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CONTENTS FOR APRIL, 1939

Number 4

Cover Design	Virgil Finlay	
<i>Illustrating a scene in "Susette"</i>		
The Red God Laughed	Thorp McClusky	5
<i>A strange tale about the end of human life on Earth</i>		
Trinities	Edgar Daniel Kramer	10
<i>Verse</i>		
"Their eyes upturned and begged and burned"	Virgil Finlay	11
<i>Pictorial interpretation of a poem by Sidney Lanier</i>		
Susette	Seabury Quinn	12
<i>An intriguing weird tale of the French Revolution</i>		
Hellsgarde	C. L. Moore	37
<i>Dead men guarded the treasure in Hellsgarde Castle—a tale of Jirel of Joiry</i>		
Armies from the Past	Edmond Hamilton	61
<i>An exciting story of time-travel and a world enslaved</i>		
The Red Swimmer	Robert Bloch	83
<i>Piracy on the Spanish Main—red arms that reached out of the sea</i>		
In an Old Street	Vincent Starrett	97
<i>Verse</i>		
Hydra	Henry Kuttner	98
<i>A ghastly horror reached back from another dimension of space</i>		
Fearful Rock (End)	Manly Wade Wellman	110
<i>An eerie novel of evil powers and the War between the States</i>		
The High Places	Frances Garfield	123
<i>A ghost story of aviation</i>		
Mommy	Mary Elizabeth Counselman	128
<i>A very human weird tale about a little girl in an orphanage</i>		
Will-o'-the-Wisp	Charles Sloan Reid	134
<i>Verse</i>		
The Wicked Clergyman	H. P. Lovecraft	135
<i>A brief posthumous tale by a great master of eerie fiction</i>		
Special News Bulletin	Vincent Gaddis	138
<i>A short weird tale of radio and a passenger air-liner</i>		
Weird Story Reprint:		
The Curse of Yig	Z. B. Bishop	140
<i>A grim story of the rattlesnake-god of the Indians</i>		
The Eyrie		153
<i>Readers' department</i>		

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FARNSWORTH WRIGHT, Editor.

173

WEIRD TALES ISSUED 1st OF EACH MONTH

Special News Bulletin

By VINCENT GADDIS

A short weird tale of radio and a passenger air-liner

DOCTOR EDWARD CRANDON stepped from the taxi. Lightning flashed. A gust of rain swept through the night.

"To Chicago, sir?"

"Yes." The doctor surrendered his suitcase to the airport attendant. The huge ship loomed into view. Its motors were roaring. The hangar lights were dim eyes in the mist, but the cabin windows gleamed cheerfully.

"Bad night, sir."

"It certainly is!"

The attendant handed the suitcase to the smiling hostess. Doctor Crandon stepped aboard and followed the hostess to his seat. A bad night. His first trip in the air. But the convention was only a few hours away, and his nervousness would vanish.

He settled back against the cushions and glanced at the other passengers: a middle-aged man reading a newspaper—a laughing couple, talking softly—a lady, rather old, wiping her eyes—a young man writing on the back of an envelope—a girl using her compact.

The lights flashed out. The ship moved. Drops of water struck the window-pane, forming miniature rivers. Doctor Crandon pulled the blind down. They were in the air.

The plane lurched wildly. A sinking sensation, an instant of animal fear and panic, and then the plane was again roaring steadily through the night. The lights flashed on. Doctor Crandon smiled. Air-pocket.

The hostess appeared, smiling at the passengers. She calmed the old lady, adjusted a pillow, brought a glass of water to the middle-aged man. Doctor Crandon glanced at his watch. Eight-thirty. Time for the news broadcast. As if reading his thoughts, the hostess stopped at his seat.

"Would you care to listen to the radio, sir? There's a small set at each seat with earphones attached instead of a loudspeaker."

"Thank you. I believe I will." Doctor Crandon slipped the phones over his head, and the hostess passed on. He spun the dial. A voice.

"At this time we bring you the news dispatches received over our special leased wires."

"Right on time," the doctor murmured.

The voice continued: "The *Hindenburg*, famous German dirigible, crashed in flames at Lakehurst, New Jersey, late today. The great ship, while attempting to land, and only several hundred feet in the air——"

Doctor Crandon sat upright, his face frowning. Strange! The *Hindenburg* had crashed months ago. He remembered listening to these very words the night of the tragedy. Perhaps the news report was being repeated for some reason. He moved the dial. Lightning flashed. Thunder echoed through the cabin. Static—the soft, haunting murmur of an orchestra—another voice.

"We interrupt this program to bring

you a special news bulletin. The Japanese forces have seized control of Shanghai. All foreigners have been warned——” The voice faded. Shanghai had been taken the night Kellar, his heart-disease patient, died. Weeks ago.

Suddenly Doctor Crandon recalled reading a scientific theory. Every sound that has ever been made is still vibrating in the ether. Every radio program is still in existence in space. The noises of long-dead history might some day be captured. Could it be possible that, due to electrical and magnetic conditions caused by the storm, the radio was picking up broadcasts made weeks before?

THE doctor's attention returned to the radio as a strange hum struck his ears. The hum faded into music— weird music, unlike anything he had ever heard. The music stopped. Clear, penetrating, came an announcement:

“Special news flash. The United States of Europe has declared war on the Federation of South American States. President Mary Dixon, in an official statement, has announced that refusal to grant trade——”

Static. Again the sky flamed with brilliant light. A woman's voice.

“Increased meteoric interference may cause officials to stop all space traffic between Mars and Venus. The solar system will move out of the danger zone within two weeks. The Scenic Spaceways Company tonight canceled all week-end trips to planets beyond Mars and——”

The future? Doctor Crandon was listening to broadcasts that were yet to be made! Time—the fourth dimension. Time—extending into space like length and breadth. The events of the future really existed somewhere, and

due to some freakish law of nature, some unknown condition of cosmic forces in the air, it was possible for him to tune in on tomorrow. His discovery would rock the scientific world.

He glanced at the passengers. Were any of them using their radios? The old lady was staring into space—the couple were still talking—the middle-aged man was sleeping—the young man was reading a magazine—the girl was working on her fingernails. The secret was his—alone.

A cold paralysis gripped him. He was on the edge of the great unknown. He must listen. Stock market reports. Race results. The tide of wars. New discoveries. He could make millions, be a prophet, a great inventor. He slowly turned the dial, listened.

Suddenly the roaring motors died. A series of jolts. The plane was landing. So soon? Doctor Crandon looked at his watch. Eight-thirty. The hostess appeared, smiling. The passengers arose and prepared to leave.

It was dark outside. Doctor Crandon reached for the blind, but the hostess caught his arm.

“Wait,” she said.

Still smiling, she opened the top of the radio, turned something inside, jerked a wire. A voice boomed into the earphones. Doctor Crandon stiffened as he listened to the words:

“Special news bulletin. The 8.15 New York-Chicago airliner crashed tonight shortly after leaving the airport. Seven passengers, two pilots, and a hostess were on board. All were killed instantly. Among the passengers was Doctor Edward Crandon, famous specialist. He was on his way to attend the Chicago Medical Convention——”

Doctor Crandon jerked the phones from his head and followed the other passengers to the door.