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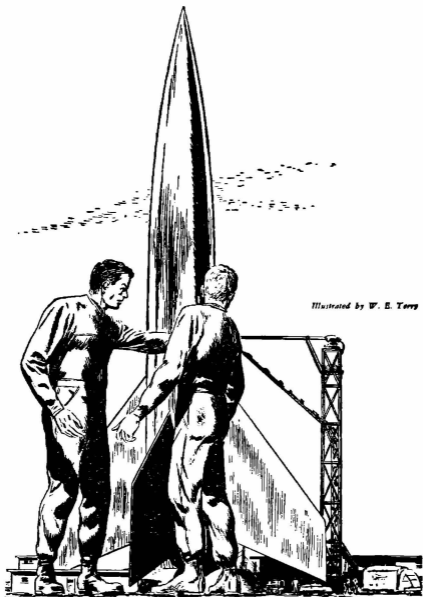
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Illustrated by W. E. Terry

Pete Harrison carried caution to an extreme, and bet only on "sure things." But now he was a member of the first expedition to the moon and it looked as if he'd have to take his chances along with the rest of the crew. Unless he could find a copy of

YESTERDAY'S PAPER

By Boyd Ellanby

FROM the direction of the *Tycho's* berth, Bill Danforth rolled up in his jeep and grinned at Peter Harrison's worried face.

"What's the matter, Pete," he said, "still trying to figure our chances to six decimals? That doesn't pay, in business like ours."

Peter Harrison looked at the moon just rising behind the Pyramids. "That's just what does pay, in business like ours. You figure your

chances, as close as you can."

"Sure. But when you've done that, why keep worrying? We'll never know the score any closer than we do now—until we get back. Better let me run you down to the Semiramis for a drink."

Peter shook his head. "Thanks. But I'm not in a drinking mood, now." He scuffed his boot in the sand while he stared across the desert and brooded on the rocket ship waiting



there in the dusk. "Call me anything you like, except a fool," he said. "I'm not trying to back out on the deal. I knew what I was in for when I signed up, months ago, but I had supposed the job would look more certain, this close to take-off time. When the *Tycho* lifts for the moon, I go with it, but it's not only the conservatives who are wondering if the ship will ever get back. Even the big gamblers are getting cold feet, and last night when I walked up Kasr el Nil, I couldn't go half a block without some laddie in a nightgown stepping up and offering me sixty to forty that the *Tycho* will never get back."

"So what?" said Bill. "Do you think the U.N. would have set up a project on this scale, gone to the enormous trouble of getting permission from the Egyptian Government to make this installation smack in the middle of the desert, half-way from nowhere, if they thought the jump would fail? Would they have spent millions to build the Hyperphysics Institute, to erect the Moonport, and to import thousands of specialists, just for a whim?"

"I know, I know! But I want to feel certain — absolutely certain — that I've checked every possibility of things going wrong. Be serious, Bill. What do you think the chances are of the *Tycho's* getting us to the moon and back again, safely?"

Bill shrugged his shoulders. "What do you think I am, a fortune-teller? Maybe you should ask Jim Dutton or one of his boys over at Temporal Research to peek into the future for

you."

"I'm not kidding! I just want to figure probabilities."

"But we've already figured probabilities, till those computers inside are leaking probabilities at the seams! There are four of us making the trip on the *Tycho*—you, me, Carl Johansson, and Pete Harriman—though how they came to foul things up by choosing two guys with names so much alike, is beyond me. Out of the four of us, what makes you so special? Pete Harriman and Carl Johansson seem able to take the risk in their stride, just like me. Yet they've both got wives, which you and I haven't, and Carl even has a kid. I heard you were the worrying kind before we signed up for this deal, but I never guessed you'd take it so hard. Are you always like this?"

A hail came across the rocky plateau.

"Ya Pasha! Ya Pasha!"

They turned to see a running Arab, his bare feet slapping noiselessly over the sand, the skirts of his blue and white *galabiya* streaming behind him as he ran.

Out of breath, he reached the jeep and gasped, "Ya Pasha Harriman!"

"Wrong man," said Peter. "I'm Harrison, not Harriman, and I wish you wouldn't keep calling me Pasha. In America we don't have any nobility, remember, and plain Colonel is good enough for me."

"Okay, Pasha Harriman."

Peter sighed. "I've told you a hundred times, Abdou, I'm Harri-son. It's the bald-headed flyer that's Harri-

man. They call him hairy-man, because he hasn't got any hair. Is that clear?"

Bill Danforth chuckled, as he spoke to the puzzled Arab. "He's just trying to confuse you, Abdou. Don't pay any attention. All you have to do is remember: red hair equals Harrison."

"Excuse me, ya Pasha," said Abdou. "My ears do not hear the difference well, and so it is hard to remember. But the young lady at the Hyperphysics Institute, the one at the communications office, sent me to get you. The man with red hair who is going to the moon, she said. There's a radiophone call for you, from America."

"Who's calling me?"

"That's not for me to say, sir. I think it is another young lady."

"Oh, no!" said Peter, his forehead creased in a frown. "I wonder if it can be Ruth?"

"I wouldn't know," said Bill. "Who's Ruth?"

"A girl I know. I wonder if something's happened—"

"Hop in the jeep," said Bill. "You too, Abdou. Crawl in the back and we'll give you a lift."

IN the club lounge of the Hyperphysics Institute, Peter sat on the edge of his air-cushioned chair, radiophone in hand, listening to the appalling jumble of sounds beamed into his ear.

"No!" he shouted. "I was not calling the chief Lamasery in Tibet. I'm trying to get a call from America."

A white robed waiter, resplendent

in scarlet tarbush, scarlet sash, and scarlet sandals, hurried up to place a frosted glass on the table before him, then padded away.

Ignoring the glass, Peter gripped the phone more tightly as he cried out, "Ruth! Then it was you! I can't hear you very well, Ruth. No, operator, this is not the Addis Ababa airport, I'm trying to talk to Chicago. What's that, Ruth? Yes, the take-off is less than a month away, now, and as soon as we get back I'll phone you, and you can send out the invitations. What's that? You're coming here?"

The warm voice rose and fell in his ear as though it were bobbing on the waves of the sea.

"The family seems to want a vacation," she said. "We're rocketing to London, and flying on to Cairo. We'll arrive two weeks from today, and you can make arrangements at the Embassy for us to be married there, the evening we arrive."

"But Ruth!" he protested, "we can't take the chance. I've already explained all this to you."

"I know you have, Pete. You've been explaining for nearly five years, now. First we couldn't get married because you hadn't finished your doctorate. Then we had to wait because it wasn't enough for you to be a physicist, you had to know rocket theory too. Then you put it off because it wasn't a hundred per cent certain that you'd survive the first transatlantic rocket flight. Well, you survived, just as I said you would. But did we get married? No, you

asked me to wait until you'd completed the organization of the Thorium plant, because it might blow up and take you with it, along with the state of Nebraska. And now you want to wait until you've got back from the moon. Right?"

"Right," said Peter, in a small voice.

"I'm not a toy, to be kept on the shelf forever, Peter. I've got pioneer blood in my veins, and I'm just as ready to share the risk of the future with my man as my great-great-great grandmother was when she sat beside by grandfather in a covered wagon, and crossed the middlewestern prairies in the dead of winter. No, Pete, this is your last chance. You make arrangements for our wedding to take place at the Embassy, two weeks from tonight, or else the wedding just isn't going to take place, ever."

Peter reached for his misted glass and gulped down half the drink.

"Be reasonable, Ruth! What would happen to you if I don't come back from the moon? Get off the line, operator! I don't understand Italian."

Ruth's gentle voice came clearly. "You can waste a lifetime, being reasonable. If I'm willing to take a chance, Pete, why shouldn't you be? Is it a deal?"

He wiped his streaming forehead, and said weakly, "All right, darling. It's a deal. Two weeks from tonight."

The phone clicked off, and he replaced the set in its cradle in the arm of his chair. He drained the rest of his drink and sank back into the cushions. Glaring distractedly around the

crowded lounge, he wondered if there was anyone around who could give him good advice right now?

Carl Johansson, he supposed, was having a family dinner at home, in the suburb of Maadi. Bill Danforth had gone into Cairo, to take in a new night club. He noticed Peter Harriman making for the ping pong room, his bald head gleaming under the lights—but Pete Harriman's wife had gone back to the States, and he was soured on matrimony.

A hand clapped him on the shoulder.

"Hi, Petel! You look low."

It was Jim Dutton, head of Temporal Research. He'd known Jim at M.I.T., and had always liked him.

"Well, the fact is," Pete began.

"It can't be that bad, whatever it is," said Jim. "Sorry. I'm meeting the wife for dinner in the Cheops Room, and I'm late. Tempestuous Tessie kept me overtime tonight." He hurried away.

The crowd in the lounge was thinning, now, as people went in to dinner. Peter sat up and clapped his hands sharply together. When the waiter came running, he snapped an order.

"Another Moon Fizz."

"*Haadir!*" said the waiter, and padded away.

FOUR Moon Fizzes later, Peter wove his way out of the lounge, took the escalator to the ground floor, exhibited his wrist identification to the soldier at the entrance, and emerged into the radiance of night

in the desert. He looked up, and tried to focus his eyes. The moon was high in the sky, now, and her light was reflected from the white slopes of the Pyramids to the north of him.

He strolled on, aimlessly toward the Hyperphysics Institute, known to its workers as the Labyrinth, because the many cells of its offices and laboratories spread over a full acre of desert. His head was beginning to clear and as he looked at the pattern of lighted windows in the few labs where research went on twenty-four hours a day, he remembered a scrap of conversation.

It was ten days ago, the day of his arrival in Cairo. Abdou, acting as his guide, had been taking him to the gyro-lab. They had passed the open door of a room from which issued a high-pitched, nerve-shattering, mechanical whine, and his skin had crawled with the physical discomfort of that noise.

"What are they doing in there, Abdou?" he had asked.

Abdou smiled, and spread out his hands, palms upwards.

"It is not for me to say, ya Pasha. They say they are learning how to travel into the middle of next week. Perhaps it is a joke?"

Had it been a joke, Peter wondered? But the middle of next week wouldn't do me any good. If only I could travel into the middle of next month, now, and find out for myself whether the *Tycho* will return!

He stopped short near the doorway, and an Egyptian Captain saluted smartly.

"Something wrong, Colonel Harrison? Can I help you?"

"No, thank you, Captain Hussein. I think I'll just take another turn around before I call it a day. Nothing wrong."

He smiled to himself as he wandered on in the moonlight. Nothing wrong at all!

Suddenly, like a jumble of letters suddenly forming themselves into a familiar word, various isolated remarks overheard in the past few days had tied themselves into coherence. He had a flash of conviction that the boys in Temporal Research had indeed learned how to travel into the middle of next week, and a whole plan of action blue-printed itself in his mind.

He still remembered something of the hyperphysics he had studied during his five years at M.I.T., and in their senior year all his class had learned the physical theory underlying the concept of time travel. Since then, he had scarcely thought of the subject, but it was hardly surprising that some practical progress should have been made since he left college. Against Jim Dutton's advice, he remembered, he had by-passed Physics X, the course in the philosophy of time travel, having no patience with such nonsensical questions as "What would you do if you ran into yourself in the street?" When the technic reached perfection, he had always believed, such hypothetical paradoxes would be bound to vanish in the reality.

He returned to the Labyrinth.

Pausing before the guard at the entrance, he showed his wrist identification and strode in purposefully, and combed the lounge until he located Jim Dutton relaxing with a long cool drink.

"Hi, Jim," he said. "Did you find your wife all right?"

"She's gone on home. One of the youngsters was having an attack of gypsy tummy."

"Too bad. Say, Jim, why do you bother with the drinks they make here? Come on down to Shephard's with me, and I'll buy you a real, genuine Moon Fizz."

Jim pulled himself to his feet, and yawned. "Can do, I guess. Just a night-cap, though."

"I've been wanting to hear more details of the work in Temporal Research. Is it true that you boys can get as far ahead as the middle of next week?"

"You want to hear about the exploits of Tempestuous Tessie, do you? You underestimate her, Pete. She's got so she can push ahead as far as the middle of next month, and not even breathe hard!"

THE laboratories on corridor J 3 were usually quiet and deserted by seven o'clock each evening, and on five successive nights Peter had managed to slip into the corridor, unobserved, quietly to open the door whose brass plate read *Temporal Research*, and lock the door behind him. With the entrances of the Institute so completely guarded, no unauthorized person could enter the building,

but an authorized person, once in, was free to wander where he liked, on the principle that no one would meddle in research that did not concern him.

At first glance, the research had seemed to consist of nothing but paper work, the feeding and milking of the giant computers in the room. But Jim Dutton had allowed himself more than a "night-cap," while discussing the habits of Tempestuous Tessie with his old classmate, and had canvassed the subject in such detail that Peter had no trouble in locating the door concealed in the air-conditioning unit, and entering the softly lighted tunnel which led to an underground room not far from the third Pyramid.

Tempestuous Tessie was located in the ruins of a mastaba, the tomb of one Lord Harakhte, a long forgotten noble, and its stone walls still bore traces of color where paintings had been. Just below the ceiling, at ground level, two modern windows had been installed, about six inches square, not likely to be noticed even if some tourist should wander so far from the conventional tour of the antiquities. One rock wall was covered with a slab of transparent neolucite, studded with numerous dials and rheostats, and the main buss bars were connected to power cables as thick as a man's arm. The opposite wall was overlaid with a complex of circuit diagrams, in engineer's shorthand.

In the center of the room stood Tempestuous Tessie, a plastic chair

standing in a cube made of the intricate intermeshing of steel and aluminum ribbons.

By his sixth night of work, Peter felt himself ready for his little jump into the middle of next month. He had made his plans with his customary care, and nothing at all, he was certain, could go wrong. It would be as simple as ordering a drink at a bar, and getting it.

The schedule of the *Tycho* called for her to blast off at dawn, on Saturday, February 10. She would land on the moon some seven hours later, her crew of four would spend several days in observation, exploring the surface and recording data, and the rocket would return to its base the following Friday morning, February 16. This first trip was just a trial run, a pilot journey for future research.

After much careful calculation, Peter decided to set the machine to project him to that important Friday at around eleven o'clock in the morning. He would then take a desert taxi to the Moonport, and if he were lucky he might see with his own eyes the landing of the ship. If the *Tycho* arrived before he did, he had only to ask some passer-by the details of the landing, or to read about them in the daily paper.

The power supply of the machine would limit his stay in the future to four hours, and if at the end of that time, by three in the afternoon, the ship had not returned, he would know that some terrible accident had occurred, and that in all probability

the ship and its crew would never again reach Earth.

It was all very simple, he thought. Just an hour's glimpse of the future, and he would be able to order his entire life as a sensible man likes to do.

He glanced at his wrist watch. A few minutes before eleven. He checked the settings on the dials. All correct.

He settled back into the chair, closed his eyes, and closed the switch.

HE felt slightly dizzy when he opened his eyes, but as he stepped from the cage a current of cold air from the surface helped to revive him. His watch read just eleven. Quickly he climbed up the narrow ramp, the once secret entrance left centuries ago by the mastaba's builders, and emerged into the desert daylight. Walking quickly down the slope toward the Pyramids, he pushed through the stream of tourists until he reached the crowd of dragomans, waiting near the entrance of the Great Pyramid.

A white-bearded patriarch with cane in hand and ingratiating smile on his face approached him.

"Want a nice camel ride, mister?"

"No, no," said Peter, glancing impatiently at the sky. "Can you tell me if the ship has come back from the moon, yet?"

"Very nice camel, mister. His name is George Washington. He rides easy."

Peter shook off the restraining hand. "No, I want a desert taxi to take me over to the Moonport. I want

to see the ship when it comes in."

"Too late, mister," said the dragoon. "Ship came in yesterday. You better stop worrying about the moon, and take nice camel ride instead."

"What!" shouted Peter. "Are you sure it came in yesterday?"

"I'm sure, okay. Yesterday no business here. No tourists. Nobody wanted camel rides, everybody watching the ship come back from the moon. Business is very bad, mister. I have many children; and they don't have enough to eat. Give me ten piasters for my family."

"Blast your family," said Peter. "I want to know about the ship. Why did she come back yesterday?"

"Something wrong. Where were you yesterday, not to hear? People all talked about it."

"Never mind where I was yesterday. What went wrong?"

"How should I know? I'm only a poor old man, with many hungry children."

"Did everybody get back safe?"

"God, he knows," said the old man, "but people say that 'wo of the men, Americans, like you, were carried out of the ship on stretchers. And they say that the American government will send the bodies back to America. But only God knows."

Peter was stunned. His heart beat furiously, and he could scarcely form words with his trembling lips.

"Which ones were they?" he gasped. "Who were the men?"

The Arab shrugged his shoulders. "God, he knows," he said. "Why didn't you read about it in the news-

papers, or hear it over the radio? I know only that my family went hungry last night."

Digging into his pocket, Peter pulled out a ten-piaster piece and flung it at the outstretched hand. "Here's for your family. Now let me go."

He ran past the row of kneeling camels and paused at the door of a taxi which was just taking in a group of travelling Britons.

"Driver!" he said. "Where's the nearest place to buy a paper?"

The driver scratched his head. "Don't you have a radio? Not many papers, any more. Have to go to Groppi's or Shepheard's, maybe."

"We're in a hurry, driver," said the tourist, with a curt stare at Peter.

Turning his back, Peter ran down the steep road that curved to Mena House, dashed through the garden, disturbing a flock of hungry sparrows, and into the lobby where he was met by a brightly dressed doorman.

"Where's your phone? Quickly!"

He gave the number of Carl Johansson's house in Maadi, and waited tensely, listening to the repeated ringing. All I have to do, he thought, is just to ask Carl which ones got back safely.

Then he banged home the receiver as though it had become a hissing snake, and sweat broke out on his forehead, as the doorman watched him curiously.

I can't do that, thought Peter. Good heavens, I can't do that! Maybe Carl was one of those killed. And what would his wife think of me,

asking an insane, heartless question like that?

Tossing a coin to the doorman, he walked slowly out into the brilliant sunshine. In front of the hotel stood several taxis, and like a man in a dream Peter opened the door of one, crawled in, and settled down on the dilapidated springs of the back seat. No, telephoning Carl's house was too risky. The best thing to do, he decided, would be to go over to Jim Dutton's—the Institute would surely be closed today, out of respect for the victims—and find out why the ship had returned a day early, and which two of the crew had been killed.

"Take me to Maadi."

With a clash of gears, the old-fashioned taxi-cab, vintage 1970, zoomed down the Pyramids road, snaking in and out of the traffic, blowing its horn constantly as it dodged camels and grazed the skirts of yelling little boys. They had gone only a few blocks when Peter jerked forward and shouted at the driver.

"Stop! Stop right here!"

Brakes screeched, and the car lurched to a stop, nearly knocking over a cart loaded with sugar cane. Peter turned around.

"What's the matter, sir? This is not Maadi."

"I know it, I know it," said Peter. "Just keep quiet and let me think a minute."

The blue-beaded bangle, a charm against the Evil Eye, vibrated against the rear-vision mirror, swinging rhythmically in the light breeze.

The regular motion half hypnotized Peter as he watched it, and tried to arrange his thoughts.

I can't possibly go to Jim Dutton's house, he thought. I am an utter fool. What if I was one of the men killed? And if I roll up at his front door he'll think I'm a ghost. Or, if I wasn't killed, I might be anywhere at this moment, maybe even sitting in his living room! It would be terrible if there were two of me seen wandering around Cairo.

Or was it possible, his dazed mind wondered, to have two of him going about at the same time? He wished now that he had not skipped that course in the philosophy of time travel, in his senior year. He wished he knew the official verdict on the paradoxes involved. It would make his mind a lot easier now—or would it? He was overwhelmed with a sudden conviction that it was impossible for any one man to be in two places at the same time. Doesn't the fact that I am here and alive, now, he wondered, prove that I was one of those killed on the trip to the moon?

He became conscious of a headache, an intense, throbbing, persistent ache, from nape of neck to forehead, which made clear thinking impossible, and the very effort to think was torture.

"Where to, sir?" said the driver.

With a supreme effort Peter disciplined his thoughts. I've got to keep out of sight, he reflected. Luckily, I don't know so very many people in Cairo, as yet, but I mustn't let myself run into anybody who knows me.

He glanced at his watch. It was nearly noon, now, and it was not likely that anybody would be in town at this hour, when the sun was at its hottest. The best thing to do was to buy a newspaper.

"Where to, sir?" asked the driver again.

"Take me into town. Isn't there a newsstand right across the street from Shepheard's? Take me there. I want to buy a paper."

"Okay," said the driver, as he started the car rolling. "What's the matter with your radio?"

"Haven't got one."

The driver made a clicking sound with his tongue. "Too bad. Papers aren't so easy to get, these days."

"What do you mean?"

"It's this modern world, with the U.N. settling this research thing here, and all. Nowadays everybody has a radiophone and television, and with news service automatically piped in to every house, there's only a few, what they call conservatives, that like to read the morning paper at breakfast time. When I was a kid, I remember I used to run errands for the bawab, the doorman, at one of the big apartment houses, and I remember I used to lug in at least a dozen different newspapers every morning. You had your pick of maybe three in Arabic, one in Italian, a couple in French, and an English paper, and so on. You could buy one either morning or evening. The way things are now, people don't need them, and there's only two that still come out, one in Arabic and one in

English."

Peter tensed. "Morning or evening?"

"Both morning."

Peter sighed, and relaxed. As they paused for a few minutes to let a flock of fat-tailed sheep cross the street, he had a sudden idea.

"Maybe you can tell me what I want to know, driver. I understand the ship got back from the moon, yesterday."

"That's what they say."

"And I heard two of the men were dead when the ship arrived. Is that right?"

"That's what they say."

"What were their names, can you tell me?"

The driver hunched his shoulders. "American names. I never can remember American names, mister, that's why I call everybody 'sir,' even my old customers. All those names sound alike to me."

Peter gave up, and sat back until the taxi pulled up across the street from Shepheard's. He paid off the driver and walked over to the news kiosk.

"*Egyptian Gazette*," he said.

"Last one we got."

MOVING to one side, he hastily searched the columns of the paper. There were only four pages, and it was not until he reached the inner columns of the third page that he came on any reference to the rocket ship. There he found the small heading, **YESTERDAY'S TRAGEDY.**

"The sad journey of the *Tycho*, detailed in yesterday's paper," he read, "has grieved the entire community. The King and his Ministers have sent their official condolences to the American Government, and to the U.N. Hyperphysics Institute. Private memorial services for the two unfortunate victims will be held at the America Embassy this morning at eleven."

That was all.

Why had the crew had the diabolical idea of returning a day ahead of schedule, he wondered savagely? The shift in timing had demolished all his careful preparation, and made it impossible for him to find out what he had hoped to find. Yesterday's news was dead. The tempo of modern living had come to mean that an event that happened yesterday was almost as remote from public interest as an event of a hundred years ago.

He crumpled the paper and threw it into the street, then turned back to the newsstand.

"I'd like to buy a copy of yesterday's paper."

The boy in charge looked bewildered. "Yesterday, all gone. Today, there," and he pointed to the crumpled paper lying on the pavement.

"Yes, yes, I know, but I'm through with today, and it just happens that I want to see a copy of yesterday's paper. Haven't you got one, tucked under the counter there?"

The boy shook his head, but a calculating look had come into his sharp black eyes.

"You want yesterday's paper?"

"That's right."

"You pay?"

"That's right."

"Okay, I go get you a copy."

"Where can you get it?"

The boy pointed, vaguely. "Over at the office, where they publish it. Over in Kasr el Nil. Be back in five minutes."

Peter hesitated. Should he go himself, he wondered? He glanced at his watch. Twelve-thirty. Only two hours and a half left to him. He was tired, and hungry, and particularly he was thirsty, from wandering about under the baking noon-day sun.

Across the street the shadowed entrance to Shepheard's interior loomed enticingly. Inside, he knew, was the cool quietness of the bar.

"All right," he said, handing over a ten piaster coin. "Go get me a copy of yesterday's paper, and if I'm not here when you get back, wait for me. How long did you say it would take you?"

"Maybe five minutes, mister," said the boy, with a happy grin. Deftly he lowered the protecting metal shield over his meager supply of papers, locked it with a padlock, and ran down the street.

Progress at last! thought Peter, as he dodged across the street, his ears battered by the bedlam of the honking cars, yelling pedestrians, and vociferous camels. He climbed the few steps to the stone veranda of the hotel, and walked toward the shaded arch of the door. Then he stopped, and turned his back.

Standing in the doorway, a sad-

dened look on his face, stood Jim Dutton, talking with a U.N. official. Peter side-stepped to shelter himself behind a potted palm, and cautiously peered through the leaves. Were they going or coming? Jim had been to the memorial services at the Embassy, he supposed, and had come here for a bracer before going home. The question was, was he leaving now, or was he just on his way to the bar? Standing in the doorway there, talking, he was as effective a barrier as a whole regiment of soldiers.

As the time dragged on, Peter glanced for the hundredth time at his watch. No minutes had ever seemed so long to him. If Jim didn't leave soon, the prospect of a drink would vanish.

Another few minutes of talk, and Jim Dutton and the U.N. official turned, and entered the hotel. They had been arriving, not leaving.

With a sigh of resignation, Peter turned and walked down the steps, and crossed to the newsstand.

No boy. The traffic clattered by. A ragged urchin tugged at his sleeve.

"Buy a chance on the sweepstakes, mister?"

"I never take chances," Peter snapped.

An old man shuffled up, looked around furtively, and offered from the shadow of his flowing sleeve some "very special" postcards. Peter shook his head.

A dragoman in pale green silk offered to guide him to the Bazaars, and Peter turned his back. But all three remained, trying to persuade

him to change his mind, until he snarled at them with a vicious "*Im-shi!*" and they scattered.

He had waited nearly half an hour and was glaring at his watch when the dragoman sauntered by again, a smirk on his cynical face.

"Are you waiting for somebody, sir?"

"Yes. I'm waiting for the boy that runs this newsstand. I sent him to buy me a copy of yesterday's paper."

"You gave him money?"

"Certainly."

The dragoman pursed his lips. "No need to wait, sir. That boy won't come back today." And he strolled on, twirling his bamboo cane.

He was right. The boy didn't come back.

At a quarter past one, Peter hailed a passing taxi.

"Sharia Kasr el Nil," he said. "*Egyptian Gazette.*"

Five minutes later he was clattering up the wooden stairs of an old building, and on the second floor he faced a door labelled *Egyptian Gazette*. The door was closed.

He knocked, but nothing happened. He rattled the door knob, but the door was firmly locked. No sound came from inside.

He shouted. "Hello! Anybody here?"

Presently a bent old man hobbled down the hall, peering at him with half blind eyes.

"Nobody home," he said.

"But I want to get into this office, to see the editor."

"Nobody home."

"Where are they?"

The old man broke into a flood of Arabic which left Peter's head swimming. He cut in to the meaningless volubility.

"Don't you speak English?"

"La! Nobody home."

"And I thought everybody in Cairo could speak English! Where's the editor? Where's the printers? Where is everybody?"

The door of the adjoining office opened and an amiable, swarthy face peered out. "I'm Italian myself, old boy, but I can speak English. Editor's gone to Alex for the week-end. The help are all at church."

"What do you mean?"

"Don't you realize this is Friday, old boy? All the help are Mohammedans, and this is their holy day. Like Sunday, old boy. Come back tomorrow. Where have you been living? You ought to know you can't do business on a Friday." With a beaming smile, he slammed his door.

"But all I wanted," Peter shouted desperately, "was to buy a copy of yesterday's paper!"

The door swung open, and the affable Italian looked out. "But nobody keeps yesterday's paper. The day is gone, isn't it?"

"Haven't *you* got a copy, lying around your office?"

"Wouldn't have it cluttering up the place. My servant takes them out and sells them, as soon as I've finished."

"But where does he sell them?"

"Not my business. Maybe to dealers in old newsprint. Maybe some-

where else. You've heard of the world paper shortage, old boy? Where he sells them? Never asked him."

The door slammed shut again, and Peter slouched down the stairs.

WALKING along the street, he was without ideas, without hope, almost without conscious volition. He found himself standing, finally, beside a Bar and Restaurant, and wearily he climbed the stairs to the open-air veranda, where he sank down in a spindly chair at a marble-topped table.

"Beer, sir?"

"A dark Tuborg," he ordered. He wondered if he shouldn't give up his project and go back to his own time. He was probably dead anyway, he thought hazily, and it was ridiculous to be wearing himself out this way, for a reason which was no longer sensible. It was a good thing he hadn't let Ruth tie herself down to such an incompetent, muddle-headed, unlucky, accident-prone kind of a man.

He was startled back to sanity by hearing, from the table behind him, the word "moon." He switched his chair around to look at the speaker.

At the table were a boy of about nineteen, and a girl a year or so younger, obviously American, and obviously smitten by each other. The boy was drinking beer while the girl sipped lemonade and nibbled at the salted pistachio nuts in the dish before her. They were holding hands under the table, and exchanging intimate remarks.

It's a shame to interrupt them,

thought Peter, but if I heard what I thought I heard— He coughed, and the boy looked up.

"Excuse me," he said. "but you seem to be fellow Americans."

"That's right, we are," said the boy. "We're on a tour. We left our ship at Suez, and we're joining her tomorrow at Alexandria. I know it's a slow way to travel, but you do get to see things."

"Isn't Egypt wonderful?" said the girl.

"I'd like to ask you something." Peter shifted uncomfortably in his chair. "Did I hear one of you mention the moon? Were you talking about that ship that got back yesterday?"

The girl lowered her eyes, and the boy turned red.

"I don't think so."

"But I distinctly heard one of you use the word 'moon.'"

"That was me," said the girl, shyly, "but it didn't have anything to do with that ship. I just told Jerry, here, that I bet he'd even be jealous of the man in the moon. But it was too bad about the men on that ship, wasn't it?"

Peter leaned forward. "Yes, indeed. A terrible tragedy. But due to—that is, due to the pressure of events, I haven't been able to learn quite all the details. Perhaps you can supply them. I understand that two of the crew were killed on the trip. Is that correct?"

"That's what we heard on the radio."

"Do you remember who they

were?"

The boy frowned. "I remember one name, in a vague way, because a fellow in my class had the same name. Somebody named Danforth, I think."

Bill Danforth! Peter sighed. Happy-go-lucky Bill, who was always willing to take his chances.

But he could not waste time now in grieving.

"And the name of the other one?"

"I can't tell you exactly," said the girl, with a soft giggle. "Everybody always says I have the weakest memory! But I do remember it was somebody named Peter."

"Peter *what*?"

"I don't remember. But I do remember laughing, and mentioning it to Jerry, here, because there were two men on the ship both named Peter, and their last names sounded so much alike, and it seemed so silly, and I remember asking Jerry, here, how their wives ever told them apart. Why, is it important? Does it matter?"

"No," said Peter wearily. "It doesn't matter. Nothing matters. Nothing at all."

He could feel their eyes staring at his back as he left his beer unfinished, and walked down the stairs.

HE stood at the street entrance, in despair. Three hours gone, and nothing accomplished. Could he visit a library? But the Egyptian libraries, even if they carried the English paper, would be closed today, since it was Friday. There was a library at

the American Embassy, but he did not dare go there, for he might run into somebody who knew him. Wasn't there any way in the world an intelligent man could solve such a simple problem as finding a copy of yesterday's paper—short of waiting until yesterday arrived?

A brown-faced urchin with a wooden box on his shoulder accosted him.

"Shine your shoes, mister?"

"Shoes don't matter," said Peter absently.

"I give good shoe shine."

"Shoes are not important." On sudden impulse he asked, "You don't happen to know, I suppose, where I can buy a copy of yesterday's paper?"

"Okay, mister," said the boy.

His heart pounding with a wild hope, Peter stooped and clutched the boy's shoulder. "You mean you know where to get one? A copy of *yesterday's* paper, mind!"

The boy looked alarmed, and tried to pull away. "Okay, mister!"

"Don't be afraid, just show me where the place is, right away!"

But the boy pulled away, with dilated eyes, and almost crying, he bleated out, "Okay, mister! I give good shoe shine."

Peter let go and the boy raced down the street. Shoulders slumped, Peter walked on slowly. But he had taken only a few steps when a heavy body lurched into him from behind, and he whirled to look into the beaming face and slightly unfocused eyes of a jovial American sailor.

"Sorry, buddy," said the sailor,

"but these Egyptian sidewalks ain't very steady. Pretty uncertain country, this is."

"How right you are," said Peter, and started to walk away. But the sailor looked sympathetic and stopped him with a sunburned hand poked towards his chest.

"Put'er there, mister. You look like you'd lost your last friend. But I'll be your friend. What makes you look so down-cast? Did somebody die?"

"Yes, somebody died," said Peter.

"Who died?"

"I don't know. I've been trying this whole blessed day to get hold of a copy of yesterday's paper, so I could find out."

"Tough luck," said the sailor. "But I don't see why you want to read the paper if it prints bad news like that. Why don't you just ignore the whole thing?"

He began to laugh, and grabbed Peter's arm. "Say, that's good, isn't it? Just ignore the whole thing! Just like the story my uncle used to tell. You wanna hear this. When my uncle was a boy he lived on a farm, and there was this cat, see—"

Peter pulled away and walked on rapidly, but when he reached the corner and was looking for a cab, he felt his shoulder grabbed again, and there was the sailor, still laughing.

"You shouldn't walk so fast on these unreliable sidewalks," he said. "It's hard for me to keep up with you. Well, this story my uncle used to tell, see, when he was a boy he lived on a farm, and they had this

cat, and this cat she—”

“Taxi!”

A taxi screeched to a stop and Peter jumped in and slammed the door. The sailor peered through the dusty window, a hurt expression on his face.

“Still worrying about that paper, mister? You’d feel better if you’d let me tell you about my uncle and this cat—”

The acceleration of the car shook him off, and Peter glanced around to see him still standing there on the corner, looking puzzled and forlorn.

IT was half past two as the taxi bumped back along the Pyramids road. Peter sagged against the lumpy upholstery in utter defeat. The strains and tensions of the last three and a half hours had been so great that he could scarcely remember the original purpose of this wild journey into time. He could hardly have stated why he came, and what he hoped to gain. None of his reasons seemed to make any sense. He was conscious mainly of being unutterably tired, and of being very hungry.

He could not remember having been so hungry since he was a small boy. How many hours had he been without food, he wondered? A minute? Four hours? Sixteen hours? Or two weeks? But the philosophical complications of travelling into the future were too intricate for his dulled mind, and he thought only, that it would be nice to have a sandwich.

Ahead of them on the road he saw a neon sign, *Pyramids Grill*. It was a down-at-the-heels place, which he

would never have chosen if he had had more time, but it was handy.

“Stop here,” he ordered the driver. “I’m hungry and tired. I’ll just sit here. You go inside and get me a cheese sandwich.”

In less than five minutes he had a crudely wrapped sandwich in his hand, and was rolling on toward the Pyramids, but by now he lacked the energy even to eat.

Pulled up once more in front of the Great Pyramid, he paid off his driver, waved away the guides, and trudged on through the sand.

An Arab came running after him. “Tell your fortune, sir?”

Peter shook his head, and kept on walking. He’d had enough of trying to look into the future. Up the slopes and onto the firmer stony ground and at last the wonderfully desirable ditch which led down into the stone room where Tempestuous Tessie waited.

It was five minutes to three when he sank down onto the chair and closed the steel cradle. His uneaten sandwich lying limply in one hand, he leaned back, closed his eyes, and waited for the shift in time.

WHEN Peter Harrison opened his eyes in his own time segment, it was still eleven o’clock of the night he had left. He re-arranged the apparatus as it should be, plodded through the long tunnel back to the room called Temporal Research. There he pulled up a chair, laid his head on the desk, and slept.

It was dawn when he awoke. A

sudden spasm of fear lest he be found in the laboratory sent him hurrying into the corridor, down the escalator, and out of the building, where he exhibited his identification to the incurious soldier on guard.

As he walked across the desert toward the line of Institute jeeps, one of which would take him to his room at the Semiramis, he remembered his sandwich.

He tore off a piece of the paper so he could bite into the exposed corner of the sandwich, but kept the rest in place to protect the bread from his sweaty, dirty hand, and began munching on the bread and cheese, peeling back the wrapping as he ate.

As he walked, he thought. His trip had accomplished nothing that he had hoped for. He still knew, no more than the rest of the crew, what his individual fate would be. He did know, of course, that the ship would return—but the other men had never doubted it. What were his chances of coming back alive?

The return of the ship was a hundred per cent certain. And he had added to his knowledge the fact that two of the crew would be killed, and two would survive. He had learned, furthermore, that one Peter had lived, and one Peter had died. But which one? Had that information really helped him any? His individual chances were still exactly what they had been in the first place—fifty-fifty.

Bill Danforth had always laughed at him for being a conservative. Ruth had teased him ever since he had

known her as being a man who wouldn't take a chance, a man who had to be sure. But he had always thought of himself just as a sensible man who tried to play safe.

For the first time in his life, it occurred to him now that there are times when a man is a fool to play safe. While you're alive, he thought, you have to take chances. Even when you can go into the future, you can't always find out what the safe thing is to do. He was tired of being cautious. If you were always cautious, look at the fun you'd miss!

The sun was rising in the east, and the long black shadows of the Pyramids stretched out across the desert sands. Peter straightened his shoulders, and took another bite of his sandwich.

Well, he thought, I've made up my mind. After today, nobody will have any grounds for calling me a coward, or kidding me for betting only on a sure thing.

He lifted his sandwich. He stared at it in the growing light, and his skin prickled. The paper by which he held the bread was a piece of torn newsprint, with English words on it. He dropped the bread to the ground and stared greedily at the mutilated column of print. Yes, it was a piece of yesterday's paper, a part of the story about the landing of the *Tycho*.

Frantically he read the fragment, searching for names.

The piece he held said:

(Cont. from page 1)

Among the survivors were:

Col. Carl Johansson, o
Hyperphysics Insti
and Col. Peter Har
distinguished graduat

That was all.

With a yell of rage he dashed the paper to the ground, ripped it to pieces with his boots, and stamped the fragments into the sand.

Behind him he heard a shrill call, and turned his head briefly to see the distant figure of a white-gowned Arab running after him.

"Ya Pasha! Ya Pasha!" he called, waving a long arm.

Doesn't Abdou ever sleep? thought Peter angrily. I wish he'd leave me alone.

"You dropped a piece of paper!" called Abdou. "Here is the piece you dropped!"

Peter stopped dead. That corner of paper he had torn off, when he took his first bite of the sandwich! That must be the missing fragment which held the final letters of the incomplete name.

Did the black type read "rison?" Or "riman?"

Then he shrugged his shoulders. What does it matter? he muttered to himself. Only a fool demands certainty in this world. And even if he read the paper, the chances would still be fifty-fifty that the editor had gotten the names twisted, just as everybody else did. Even if it read "rison" he couldn't be sure that was right!

He turned his back on Abdou, and strode on toward the waiting jeep.

He crawled into the seat, woke the sleepy driver, and in a voice of authority gave his order.

"Take me to the American Embassy."

The driver stretched, and tried to smooth his rumped hair. He yawned.

"But they won't be awake at the Embassy yet, sir. It isn't six, yet."

"Never mind that," said Peter. "Take me to the Embassy. I'm going to make arrangements for a wedding!"

THE END