



10 STORY FANTASY

DONALD A. WOLLHEIM, Editor

Vol. 1 No. 1, Spring 1951

THREE GREAT NOVELETTES

TYRANT AND SLAVE-GIRL ON PLANET VENUS (Science-fiction) John Beynon	4
Bert had to take his choice of the decadence of Old Mars or the harsh virility of the New Venus.	
THE POISONOUS SOUL (Weird-fantasy) Franklin Gregory	32
Was that stranger merely a man who looked like a snake—or was he actually a snake that looked like a man?	
GETAWAY ON KRISHNA (Interplanetary adventure) L. Sprague de Camp	76
There was a secret to winning that mad race over the ice of that far planet—a secret only one Earthman knew.	

TEN FANTASTIC SHORT STORIES

HAUNTED ATOMS A. E. Van Vogt	14
Five hundred years after Hiroshima, will new spectres walk among the graves?	
CRY WITCH! Fritz Leiber	19
What was it about that young lady that made the villagers bar their doors at night?	
FRIEND TO MAN C. M. Kornbluth	26
Martian charity demanded payment in its own eerie way!	
SENTINEL OF ETERNITY Arthur C. Clarke	41
What would happen when the signal pyramid on Luna was silenced?	
THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL August Derleth	48
Pincus Hawk couldn't understand why that unfinished wall whispered to him.	
PRIVATE WORLD Martin Pearson	55
Mr. Allen found himself being shot at in a war he couldn't believe in!	
UNEASY LIES THE HEAD Lester Del Rey	62
Civilization would fall if no one could be found strong enough to replace the dying mastermind.	
SEEDS OF FUTURITY Kris Neville	71
Edward Barnett had a scheme to solve an old world's strange dilemma.	
WHO BUILDS MAOS TRAPS? K. W. Bennett	93
Some fiend left a "better mouse trap" at the city editor's desk.	
THE WOODWORKER Gene A. Davidson	99
Something was carving stinging insects out of wood—and bringing them to life!	

10 STORY FANTASY, published quarterly by Avon Periodicals, Inc., at 119 West 57th Street, New York 19, N. Y. Copyright, 1951, by Avon Periodicals, Inc. Single copies 25¢. The publishers do not assume responsibility for the return of

unsolicited manuscripts. Names of all characters and persons appearing in the stories in this magazine are fictitious, and any resemblance to the names of actual persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

PRINTED IN U. S. A.



UNEASY LIES

HUDSON was beautiful at night, with its great spread of lighted ways and its parks grown mysterious by moonlight. Even the ugliness of the river docks had been hazed into a shadowy glamor, and the moonswath over the ocean beyond was churned into white froth by the graceful immensity of a sea-going liner. Then, between the Parliament House and the Palace, dancing letters of fire sprang into life, proudly flaunting the weakness that underlay all its beauty:

*HUDSON,
THE DIRECTOR'S CITY
May He Reign Forever!*

An unforgettable century had tried
62

For a century the Dictator civilization together by dying and his only possible statue of himself with a

By LESTER

men's souls beyond endurance and found them wanting. Where pioneers had once carved a great Republic out of the wilderness, their descendants swarmed the streets and gazed up at that symbol of dictatorship with gentle, contented docility. It was Jason's world, and a pleasant one. Bless the Director!

Six hundred feet above them, Jason



THE HEAD

had held that weakling sheer will power. Now he lay successor was a mechanical burned-out electronic brain!

DEL REY

leaned weakly against the window as his heart struggled and missed, and a suffocating constriction tightened on his chest. He shuddered, fighting back the physical hysteria of the attack, but his voice was still calm and level. "How long, then?"

"Maybe six months, if tomorrow's lab reports are favorable!"

Six months! It should have come

as a relief, after seventy years of sole responsibility for a world too passive to do its own worrying, but even now he dared not accept the death sentence his body had placed upon him. He shook his head wearily, and let his eyes drop back to the streets below.

Twelve decades had seen two chemical wars, one with nuclear fission, and two more with all the incredible hell of material energy. Yet somehow the race had survived, even though the last nineteen-year reign of fury had taken three billion lives, decayed from spheres to nations, and vented its final chaos between village and village. Sixty million had passed through all that, but its psychic trauma had left them weak and submissive. Those who had struggled

were dead, and the weak had reluctantly inherited the earth and passed their psychoses on to an apathetic progeny. Men had sought power, and men had died; better a live serf than a dead crusader!

Two generations of listless anarchy had followed, before a rude parietic named Knude, driven by half-insane frenzies, had built himself up from self-claimed rule of a village to world mastery. It had taken a scant twenty years, and he had found no opposition, save his own fumbling mistakes. His queer genius had built union, and Jason's had given it form. Now. . . six months!

BUT THE WORST of the attack had passed, and the Director turned back to the darkness that was relieved by a single bulb, where Dr. Sorgen was waiting with the mercifully silent understanding that was typical of the man. Jason mustered his strength to hold his turban-covered head erect and his face a mask of quiet firmness as he resumed his seat and moved a chess knight deliberately.

"Sorry, Sorgen; what about Herker's ACS work?"

"A brilliant fizzle, like Bogolometz' original." Sorgen castled, and his normally placid, middle-aged face was puckered into a frown. "Napier's longevity technique should have given you a hundred and fifty years minimum, though."

"Except that I had your predecessor remove my sleep center so I could burn out twenty-four hours a day. New heart?"

"Could you stand twenty minutes of necrolepsy, even if I broke the record? Oh, damn it! . . . Check!" Sorgen hunched his shoulders in professional disgust, but his voice was over-brusque as he fumbled for his pipe. "Why the devil didn't you let me check up when I wanted to, instead of demanding a spot prognosis

now? You must have known; you're not a complete fool, Jason!"

"Fool enough to think I could solve the insolvable. I need ten years, maybe a hundred. One, I *must* have!" But he read the answer in the doctor's averted eyes, and slumped back into the leather chair, idly scratching at the heads of the two big dogs beside him. "Somebody once called benevolent dictatorship the best government short of ideal anarchy, Sorgen, and it's true for this world, though a strong people can afford democracy. But even perfect dictatorship is the most dangerous rule ever devised! When your ruler dies, his successor may be a fool, a brute, and a weakling—and there's no check on him. Not even the royal tradition of *noblesse oblige!* . . . Nema, what about Bill 693?"

"Passed unanimously, Excellence," a primly efficient voice answered from the communicator.

Jason grunted. "In five hours—eighty pages of legal gobbledegook! And that's the only check on my power, after fifty years of trying to create a real democracy! . . . In all that time, *one* man accepted his real responsibility. I had great hopes for him—until his constituents decided I might blame his 'treason' on them. They pulled him out of bed in his pajamas, and chased him out of town in midwinter to die of pneumonia! And now I have six months to find a successor!"

The weaker the people, the stronger must be their ruler. He dared not demand less than he had been forced to become, and so far there had been no other with the strength for that iron self-discipline. Probably somewhere in the world there were a thousand capable of replacing him, but the Director had no means of subjecting three hundred millions to all the tests needed to find one of them. The very benevolence of his rule had eliminated the opposition that might

have developed and revealed a worthy successor.

"But aren't you forgetting history, Jason? When Knude died—"

"History isn't always accurate, Sorgen," Jason answered wearily. "Knude died of curare on a nail designed to work through his shoe! He chose me as the world's best scientific mind, counting on a scientist's lack of political ability, and forgetting that the master of a dozen sciences could learn even that, if he had to. I had to—I knew Knude's plans! The responsibility is mine, not history's. . . . Checkmate in four moves!"

Sorgen shook his head doubtfully. "Not if I move—Mmm! Which leads to what, aside from the fact that a robot would make a better chess partner for you?"

"WHICH LEADS, of course, to your robot. If I can't find a successor, then I have to make one!" The Director watched the confusion on the other's face, and a slow smile crept over his mouth. "Suppose robots existed? You know people—would you build metal men, Sorgen? Would you call them robots with that word's semantic connotations, even if they could think, learn, and remember with genuine intelligence? Well?"

"No, not unless I wanted trouble, I suppose. I'd probably call them something like heterofiddle-deedee phlumpees, and build them into switchboards, calculators, or—" Sorgen's speculative look jumped to confused awe, and then twisted into sudden certainty. "Jason! Voice-operated typewriters! What else would know I meant *too* instead of *to*?"

The Director's smile broadened. "Exactly! Your vocatype and one of my chessboards are robots, inhibited against independence. . . . Nema, will you come in? . . . So are my two dogs, incidentally, to give me protection against any chance insane crackpot. But are you sure you'd rule out hu-

manoids? Bodies are easy to build, now."

"Absolutely. Men have protoplasmic habits—they giggle, follow archaic taboos, and think mostly with their endocrines, so they'd spot any imitation. And they still believe in Frankenstein's monster."

Jason grunted doubtfully. Men also saw faces in clouds, and read purely human intelligence and contrariness into their mechanical inventions. If an office clerk behaved like a machine, they called it efficiency and gave him a raise!

But a quiet, mousy little woman had come in through the door on silent feet, and he dropped the argument. "The perfect secretary—the result of fifteen months of analyzing the best human for the job, and using her as an education pattern. Suppose you show him, Nema!"

"But—but, Excellence! Dr. Sorgen—"

"Will share all my secrets," he finished for her. "From now on, if anything happens, I'll need him, so he's my shadow. Show him!"

Nema dropped reluctantly onto one knee and began a series of operations that ended with the top of her skull in her hands, and her head open to view. Inside lay a three-inch sphere, enmeshed in a maze of wires, and nothing else. Jason waited while the doctor let his mouth close slowly, then motioned her to her feet and dismissed her.

"Thank you, Nema, that's all." There was no smile on his face as he moved toward a panel that lifted to reveal a small private elevator. "And now, Sorgen, if you'd like to be the first visitor in my personal laboratory, I'll show you my mechanical double, and—perhaps—your future Director!"

A STEREO producer would have developed severe frustrations in the laboratory; except for a panel of controls and outlets before a desk,

and a table of metal-working tools, it might have been a locker room. Yet it was home to Jason, and he dropped gratefully into a chair and motioned Sorgen to another. The slight exertion of the trip had been enough to set his heart pounding, but it quieted as he began the old routine.

From his turban came scanner and recorder reels to be replaced by new tape for later use. The old ones were slipped into receivers on the panel, and tiny cables came out to couple him directly into the recording "brains" while he was in the laboratory. The old tapes began playing on a screen before him, varying as automatic habits took over the task of controlling emotional response and annotations that would shape them into the closest possible semblance to his own personal reactions. From older records, the brains could draw on accumulated past experience to fill in the picture.

"Every minute of my life is there," he told the doctor, without looking up from his work. "Everything I could recall from my very earliest childhood has been re-enacted just as I saw it and heard it. Every decision I ever made has been remade by this. I've spent half of the last fifty years on it. As for the history and how it operates—you'll find it all in this introductory manual for students in my private commercial laboratories. It will give you the picture while I finish this. . . There isn't as much to it as you might think."

There wasn't much to it—in the book. Applications tend to become increasingly simplified as theory is extended. When subject to magnetic current, certain metal colloids in a silicon jelly would propagate links between affected nodes, intermittent conductivity increasing with use. After the momentary passage of current, however, the links became resistances to cut off further flow until another stimulus. It was vaguely like

the response and inhibition pattern of interaction between brain cells.

Unlike the brain, however, all nodes could link, and the links propagate sub-links, in turn propagating others. Nema had five hundred nodes, and this model possessed ten thousand, to yield fifty million links, a quadrillion sub-links, and one and a half novillion sub-sub-links. There would be no danger of overloading the memory circuits! Even the crude first model that Justin Ehrlich had developed was still as flexibly open to new knowledge as ever, after over a century.

Sorgen chuckled suddenly, and the book was open to the old man's picture. "Quite a character, that grandfather of yours!"

"The stubbornness and most crotchety man that ever lived," Jason agreed, but there was affection in his voice. Justin had spent twenty years on the vocatype because of a petty fight with his typist. When the final war began, he had packed up and dug into MacQuarie Island and gone doggedly on, building up the simple little magnetronic memory tube to a thousand and input model. While the war raged he had spent fifteen hours a day pronouncing words and typing them until the machine was conditioned to the flow of words, and even the tricks of punctuation and homonyms!

And then, back in the post-war ruin, he had stubbornly begun dictating the original book that had started it all, and that no one would ever read—only to find his machine a mutineer. In the middle of a passage, it had stopped, kicked out the paper, and deliberately begun a revision. Twenty dictations and failures later, even his stubbornness had relaxed enough for him to learn that his hero's middle name had been Xavier, as typed, and not Xenophon!

He never finished the book, but he left thousands of pages to show his progress in teaching the meaning of words to the brain. Years after he

died, the original Brain had finished the novel from his notes, revised to suit the new conditions, and it had been a best-seller.

And it had been that Brain, working with Jason, which had finally solved the seemingly hopeless problem of the long years of labor required to educate each brain. Now modified "implanter" brains, coupled with individual erasable memory tanks, could feed the required knowledge into the new mind in a matter of hours. Behind the laboratory panels, fifty separate implanters were coordinated to hold and develop the pattern of Jason's mind, though full integration could never occur until the time when the final robot was awakened.

JASON STIRRED finally and swung around to see Sorgen finished with his reading and waiting patiently. "You'll find the robot in a cradle behind Panel C," he answered the other's searching look. "But it's only a perfect mechanical duplicate of my body, with a few connecting wires that will come off after integration. A touch of this red button—a few hours—and Jason II becomes ruler! The panel's unlocked."

Sorgen shrugged and disregarded the panel. "It would only be the outside, not what interests me, Jason. I've been thinking while you worked. . . . Oh, I'm not immune to the usual phobias about robots! I was all set to sound off on a sermon concerning your dissimilarity to God! Now I'll skip that, because I think you've already delivered it to yourself—fifty years of it. You brought me here for advice, I take it?"

"I'm not planning on turning a monster loose, Sorgen. It was Knude's discovery of this and his ideas that forced my hand to murder. Since then, fortunately, few have guessed the secret, and they're included in the tight inner clique. Curiosity seems to be another vanished human character-

istic, anyhow. But—before saying the ruler must be human—remember that my successor will control this secret, too. If he's a fool. . . ."

"I already thought of that; knowledge can't be withdrawn, once put into use. Then the question boils down to how human your robot can be—right?"

The Director nodded, deliberately letting the long responsibility fall from his shoulders for the grateful moments that another could pick it up. The Brain had stated flatly that it could not help him, and had suggested a human consultant. He should have taken its advice sooner.

"Ability to learn, to remember, to correlate, and to decide—or to be conscious of self?" Sorgen mused. "The last, I think since it leads to social consciousness. I suppose Nema was a very limited trial balloon, and that you asked whether she had that trait? And she said she did?"

"She would have. Any imitation of a man has to have a pattern of that kind implanted, to avoid misuse of pronouns, and impersonal adjectives instead of possessives," Jason answered. He let the tone of his voice indicate the long and futile tests that had failed to establish the reality of that consciousness of self.

Sorgen fumbled with his pipe, packing and tamping the tobacco while he reshuffled his thoughts. "So it breaks into two problems: Can a robot pass as a man? And can it be trusted as a man? You've taken care of the first, now that I look back on it, by dropping all possible human traits yourself—deliberately depersonalizing yourself to the public. Want me to sum up the questions on the other angle?"

"No. They're obvious."

No mechanical education could possibly include all the details of a man's life, particularly of the early formative years. The all-important emotional color of the thoughts must be

supplied from within—and with two different types of brains, could similar “experience” assure an identical response? The Brain had written the end of Justin’s highly emotional novel, but who could say how coldly it had shaped those paper emotions? Pure intelligence could never be enough.

A man or a nation with no sense of humor would always be a piece of social dynamite, needing only a spark to fan out into megalomaniac barbarism. Frankenstein’s monster had been a gentle, pitiful wretch at first; and a sense of humor to absorb the shock of men’s reaction to him might have made the transition to his final form impossible. The old German Reich had been quiet and industrious, but a mere sense of horseplay and jollity had been too little to save it from its well-deserved oblivion.

“DAMN HERKER’S failure and damn our mass-murdering ancestors!” Sorgen knocked his pipe against the table, watched the bowl break off and bounce on the floor, and threw the bit against a wall. Then he caught himself and grinned crookedly. “I was going to damn you for throwing this at me, but I see the pressure you’re under.”

“Some of it, maybe. I’ve had decades to study the fine art of worrying.”

“Umm. And it hasn’t helped your heart. If you appoint even a slightly wrong successor, his power coupled with this knowledge may go to his head. If you don’t make a choice, somebody like our efficient police chief stands to take over by simply declaring himself in. . . . With time enough, you could vitalize the robot and watch for trouble, ready to step in if needed, but. . . . No way to check up without vitalizing, I suppose?”

“No good way, but I can check its decisions.” While not fully integrated, the implanter brains were linked, and there was a circuit that

permitted asking questions without affecting the memory tanks. “I’ve checked it against every problem to face me, found the reasons when its answer wasn’t mine, and corrected them. Now it seldom errs—sometimes it even antecedes my decisions. But I can’t be sure. In dealing with myself, practically, I may tip my hand myself.”

The doctor frowned, and then was on his feet, moving purposefully toward the panel. And sudden relief washed over the Director as he caught the thought. Of course, Sorgen would not be dealing with a deliberate copy of his own mind. His questions would not tip his hand! And as the man followed the simple directions and slipped into the headphone and mike harness, Jason located a stale pack of cigarettes and let his mind go almost blank, while the half-forgotten feel of the smoke spread soothingly into his lungs.

The other’s low mutter was meaningless, but he was uninterested in the nature of the questioning. It was not until the doctor finished that he snapped back to full consciousness. Sorgen swung around slowly, pushing the harness away, and his eyes were on the floor.

“Nonsense,” he stated dully.

There were seventy years of discipline behind Jason, as well as seventy years of failure, and his face remained unmoved. He crushed out the cigarette and stood up. “Better get some sleep, Sorgen; there’s a cot folded into the wall over there.”

He should never have had his sleep center removed; the time it had given him had been useless, and now the healing power of the long hours of semi-consciousness was denied him. There was nothing to keep him from remembering, and the memories were not pleasant. Futile dreams, wasted hopes, a son killed in an accident before he could assume rule, a grandson. . . .

HE HAD NEED of that iron discipline in the morning as he watched his grandson and the young man's wife move down the long length of the reception hall. There was no emotion on Jason's face, even as the boy went out without a backward look, dragging his spite-filled mate quickly after him. Sorgen came around the big desk, and dropped a sympathetic hand on his shoulder, but the Director shrugged it off and rose to move between his dogs toward the office.

"You heard the whole sordid story," he said woodenly. "Do you see now why the old problem of my successor became so suddenly acute, after lying dormant? I learned all this only yesterday, before I called you in."

The doctor dropped into the office chair with a weariness that showed how little good his sleep had done, and his voice held some of the same lack of expression. "Paul's still brilliant. At least he has the Ehrlich mind!"

"Which is why he's still Governor. I suppose his weakness is my fault. I never had time to supervise him as Grandfather Justin trained me when I was young, and he's this world's child. . . . But he's certainly not Director material. If Jasna can twist him, others can. And she doesn't twist him for his own good. Ever hear her sing?"

"Once." Sorgen's wry grin mirrored the Director's.

"Exactly. Naturally it took a lot of pulling strings and chicanery to get even with the men who wouldn't let her star in the State Opera. And since he was willing to cheapen his office for her personal pique. . . . Sorgen, we'll have to risk a heart-graft! I need time to find a successor!"

It seemed hours as the slow minutes passed, and at first, Jason was only conscious of irritation at the long delay; then the truth seeped in slowly.

The other fidgeted with his new pipe and groped for a good professional opening, but he wasn't particularly good as an actor, and he knew it. The Director's long sigh broke the silence and ended the need for a beginning.

"I see. So the report came in already. That bad?"

"Weeks—maybe!"

Jason let the fact sink in, deliberately, sitting with his hands motionless before him and without a quiver to mark his thoughts; there were no thoughts. Finally he turned to the communicator and pressed a button that brought Nema's quiet little figure into the room. "The record officials here, Nema?"

"They've been waiting, Excellence. I'll call them" She was gone for a minute, to return with the five officials and their recording machine.

Nema spread a paper on the table, and the men adjusted their apparatus. The final signed and witnessed document went into a slot, and they moved out again, but the secretary still lingered.

Jason waved dismissal. "That's all, Nema, unless you have something else. . . . Well?"

"Excellence, with—with your permission?" She hesitated and stopped, waiting for his nod before turning uncertainly to the doctor. "Dr. Sorgen, in my outer office. . . . Please, the Clinic Supervisor has been waiting. . . ."

Jason cut through the other's protests with emotionless words. "Go ahead, Sorgen. You'll find me in the laboratory when you're finished. Nema has a key."

He could think better there. Not that his thinking would matter much, but the habit of decades pulled his feet unerringly to his retreat, with the old phrase uppermost in his mind. For the moment, he was content to let his muscles guide him.

Instinct carried him to the work-panel, where he began the auto-

matic business of feeding in reels of used tape and reinserting fresh ones. He knew there was no point to it at all, now that the robot idea must be abandoned, but it served to pass the time as well as anything else. He coupled himself to the board and went on about the usual routine of editing the tapes, while he reoriented his thoughts to the idea that there was nothing he could do.

Oddly, it was no shock. It was as if something that had lain festering in his mind had broken, releasing its poisons, and leaving only a numbness behind. Death itself would be welcome, after the long weary years and the last painful months. The responsibility remained, but he had done all he could.

The will which he had recorded was at best a desperation measure, the gesture of a man seizing at a straw. Now that he knew how short his time was, though, there was little he could do to improve on it. Sorgen was an able man, and a thoroughly honest and decent one; whether he would be weak in office was something only the future could decide. A man who makes no effort to attain power is seldom a good choice for its control, but it was obviously a better solution than his spiritless grandson.

The Director grinned bitterly at the emotions that insisted on flooding back. No man likes to leave an empire without seeing his own blood inheriting it; even a religious man turns without thought to the hope of physical perpetuity through his offspring. He had pinned too many hopes on that! And too many others on direct personal inheritance of his empire in a mind that was a copy of his own!

Perhaps that very vanity—his subconscious craving for a direct inheritance—had ruined his chances of finding a successor. Jason, builder of a dynasty—a sorry, power-crazed fool along with all the other stupid rulers of old!

But he knew better. The robot idea had been justified, and had been right. While he could trust himself, there could never be another independent mind of which he was equally sure.

And perhaps the thing had not been a failure! No mind scattered into fifty divisions could be expected to duplicate a single integrated unit. He could never know certainly until the button was pressed and the real robot came out fully experienced and alive. Only then could he pass accurate judgment.

For a second, he reached toward the red button, to catch himself and jerk his hand away. Weeks! It was too late. He should have done it long before, when he could wait for the years needed to assure himself that it was no Frankenstein monster, no clumsy impostor which would reveal its falsity at the first crisis. Now it was too late.

Too late . . . The numbed, repressed emotions were crowding up now, pushing aside all the savage discipline of the years. Too late, *too late, Too Late!*

Reason returned suddenly, along with agony! The vise was back about his chest, choking him, and his heart was pounding with a wild increasing clamor that wrenched a scream from his lips. Heart failure should be gentle, peaceful! Why did his have to fail in so spectacularly agonizing a fashion? Why couldn't it finish the attack, before the strain burst it? With an effort that brought cold sweat trickling down his forehead, he forced his lungs to empty and fill, but the choking did not abate!

Even as he heard the click of the key in the door and saw Sorgen's surprisingly happy face twist into a knot of horror, he realized that it would never be weeks. He was dying now! Inside him, his heart pounded once more, and then seemed to explode. The pain stopped.

(Continued on page 108)

UNEASY LIES THE HEAD

(Continued from page 70)

There was a haze over everything as he brought a thousand-ton hand up through a million miles into a gesture of salute. And then great slow waves of peace rolled over him, and turned jet black!

IT WAS ONLY a faint stirring, hardly to be called consciousness, at first, yet somewhere mixed into the vagueness was a feeling of existing. It went away, and a definite sense of time lapse separated it from the first flicker that had meaning. It was only a picture of a meadow, with an old man swearing savagely at a box that kept arguing back with the same note of angry sureness.

Then there was a play of blurred, cloudy realizations, all jumbled upon one another until none made sense, and a rushing and strange whispering down all his nerves. A feeling of well-being came which he was vaguely sure did not belong to him; there was an expectation of pain and agony, but the cool, soothing comfort continued.

He tried to open his eyes, but they remained tightly closed, and he could hear no sounds. Something sneaked into his mind and then tried to hide, but he chased it down relentlessly, forcing it from corner to corner until at last it gave up and came to meet him.

Death! He'd been dying. Something about his heart? Of course, his heart had been failing. But he wasn't dead. He was quite positive of that, without bothering to reject any doubts as to an afterlife; he had never doubted that death was the end, and he did not question but what he was alive. Now the mists were slowly clearing from his mind, opening up wider and wider frontiers of consciousness.

Once before there had been something like this, when his sleep center

was removed, and he was regaining consciousness. Well, so he hadn't died—that meant that Sorgen must have found him in time and performed the impossible job of making the heart-graft. He groped for pain, found none, and decided it must have happened days before, and that Sorgen had kept him under drugs until the work had time to heal.

He'd forgotten, after the years of slowly increasing trouble, what it was to have a body that behaved normally, and permitted full efficiency. Just being alive was a pleasure again! He could have felt no better if his lost youth had returned.

Or had it? Sorgen's face had looked so completely free of worry before his eyes had spotted Jason's trouble. Herker must have stumbled on a line of ACS work that succeeded; maybe that was why the Clinic Supervisor had wanted Sorgen. It made sense—a new hope for rejuvenation, and a miracle by Sorgen that somehow had preserved a flicker of life in him until it could be used!

Then the tension released, and he sat up, to spin around easily and feel his feet contact the floor as his eyes opened.

Good man, Sorgen! The doctor was there, waiting in front of him. But. . . . It was still the lab, and Sorgen's face had been a dark cloud of gloom, only now changing to a sudden elation. The lab! What kind of a miracle had Herker—or someone—dug up that could perform a miracle like this with no medical equipment and no time to move a man's dying body?

"God!" Sorgen came to sudden life, and his voice was incredulous. He was across the room, even as Jason came to his feet, his arms slipping around the Director and supporting him.

For a minute, Jason had need of the

support, since his feet seemed determined to work against him; but the clumsiness passed quickly, to be replaced by sure certainty. He pushed the other aside, enjoying the purely physical pleasure of moving about without paying for each step with deadening fatigue.

"What the deuce happened, Sorgen?" he wanted to know. "I'd have sworn I was dead. And now—"

"Now you're alive!"

"Obviously. But how did you do it?"

Sorgen shook his head, and a little doubt returned to his face. "That can wait, Jason. Thank God, the idea was not as cockeyed as I thought while waiting for you to come to. You've been—out—for hours! Now, how do you feel? Anything wrong? Any signs of some kind of shock?"

"Not a thing. I never felt better in my life. Those last few minutes before I blacked out. . . ." Jason checked his words, and shook his head. Funny! He had no memory of how he'd felt, though he could remember every sight and sound, including the last theatrical gesture, and Sorgen running toward the panel. He'd heard of pain so intense that it could burn the memory of itself from the brain, but he'd never really believed it. "Anyhow, what happened? I know you did the impossible, but how?"

Sorgen shrugged, hesitated, and began reaching for his inevitable safety-valve. At last, he stuck the pipe in his mouth and fumbled for words. "I didn't do a thing, Jason—you did it yourself—except for one minor little detail. And then I thought I'd muffed it, since it took so long. Here, come over here. Look at that and draw your own conclusions!"

THE SIGHT of the naked robot's body on the floor meant nothing to the Director, except the puzzle of why it wasn't back in the cradle, but he dropped obediently to inspect it.

When he arose, his face was tense, and he groped back into a chair before facing the human being in front of him. No wonder he couldn't remember what the pain had felt like—nor, accurately, any feeling of pain ever, though he could remember its physical results!

But his voice was still level as he faced the impossible fact. "So you pressed the button, eh, Sorgen? Thanks for changing clothes to this body and taking me out of the cradle. . . . Funny, I don't feel any different. I feel like the man who was ruler of this world for seventy years, except that somehow another seventy doesn't seem to bother me any more. My mind's the same as it was."

"You wouldn't know if it weren't," Sorgen pointed out reasonably. "It doesn't matter, anyway. It's consistent, human, and close enough to the original. The years of checking all decisions and cross-checking until you had time to find the same solution as your original took care of that. Know what that decision of yours was—the one I called nonsense? No, you were cut out of the memory circuit, of course. . . . It was to make me your successor!"

"But that wasn't nonsense. I—he—I did name you Director!"

"So Nema told me. Incidentally, she wanted to see me alone, and that story of a Supervisor waiting was just a trick—a robot lie—to get me away from you. She wanted to ask me how you were, because she was worried by your obvious sickness and your sudden will. She's scared sick, both for you, and what will become of her!"

Jason frowned. "I never built such ideas into her."

"Naturally. But you built thought in. I'm beginning to think the brain controls the endocrines a lot more than the reverse. My guess, now, is that intelligence can't be pure—not if as carefully mechanical a mind as Nema can develop a personality. If a

robot had no feeling of self, it would turn itself off and stop bothering!"

Sorgen stopped to relight his pipe and to glance at a clock on the panel. "While you were integrating, I had time for a bunch of thought, and I took a Ps.D. degree before my M.D., as you know. Put down that 'human' intelligence rot to vanity; the noun doesn't need the adjective. After all, a complete amnesiac remains pretty much the same sort of man as before—sometimes a better one. You're no amnesiac; you're lacking a lot of detail, which you'll color up and dub in eventually till you won't know it, but you have 99% of Jason's experience. He started out with almost no reactions to events, and he didn't need someone outside twisting his emotions to create his thoughts. The same goes for you. For the last forty years or more, you saw exactly the same, heard the same, and reacted the same as he did—so you had to think the same."

"Rather a backward statement of cause and effect," Jason objected. "But I'm the last person to call it wrong."

Sorgen went on, paying no attention as he worked things out while they were still fresh in his mind. "Man gets the world through six senses—of which your sense of smell is crude now, and your kinaesthetic sense a little different. But to the average man, those don't count too much. The 99% overrides the trivia.

"And I'm not mixing cause and effect. Psychology isn't that simple; we learned long ago that they're two names for the same thing. Start acting happy, and you soon are happy, as well as vice versa. Anyhow, as far as I'm concerned, Jason never died!"

The new Director accepted the other's hand with emotions as complicated as any purely human brain could have held. There was no use wasting words in thanks to the man who had saved him, when he might

have as easily taken over control of the world. Sorgen wasn't the type to violate the spirit of his Hippocratic oath, even had he wanted to rule, which he obviously didn't.

"Then suppose we put this body in the cradle until we can dispose of it and forget all this," he decided. "There was nothing in my education to make me like staring at my own corpse!"

The other chuckled, and they began clearing the laboratory, while Jason's mind opened up on the new vistas before him. Five hundred years of full activity should be enough to restore hope and independence to the world, until he would no longer be needed. And by then the planets should be open—all the planets now, since men could go forth clad in imperishable bodies suited to their environments. There would even be time to lick the problem of letting the race in on this secret.

They were almost to the lift when the doctor stopped and grunted.

"Just thought of something," he answered the Director's look. "I seem to have worked myself out of a job, and to be unemployed as of now. You hardly need a physician!"

Jason's grin flashed on with the ease of a man who no longer had to keep his life to a mechanical level capable of easy imitation by a functional robot. "I'll need someone to explain my miraculous life-span and perform magic cures later when the world gets enough spirit to start assassinating me. And having spent fifty years on a decision I never made, I don't care to get along without a mind to check mine for five hundred. No, it'll take maybe ten years to build another robot, but if you'll permit a slight change in body, I think I can guarantee you a rather long job!"

"Umm. Long enough to become a decent chess partner, maybe? Seems to offer reasonable security. I'll take it."