



Robert W.
Lowndes,
Editor

Volume I

March, 1951

Number 6

★ *Feature Novels*

- INCOMPLETE SUPERMAN** Poul Anderson 8
They were homo superior, but they had a fatal defect.
- AGE OF PROPHECY** Margaret St. Clair 26
Young Benjamin had the powers of a True Prophet, and ...

★ *Short Stories*

- THE GRAY CLOUD** Walter Kubilius 44
The tenth atom bomb brought forth unsuspected results.
- WOMAN'S WORK IS NEVER DONE!** Judith Merrill 51
Such catastrophes will always be with us.
- THE LAST LUNACY** Lester del Rey 52
When the moon came close to Earth, the last phase began.
- THE LITHIUM MOUNTAIN** Noel Loomis 60
Any mistake is fatal when dealing with an atomic pile.
- MARTIAN HOMECOMING** Frank Belknap Long 70
Dreams can be deadly, and when they come true ...
- WHAT IS "EVIDENCE"?** (Science Article) James Blish 78
Here's why responsible scientists question Dianetics.

★ *Departments*

- FROM THE BOOKSHELF** 69
- TODAY AND TOMORROW** 77
- DOWN TO EARTH** 81
- READERS PREFERENCE COUPON** 83
- RATINGS ON THE NOVEMBER ISSUE** 86

Cover by Milton Luros, illustrating "The Last Lunacy"

Interior illustrations by Finlay, Lawrence, Poulton, and Luros

FUTURE COMBINED WITH SCIENCE FICTION STORIES, published bi-monthly by COLUMBIA PUBLICATIONS, INC., 1 Appleton Street, Holyoke, Mass. Editorial and executive offices at 241 Church Street, New York 13, New York. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at Holyoke, Mass. under the act of March 3, 1879. Entire contents copyrighted 1950 by Columbia Publications, Inc., 20c per copy; yearly subscription \$1.20. When submitting manuscripts, enclose 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 the U.S.A.

WOMAN'S WORK is *NEVER* DONE!

by *Judith Merrill*

(author of "Barrier of Dread")

War or peace, the gals will have a tough time getting things right...

LESLIE bypassed the buzzer and used the tuned voice-key at the front door. She went through the inspection corridor, and paused before the last slot, waiting open for her on the swift message of the photo-cells. She pressed down seven levers in the bank over the group of slots, informing the robot control of her unit code and personal code numbers.

The inner door opened automatically, and a single liftmobile rolled up to carry her up to the thirty-fourth floor, and around two corridors to her space unit.

On silent wheels it rolled away when she got out in front of her own door, and allowed her fingerprints against the hand-panel to give her access to the unit.

Inside, she dropped her coat and hat on automatic storers, and pushed her gloves into the refresher. Her mother waited in the kitchen.

Mrs. Caster was a well-built, graceful woman of middle age and moderate disposition. Those who did not call her a perfect mother, hesitated to do so only because they thought she might be a bit too strict, a trifle too much of a perfectionist. But her three older daughters had made brilliant successes, and she was determined that Leslie should do likewise.

"How did it go, darling?" Her beautifully modulated voice carried through the speaker tubes, as the flashing light in the soundproof wall announced Leslie's approach.

"It was wonderful, Mom." Leslie charged through the door like any other teenager for centuries back. The only difference was that her feet on the velvdown linoleum made no more noise than the door did



when photo-cells caught its impact and eased it into place. "The first time I ever went alone, and everything came out perfect!" She displayed a pin-head-size seal stamped on the paper-thin alloy of her learner's permit. "Fourteen more and I can get a prelim license," she caroled.

"All right, calm down, darling," Mrs. Caster cautioned, "and tell me all about it."

"Well, there's nothing to tell, Mom. I did just what you always do... except, oh, they had this perfectly heavenly self-seal celluluminum we read about, so I used that instead of standard wrap. Really, I think it's worth the extra twist." She looked up a little anxiously, questioningly, but her mother was nodding complete approval.

"You were right, dear," she agreed. "We ought to try it anyhow. But I want you to start at the beginning

[Turn To Page 97]

WOMAN'S WORK IS NEVER DONE!

(Continued From Page 51)

and tell me just exactly what you did. Everything!" she finished with hungry relish. It had been a long time since she herself had experienced the thrills of training.

LESLIE SETTLED down and ran her fingers through her hair, loosening it. She punched a row of keys on the table unit, and the latest popular song came on to provide background for the story.

"Well, I took the servocar at the door and used Main Ramp as far as Store Town. Then I navigoed to Supply, and..."

"Leslie!" her mother was shocked. "Aren't you ever going to learn to use the automatics? You *know* you're too old to navigo now. *No* lady navigoes herself!"

A blush spread over the girl's face. "Well I like to!" she said defiantly, and then added, "but I won't, I guess, if I *have* to stop it to get my license. Anyhow, when I checked in the permitalloy slot, I got the proper out-

line stamp"—she pointed to the deeply indented ring around the seal on the permit—"and keyed down my unit and personal codes. Then the automatic took me to Baker. There wasn't much of a line. I didn't have to wait more than half an hour. Well when I finally got there, the woman before me had left the whole thing jammed up, so I signaled repair, and had to wait two more minutes for self-service to fix it up."

Mrs. Caster was nodding. So far, so good.

"I set contents first, just the way you told me, all eight keys, to be sure we had it just the way Dad wants it to be. Then I punched for size and shape. I know texture takes care of itself, but I figured I'd play safe, and..."

A tiny chime announced the opening of the servo-slot, and the shining package Leslie had deposited in the X-ray-inspect-shoot downstairs slid onto a pre-storage rack. The

[Turn Page]

girl jumped up in excitement, but her mother put a restraining on her arm.

"Sit down, dear," Mrs. Caster said primly, "and finish telling me first."

"We-e-l-l-l..." Leslie kept talking, but her eyes never left the glowing bundle. "That was when I noticed they had the celluluminum installed, and set for serve-size, and then wrap. It was really tricky. They have a four-way key twist on the wrap, and..."

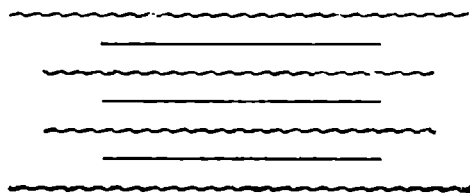
By that time she was out of the chair, and had the package safe in her hands. "It's something, Mom, really!" she insisted. "Look!" She peeled off a thin ribbon of celluluminum, carefully removing it only from the upper half of the slice she wanted to expose, then pressed down, and let the stiff bottom part propel the piece into her hand, while the celluluminum ribbon, released, wrapped itself back into place in the immediate reaction to the leverage.

She handed it to her mother, beaming with pride, and Mrs. Caster took it from her, with her expression changing slowly from one of maternal joy and affection to the horrified stare of the betrayed pedant.

"Leslie!" she gasped, and sank into her chair, almost, but not quite, too exasperated for words. "Leslie, I'm ashamed to admit my daughter could do a thing like that!"

The girl blanched, uncomprehending, and poked out a cautious finger to find out what was wrong with the slice of bread her mother held.

"Leslie," Mrs. Caster finally managed to say, "You had this smooth-sliced instead of rough-cut! *What* do you think your father's going to say, the way he likes home-made-style? Leslie Caster," she wailed, "You'll just *never* be a decent housekeeper. I can feel it my bones. Never!"



Dear RWL:

This letter, as you see above, was started some eight weeks ago, when I first saw the November issue of *Future*. Since that time, there have intervened several weeks of hot weather, the return of my older daughter from camp, the start of the school year, and the birth of my new daughter, Ann—all of which may help to explain the delay.

Somewhere in the dim distance, below, you may find some general comments on the issue as a whole. Mostly, I liked it. But leave me, with a candor which I hope is disarming, first express my reactions to what I naturally found most interesting in the issue—a review of a recently published novel, "Shadow on the Hearth", by that w.k. author, Judith Merrill.

"Doubleday", says one of my favorite reviewers (of other books), "has chosen wisely, I think, not to merchandize Judith Merrill's 'Shadow on the Hearth' as science-fiction, even though the story deals with suburban life interrupted by atomic bombs."

I find myself in complete agreement with your observation, as with Doubleday's action. Some years back, the atomic bomb was material for speculation—and science fiction. Today, it is one of the grimmer realities of life. Unfortunately, however, many people, (among whom science-fiction readers are not generally included) are still very much unaware of just how grim a reality the bomb is.

[Turn Page]

That is why, as you so cogently observed, the book was written primarily to hold the interest of "your mother-in-law, maiden aunt from Crabb Corners, or anyone else who dotes on 'John's Other Wife.'" Those three categories, if you stop to think on it a moment, make up a remarkably large part of our population—precisely that part, at any rate, which has the least knowledge of atomics, and therefore the least-informed fear of atomic war. I should be more than content to believe that all the women who listen to 'John's Etc' would eventually be as much affected by it as they are by matrimonial difficulties on the air waves.

"Shadow" was not written as science-fiction, nor is it being sold as such. I will freely admit however, that I did make an effort, in the writing of it, to make it of some interest to science-fiction readers—and even more freely will I confess that I have been delighted by the favorable reception most other science-fiction reviewers have given it.

Likewise am I gratified to find even the contemptuous purism of your review occupying more than half the space in your column—though had I had the allocation of the space, I should have done otherwise myself. As an old and ardent Leiber fan, I think you might well have given "Gather Darkness" (which everybody should rush right out and buy immediately after purchasing "Shadow") a good deal more space, in proportion to the very-well-deserved praise you bestowed upon it.

Now to the other 97/98ths of the magazine:

"World-Mover", I'm afraid, didn't impress me, though I found it readable throughout. The slightly dizzy pace serves to cover up what seemed to me to be a lack of Smith's usual careful thinking-out of scientific background. Nevertheless, in this, as in his other recent material, Geo seems to be forging ahead as a writer, and I keep looking forward to the time when he will combine his increasingly perceptive handling of characters with his old-time careful plotting and sound science (or technology, I should say).

"The Secret People" was a beautifully-done job, of which I enjoyed every word—I'm still trying to figure out what it was all about.

"The Terror" was a fine idea, well han-

died. Do you have more Coppel coming up?

"Moon of Memory"—so-so. No strong reaction.

"Day of the Hunters" was a most effective job, but I do wish Isaac would go back to his old habit of using plots in his stories. Coming from me, this comment is pretty snippy, I admit—just the same, Asimov did *used* to use them.

"Caridi Shall Not Die" was a little sentimental for my taste, but otherwise good.

For your numbering system, I'd line them up so: 1. "The Terror"—for general competence. 2. "Day of the Hunters"—for its effective buildup. 3. "The Secret People"—for good writing. 4. "The World-Mover"—a narrow choice over 5. "Caridi Shall Not Die", and 6. "Moon of Memory".

All in all, I think *Future* is coming along well. It does need a good book-reviewer, though!

Judith Merrill Pohl
99 East 4th Street
New York 3, N.Y.

(Let's see now: 1. I am one of your favorite book-reviewers—except for the instance of your own book. 2. The review of aforementioned book was what you found most interesting in the entire November issue. 3. Nevertheless, *Future* needs a good book reviewer.

And, to go on: 1. "Shadow on the Hearth" was not intended to be science-fiction—although it is science-fiction nonetheless. 2. It was not slanted at the science-fiction audience, but was written with the intention of being made of some interest to science-fiction readers. 3. It was admittedly slanted for the soap-opera lovers, housewife variety.

All this is so clear that I guess it would take a "Clear" to understand it; my general cloudy state (Captain Engram, they called me in those days) informs me that your, admittedly interesting, explanation of your intentions, merely substantiates my deductions of them, and seems to leave the book exactly where I found it.

Perhaps I should let the authors review their own books.

PS—More stories by Alfred Coppel are among my hopes for future issues.

PPS—Congratulations on the new daughter.)