttons that Igor pressed. Everywhere there was a tumult of loyalty and love for the Ruler which urgently needed expression, but could only be shown by cries and swayings so long as his figure stayed on the screens and his voice came out of loudspeakers. Never before had any man been adored as the Ruler was. The blood drained from Igor's cheeks. From this moment on, his people would worship the Ruler blindly. They would enslave themselves joyfully to him. They would perform anything he might command. And this insane conditioning was permanent! It would last. They would never be released from it!

Igor numbly pressed down the button to arouse extravagances of affection, appropriate to the conclusion of the Ruler's speech. He held it down. He saw even the guards about the Ruler turn to regard him with warmly shining eyes. He saw the Ruler's generals shouting incoherently of their love for him. They crowded about him to swear undying fealty. Igor saw a vast, slow, irresistible movement of the crowds in the streets. Shouting, screaming, stumbling and rising, with

open mouths babbling of love and loyalty and rejoicing, the Ruler's listeners moved to protest their impassioned affection from the nearest possible position. The guards crowded about him, shouting joyously.

Igor was still dazed when he faced Doctor Zoch in his quarters, after it was all over. He'd been unable to talk to the older man. He was partly ashamed and partly exultant and wholly confused. He stammered out some words.

"No, Igor," said Doctor Zoch mildly. "I did not expect what happened. I expected something, of course. I knew the Ruler would make a speech telling his people how he loved them, and how passionately he wished everybody to be happy and free of fear and hunger and sadness. I knew he would tell them—and the Machine would condition them so they had to believe—that he desired nothing but their happiness and their love. The Machine would make them believe every syllable. This much I expected. I even expected his government to fall apart before he was half through his speech, and it did. But I did not expect what took place where he was."

Igor paced back and forth.

There were no sentries anywhere about the Institute, now. Tacitly, but openly, Doctor Zoch was again the Institute's head. There were other pleasing changes in the state of things on this hemisphere.

"But I don't understand!" protested Igor. "You must have planned." . . .

Doctor Zoch nodded his head comfortably.

"I planned to invoke a natural law," he said gently. "The Ruler wished his people to think him kind and gentle and wise and benevolent. So I designed a machine to produce such emotions as would condition them so they could think nothing else. And when the Machine was used, the law of nature operated. As soon as he finished his speech, and while the television screens showed his generals cheering him and the people moving toward him, weeping with joy and love,—why—in other cities the people began to massacre the secret police because the Ruler did not want anybody to act as they did, and to tear down the prison-camps because he did not want anyone oppressed or sad or hungry or in fear. The Ruler had said he disapproved of very nearly every agency of his rule, though not by name. So the people, out of

love for him, destroyed what he disapproved of. It was a perfectly natural thing. It is a natural law that we try to do what is wished by people we love!"

Igor swallowed. Doctor Zoch said regretfully: "But it is sad about the people on the palace steps. I do not think of the Ruler, but—how many were killed there?"

Igor did not answer. He felt horrible. He'd sat at the controls of the machine, his finger frozen on the button that called up extravagant love, when he realized what must happen. He couldn't take it away. In the monitor he saw the crowd surging forward, shouting happily, pressing to get closer to the Ruler they now loved beyond imagination. They were irresistibly impelled to move toward him to tell him nearby of their feelings of loyalty, of their resolve to be his perfect subjects. They stumbled in their haste. They did not

think. Faces shining, they crowded closer and closer. . . .

Igor did not like to remember what the monitors had shown him while he sat at the controls of the Machine. The cameraman there must have been frozen as Igor was, too much stunned by horror to turn his camera away. So Igor had seen every bit of the tragedy — though mercifully from a distance—as the crowd swept up the palace steps, cheering, and crowded about the Ruler's cheering guards, and was pushed on terribly from behind so that nobody could stop. Nobody.

More than a hundred of the crowd had been crushed to death in their attempt to tell the Ruler of their love. That was not the whole list, of course. The whole list included nearly every one of the Ruler's guards, and all his generals.

The Ruler could only be recognized by his decorations. The rest of him was trampled past any possible recognition.

THE END

