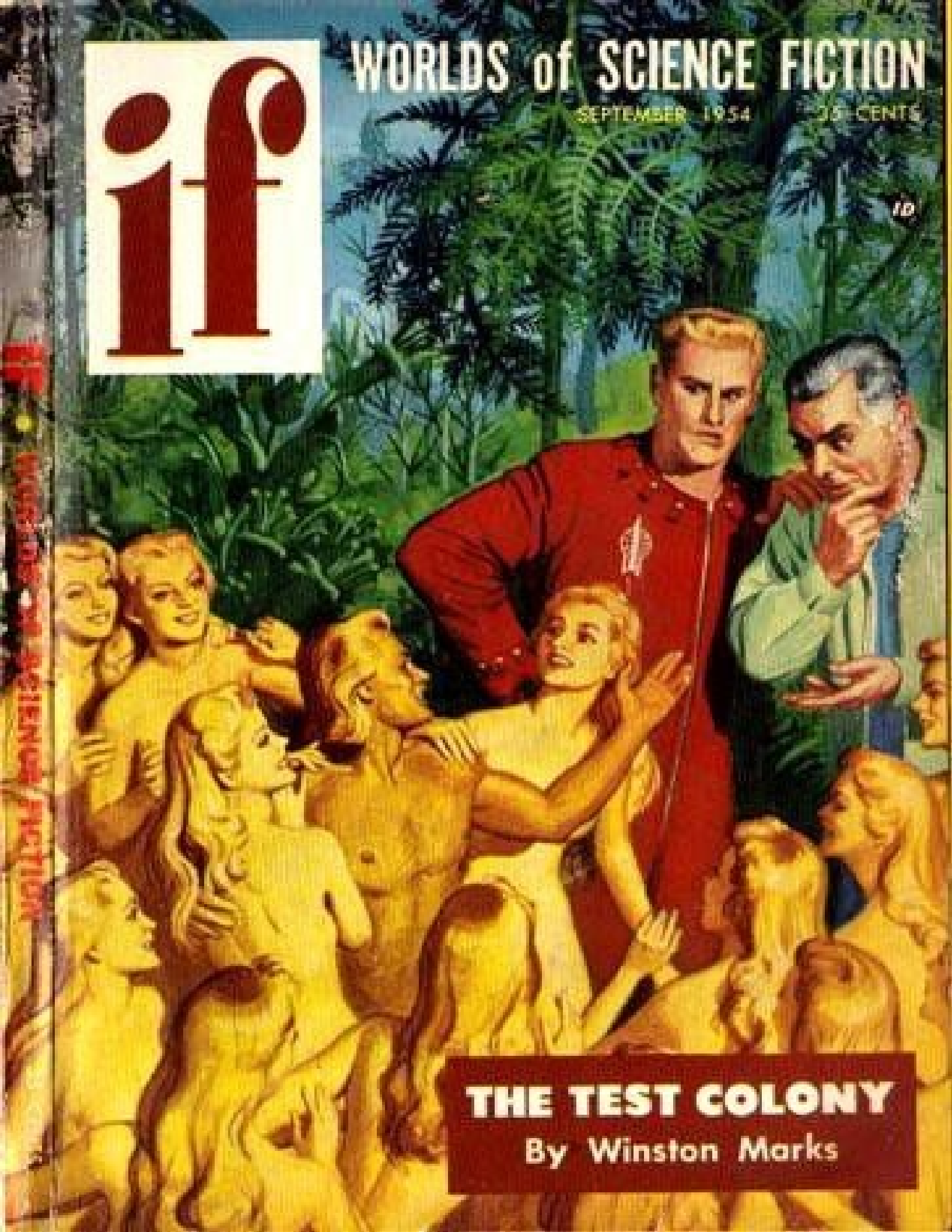
if
WORLDS of SCIENCE FICTION
SEPTEMBER 1954
35 CENTS
10¢
THE TEST COLONY
By Winston Marks

The Project Gutenberg EBook of The Test Colony, by Winston Marks

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with
almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or
re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included
with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.net

Title: The Test Colony

Author: Winston Marks

Illustrator: Kelly Freas

Release Date: June 3, 2010 [EBook #32676]

Language: English

*** START OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE TEST COLONY ***

Produced by Greg Weeks, Mary Meehan and the Online
Distributed Proofreading Team at http://www.pgdp.net

THE TEST COLONY

BY WINSTON MARKS

Illustrated by Kelly Freas

[Transcriber Note: This etext was produced from If Worlds of Science Fiction September 1954. Extensive research did not uncover any evidence that the U.S. copyright on this publication was renewed.]

Benson did his best to keep his colony from going native, but what can you do when the Natives have a rare human intelligence and know all about the facts of life?

It was the afternoon of our arrival. Our fellow members of the "test colony" were back in the clearing at the edge of the lake, getting their ground-legs and drinking in the sweet, clean air of Sirius XXII. I was strolling along the strip of sandy beach with Phillip Benson, leader of our group, sniffing the spicy perfume of the forest that crowded within twenty feet of the water's edge.

Half a billion miles overhead, Sirius shone with an artificially white glow. Somewhere on the horizon, Earth lay, an invisible, remote speck of dust we had forsaken 24 dreary, claustrophobic months ago.

The trip had taken its toll from all of us, even tough-minded Phil Benson. We both found it difficult to relax and enjoy the invigorating, oxygen-rich air and the balmy climate. As official recorder, I was trying to think of words suitable to capture the magnificence, the sheer loveliness of the planet which would be our home for at least four years, perhaps forever.

Each absorbed in his own thoughts, Benson and I were some 500 yards from the clearing when he stopped me with a hand on my arm. "Who is that?" he demanded.

Up the beach where he pointed, two naked forms emerged from the calm waters. They skipped across the sand and began rolling together playfully in the soft grasses at the forest's edge. Even at this distance they were visibly male and female.

"I can't make them out," I said. My only thought was that one of the young couples had swum down ahead of us and was enjoying the first privacy attainable in two years.

Benson's eyes were sharper. "Sam, they—they look like—"

Our voices must have reached them, for they sprang apart and rose to their feet facing us.

"Like youngsters," I supplied.

"We have no kids with us," Benson reminded me. He began to move forward, slowly, as though stalking a wild animal.

"Wait, Phil," I said. "The planet is uninhabited. They can't be—"

He continued shuffling ahead, and I followed. Within 20 paces I knew he was right. Whoever they were they hadn't come with us!

Benson stopped so quickly I bumped into him. "Look, Sam! Their hands and feet! Four digits and—no thumbs!"

I could now make out the details. The two forms were not quite human. The toes were long and prehensile. The fingers, too, were exceptionally long, appearing to have an extra joint, but as Benson mentioned, there was no opposing thumb.

They stood well apart now, the female seeking no protection from the male. Curiosity was written in their faces, and when we stopped advancing they began edging forward until they were only five yards away.

Their outlines, instead of becoming clearer, had fuzzed up more as they approached. Now it was evident that their bodies were lightly covered with a silky hair, some two or three inches long. It had already dried out in the warm sun and was standing out away from their skins like golden haloes.

They stood well under five feet tall, and in every detail, except the body hair and digits, appeared to be miniature adults, complete with navels.

Even in the midst of the shock of surprise, I was taken by their remarkable beauty. "They're true mammals!" I exclaimed.

"Without a doubt," Benson said, eyeing the full contours of the lithe little female. Her pink flesh tones were a full shade lighter than those of the male. Both had

well-spaced eyes under broad foreheads. Their fine features were drawn into fearless, half-quizzical, half-good-natured expressions of deep interest. They stood relaxed as if waiting for a parley to begin.

"This," said Benson, "is one hell of a note!"

They cocked their heads at the sound like robins. I said, "Why? They don't appear very vicious to me."

"Neither does man," Benson replied. "It's his brain that makes him deadly. Look at those skulls, the ear placement, the eyes and forehead. If I know my skull formations, I think man has met his intellectual equal at last—maybe, even, his superior."

"What makes you think they may have superior minds?" As a psychologist I felt Benson was jumping to a pretty quick conclusion.

"The atmosphere. Forty percent oxygen. Invariably, on other planets, that has meant higher metabolisms in the fauna. In a humanoid animal that strongly implies high mental as well as physical activity."

As if to prove his point, the two little creatures tired of the one-sided interview, bent slightly at the knees and leaped at a forty-five degree angle high into the tree branches. The female caught the first limb with her long fingers and swung out of sight into the foliage. The male hung by his long toes for a moment, regarding us with an inverted impish expression, then he, too, vanished.

I grunted with disappointment. Benson said, "Don't worry, they'll be back. Soon enough."

As we returned to the clearing Jane Benson and Susan, my wife, came to meet us. Although both brunettes rated high in feminine charms among the forty women of our group, somehow they appeared a little ungainly and uncommonly tall against my mental image of the little people we had just left. Their faces were pale from the long interment in the ship, and bright spots of sunburn on cheekbones and forehead gave them a clownish, made-up appearance.

"We've sorted and identified the fruits," Sue called to us. "The handbook is right. They're delicious! We've got a feast spread. Just wait until you—" She caught

our expressions. "What's wrong?"

Benson shrugged. "You girls go on ahead and get the crowd together. I have an important announcement to make." Jane pouted a little and hesitated, but Benson insisted. "Run along now, please. I want to gather my thoughts."

We trailed after them slowly. I didn't like Benson's moody reaction to our discovery of an intelligent life-form. To me it was exciting. What fabulous news I would have to send back with the first liaison ship to contact us four years hence! And it would be entirely unexpected, because the original exploration party had failed to make the discovery. That in itself was an intriguing mystery. How could twenty-two scientists, bent on a minute examination of a planet's flora and fauna, overlook the most fabulous creation of all—an animal virtually in men's image? The only guess I could make was that they must belong to a nomadic tribe small enough to escape discovery.

Benson broke silence as the narrow beach strip began to widen into the grassy plain where our ship squatted like a hemispherical cathedral. "This poses so many problems," he said shaking his head.

I said, "Phil, I think you're taking your job too seriously. You just can't plan every detail of organizing our community down to the rationing of tooth-powder."

"Planning never hurt any project," Benson said.

"I disagree," I told him. "You've had too long to dwell on your plans. Now the first unpredictable incident throws you into an uproar. Relax, Phil. Take your problems one at a time. We don't even know that we'll ever see the little creatures again. Maybe they're shy."

He scarcely heard me. He was a large, well-muscled man of 46 years, an ex-college president and an able administrator. He and Jane, his wife, were the only two of our party older than the 35-year age limit. His background as a sociologist and anthropologist and his greater maturity were important factors in stabilizing a new colony, but his point of view had grown excessively conservative, it seemed to me.

A crew of craftsmen with their busy little power saws had constructed a sloping ship's ramp of rough planks sawed from the nearest trees. We stepped through and over the assembled people who were lying around in the grass at the base of

the ramp, and Benson mounted twenty feet above us at the entrance to the ship.

Everyone was in high spirits, and a light cheer rippled through the assembly. Benson, however, ignored it and bent a thoroughly serious gaze out over his "flock".

"Please give me your closest attention," he began and waited until everyone was quiet. "Until further notice, we must proceed under a yellow alert during daylight hours and a red alert at night. All work parties leaving the ship will check with the scribe every hour on the hour. We will resume sleeping in the ship. Women are restricted to within 100 yards of the ship at all times. Men will go armed and will please inform themselves of their position on the security watch list which will be posted tonight." He squinted in the bright sunlight. "For the moment, you men with sidearms, post yourselves around the ship. Sound off loud if you sight anything larger than a rabbit."

The men named got slowly to their feet, fingering their light hunting pistols self-consciously. Benson continued, "You may appreciate these precautions when I tell you that Sam Rogers and I just encountered two remarkably humanoid animals on the beach less than half a mile from here."

Tension replaced levity, as Benson described our meeting with the natives. I thought he gave it a needlessly grim emphasis with such terms as, "*quicker than cats*", and "*devilishly intelligent*", but I held my peace.

He summarized, "I do not want to alarm anyone unduly, but we must face up to the fact that we are totally unprepared for such a contingency. The exploration group failed us badly in overlooking these creatures. They may not be inimical to our culture, but until this is established we must consider them prime threats. That is all," he concluded.

No one grumbled aloud, but their faces showed keen disappointment at the resumption of quartering in the ship. Reluctantly, the women began rolling up the still-deflated air-mattresses that were scattered about the soft, deep grass. Sue complained, "Sam, if these people don't get a little privacy pretty soon we'll turn into an ant colony. There'll be lovin' in the streets."

"It's not my idea," I said. "I'll be nailed to a table at the foot of the ramp all day making check marks. Phil is taking this entirely too big. The little people are really charming. He neglected to mention that they are beautifully formed and quite gentle in their—their actions."

"Actions?" she said. "What happened, really?"

I described the conditions under which we first saw the natives, and she laughed a little strainedly. "I can just imagine the look on Phil Benson's face."

I knew what she meant. In trying to enforce the shipboard rule of segregation of the sexes, our leader had developed an oversensitive attitude toward certain aspects of modesty. In the unutterable boredom of space, the pledge we had all taken to complete continence for the voyage was a severe test to all forty couples.

Had propriety and space considerations been the only reasons for the infamous "no-romance" regulation, it would never have held up. But all concerned realized the problem of childbirth in space under the jam-packed living conditions, tight water and food rationing and the fetid, recirculated air.

Now the second honeymoons were over before they started. It was back to the ship and the night-life of monks and nuns.

That night, Sue and I joined the four ship's officers, their wives, Phillip Benson and Jane in the navigation cupola atop our doomed ship that had become a "fortress". The small control room was the only semi-private room in the ship, and even Benson was admitted by invitation only. The meeting was a council of war, so to speak, and the officers were pressed into service to organize and operate the security guard.

When the guard watch was worked out for a week in advance, I spoke up. "I think we're getting off on the wrong foot, Phil. We can't stay penned up like animals at night and expect to function as humans."

Benson argued: "We are a carefully balanced group, Sam. We can't afford casualties. Look at our medical corps, two doctors and four nurses. Suppose we were attacked and lost them?"

Captain Spooner, whose authority had lapsed when we touched down, backed up Benson. "I see no great hardship in the precautions. Inconvenience, yes, but nothing that the danger doesn't fully justify."

He was a cocky, virile, bald-headed little terrier of 35 years. His very young wife and the wives of the other three officers seemed only lightly perturbed at the prospects of continuing celibacy, which confirmed my suspicions.

I said, "That's gritty of you, Captain, but remember, the rest of us haven't had the relative privacy of the bridge. If this restriction continues long I predict violations of the discipline, and probably some serious behaviour problems."

My position as colony psychologist had become somewhat obscured under the snowstorm of paperwork that my secondary job as official scribe had brought. Benson seemed now to recall that mental health *was* my concern. He said, "I thought you reported high morale upon arrival."

"I did, but the tensions are there, and it's foolish to draw them too tightly. We have a well-picked, highly adaptable group of people. Let's keep them that way. The quicker we hit a more normal existence the less risk we run of emotional disturbances."

"They'll take it," Benson said positively, and Spooner nodded in arrogant agreement.

My 20-hour wristwatch, geared to the shorter rotation of Sirius XXII, said nine o'clock, one hour before noon, when the women began undressing.

There had been an air of conspiracy among them all morning, a studied casualness as they wandered around near the ship, forming small conversational eddies, dispersing and reforming elsewhere. I had just finished checking in the 11-man fruit-gathering detail. I looked up from my roster in time to see the first motions of the "great disrobing". Zippers unzipped, snaps popped open, slacks, skirts, blouses and jumpers fell to the grass, and a dazzling spectacle of space-bleached feminine epidermis burst into view.

The ladies were very calm about it, but a chorus of yips sounded and swelled into a circus of cheers from the male working parties.

Before I could fathom it Benson came charging down the ramp followed by his fruit-stowing detail. He stopped at the foot of the ramp, mouth open and eyes pinched with annoyance.

He spotted Jane and Sue. "What is going on out here?" he demanded loudly.

Our two wives waved at us and strolled over, doing a splendid job of acting unconcerned. "Just a little sun-bathing," Jane said, shooing a small insect from a

pale shoulder.

Susan refused to meet my eye. She was watching two birds soar overhead. "It's fantastic," she said. "If you don't look at things too closely, you'd never know we weren't at a summer camp up in Wisconsin—except for the fruits. They remind me more of Tahiti. It's marvelous! The mosquitoes don't even bite."

"They will," I said, "as soon as they get a good taste of human blood. And baby, you're sure making it easy for them."

Benson was distracted from the conversation by the converging male colonists, who were whooping and yelling like a horde of school boys. He backed up the ramp and ordered, "Let's get on with the work. You've seen your wives in the altogether before."

The men quieted a little, but one yelled, "Yeah, but not lately!"

Another added, "And not *all together*."

In spite of the fact that nude sun-bathing was a commonplace, twenty-second-century custom on Earth, by tacit consent clothes had been worn at all times aboard ship. The women had gone along with Benson for two years on such matters, so this was clearly a feminine protest against the spirit of the yellow alert.

Young doctors Sorenson and Bailey came trotting up, grinning appreciatively but wagging their fingers. Without consulting Benson, Bailey mounted the ramp and shouted, "Blondes and redheads, ten minutes exposure. Brunettes, fifteen."

A great booing issued from the men, but Bailey held up his hand for silence. "The medical staff will make no effort to enforce these exposure maximums, but be advised that the radiation here is about the same as Miami Beach in June, so don't let the air-conditioning fool you."

Benson was spared further decisions on the issue, because at that moment one of the sentries remembered to take a quick look at the vector of forest he was supposed to be guarding. Unable to make his voice heard over the hub-hub, the guard fired his pistol in the air.

We all jumped up and stared, and Benson muttered, "Dear God!"

Our people were scattered over an acre around the ramp, and encompassing them was a semi-circle of at least a hundred "savages", frozen like bronze statues at the sound of the gun-shot. They curved in an arc less than a hundred yards from the ship.

Their hands were empty of weapons, and their motionless attitudes were in no way threatening. To the contrary, they seemed small and quite inoffensive except for their numbers.

Acting in my capacity as psychologist, I ran up the ramp and called out as calmly as a shout would permit, "Everybody take it easy! Don't make any quick moves. Above all, don't anyone fire off a weapon again unless there is an obvious attack."

Benson clutched my arm. "Are you mad? We've got to get the women inside."

"That's what I'm thinking," I said. "But if we invite attack by running they won't all make it."

"They aren't armed. The men can stand them off."

"Then what are you worrying about?" I demanded. "Relax for a minute and see what happens."

Benson simmered and reluctantly accepted my logic. Meanwhile, the line of natives became mobile again. They closed in at a casual saunter, rolling off the balls of their long feet with a peculiar, slow, bouncing motion.

A ripple of subdued exclamations ran through our people, and in turn the little natives moved their lips, turned their heads to one another and seemed to be commenting among themselves.

Benson began hissing futile commands for the women to start boarding the ship. No one paid any attention. I could sense no great danger in the situation. In fact I felt more attracted than repelled by the little golden-haired creatures.

Bailey, who was still on the ramp, took a different view. He called out, "They don't look dangerous, but keep away from them. Lord knows what kind of bugs they may have in them."

It was a sobering thought. Their most insignificant disease germ might easily wipe out our colony if it proved contagious.

Yet, how could we stop these natives without inflicting bloodshed? On they came in their shambling, loose-gaited walk. Benson was unsnapping his holster flap, and even the highly curious women were beginning to shrink back toward the gangplank, when a light breeze swept through us from behind. It rustled the grass softly and moved into the natives, only 20 yards away.

The wavering line stopped again. Segments began to retreat, first singly, then in pairs and groups. All but a handful of the most curious suddenly bounded for the forest and disappeared.

The others came forward again, but with increasing bewilderment. Repeatedly, they raised their noses and sniffed the air.

Bailey said from behind us, "They catch our scent and don't know what to make of it. Thank heavens most of them took off. We can handle a dozen of them easily enough."

Our people opened ranks and let the little creatures infiltrate. Sue squeezed my arm. "Why, they're beautiful little things! They make me feel self-conscious with my bleached-out skin. They certainly look intelligent, those eyes—no fear in them at all—look, they're even smiling!"

Indeed, several of the creatures were grinning broadly at the male members of our party. They found our clothing amusing.

Now we could hear their soft voices conversing in a language that was liquid with a great many compound vowel sounds, not unlike Earth's Finnish tongue. Their quick, dark eyes seemed to take in everything. They seemed torn between a consuming curiosity and a strong aversion to our scent. One by one they satisfied the former and yielded to the latter, dropping back and racing for the forest in great, joyous bounds punctuated with happy little whoops of undefinable emotion.

At last only one, chesty little male was left. Benson exhaled heavily beside me. "It's the little fellow we saw on the beach, Sam. Look, he's coming through."

A tawny stripe of brown, furry hair ran from his high forehead, over the crown of his proud skull and down his neck to fade into the typical, deep, golden fuzz of his body. As he approached the ramp I saw that his face was smooth, entirely free of hair as though clean-shaven.

By now Benson was as fascinated as the rest of us. I stepped down in front of

him to confront our visitor. I placed a hand on my chest and said, "Sam Rogers!"

The dark eyes swept from my feet to my head and fastened upon my face. He pointed four long fingers at me and repeated distinctly, "Samrogers."

My name is easy to pronounce, but it was a shock to hear it from the lips of an extra-terrestrial being.

Then he placed the same hand on his own chest and said, "Joe!" Actually, it came out with a rapid widening and narrowing of his lips that sounded like a quick version of, "Jo-ah-o-ah-oh," but the vowel echoes were so rapid that for practical purposes it read, "Joe," to me.

I pointed my hand at him and repeated, "Joe!" He looked vaguely disappointed at my crude aspiratory control, but then a bright smile creased his cocky little face. His hand flicked out and back.

"Samrogers—Joe."

Involuntarily I nodded my head. He nodded back and smiled again. Before I could think of what comes after, "Dr. Livingstone, I presume," he wrinkled his nose, squinted his eyes, whirled and darted off for the timber.

We stood rooted for a minute, then Bailey said, "We must really stink. Plucky little fellow took it as long as he could."

Benson looked back at Bailey and me. "Well, what do you think?"

I looked at Bailey, and he looked at Dr. Sorenson. "Lord, I don't know. Except for the possibility of microbe infection, they appear perfectly harmless to me," Sorenson said.

I said, "Since they don't like our scent there doesn't seem to be much danger of contact. Phil, why don't we call off the yellow alert with the exception of a rule or two about fraternization in closed spaces?"

Benson looked over his people. All were paired off now, husband with wife. And to a man their arms were wrapped protectively around their respective spouses, watching for the decision. Their faces read, "Is this innocuous little race of people the cause of all the trouble?"

Benson rubbed the gray of his temple with a knuckle. He mounted the ramp and announced, "The emergency is reduced to a blue alert. Women will have the

freedom of the clearing and the visible beach, but only authorized working parties will enter the forest. Men will continue to wear sidearms. When outside shelters are complete we will sleep in them, but until then, or until we are better informed about the natives, we shall continue sleeping in the ship."

The new order of the day did nothing to mitigate the resentment and tension, but it did accelerate assembly of the lumber mill and house construction. The little Sirians seemed to have satisfied their curiosity, for they left us to our labors for a whole week.

The first building of our projected village was completed on the seventh day. It was little more than a two-room shanty, but it represented the most sought after prize of the moment, *privacy*!

We drew lots for it, and, with the uncommon justice, one of the hardest working amateur carpenters won. The women brought in armloads of grass for a couch and decorated it with wild-flowers. When evening fell it seemed like an occasion for a celebration, and Benson relented on the evening curfew.

We gathered scraps from the lumber mill, carefully cleared a sandy strip on the beach of all inflammable matter and built a huge bonfire. In the rich atmosphere even the green wood burned merrily, spitting green sap and sending up clouds of pungent, aromatic smoke.

Sue had just curled up in the crook of my arm, and we were working on a case of Earth-nostalgia, when we noticed our visitors again. They came bounding, up to the wide rim of the firelight. They jabbered in excited, ecstatic voices but stopped short of our human assembly. Only one, I recognized him as Joe, picked his way through us and came close to inspect the crackling blaze.

Fascinated, Sue and I watched his profile contort with an expression of immense admiration. It was not the awe of a savage, but the heartfelt appreciation of a human for a rare and beautiful spectacle.

"Fire must be unknown to them," Sue whispered.

"At least mighty rare," I said. "The handbook says no volcanoes and no thunderstorms."

Joe turned at the sound of our low voices. With eyes half-blinded by the glare he searched for me. "Samrogers!" he called clearly. "Samrogers!"

I rose to my feet and answered, "Joe! Right here, Joe."

He picked his way over to me, smiling broadly and glancing back at the fire every step or two. A pace away he stopped, pointed at me, said, "Samrogers," pointed at himself, said, "Joe!" *then pointed at the fire and waited*.

It was a clearly indicated question. I answered it respectfully, "Fire!"

He repeated, "Fire," and his eyes glowed like sparks. Then he made gestures of picking up some of the fire and taking it away, turning to me to pose the question.

Sorenson, propped up on an elbow, said, "I'll be damned. He's asking you to give him some of the fire."

"No," Benson said. "He knows fire, knows you can't take the flames. He's asking for *the means to build a fire*."

I faced Joe, shook my head solemnly and said, "No!" To give meaning to the word I sat down and turned my head away for a moment. When I looked back Joe was looking very disappointed. It made Sue so sad that she held out a wedge of sweet melon to him. Joe accepted the gift easily, gracefully and with a small smile of "thank you". He turned back, squatted as near the blaze as comfort would permit and chewed absently at the melon.

Thereafter he ignored the animated conversation that sprang up among us. Jane wanted to know why we didn't give him one of our lighters. "He's just as intelligent as we are," she insisted. She got no argument on that score, but her husband pointed out that the golden people were unaccustomed to handling fire, and that during the present dry season even the green foliage might take off in a holocaust if ignited in this rich, oxygen air.

Even as he spoke, a long, slender pole, flaming at one end, toppled from the settling fire and rolled near Joe. With scarcely a pause to debate, he leaped to his feet, grabbed the pole by the cool end and waved it aloft like a torch.

With a triumphant yell he plunged through us and out across the field bearing his prize aloft trailing sparks.

I tried to shoot low, but my light caliber pellet caught him rather high in the thigh. He dived to the ground senseless in a shower of sparks. His fellow creatures immediately gathered around him. When we closed in to retrieve the fire-wand and stamp out the sparks, the other natives faded away, crinkling their noses. They made no effort to remove Joe, but cast many admiring glances back at the fire he had stolen.

Sue came up storming at me. "You didn't have to *shoot* him." She started to kneel down beside him, but Dr. Bailey restrained her.

"Easy, Susan. Remember the quarantine."

"We can't let him lie there and bleed to death," I said, feeling unaccountably ashamed for my deed, although there was scarcely an alternative.

Benson came up, "Nice shot, Sam."

I said, "Phil, I want permission to enter quarantine with Joe, here. Let me have the instruments, and I'll probe for the bullet and take care of him."

Benson shook his head. "We can't take that chance. We couldn't spare you if you caught something."

"Who could you spare better?" I demanded. "See here, we've got to find out sooner or later whether these little fellows carry anything contagious. If they do, well, then we have a decision to face, but we can't decide anything until we know."

Sue was at my side now. She said. "You have a dozen people who can punch a micro-writer. Sam and I aren't indispensable. Besides, it was he who crippled the poor little fellow."

Without waiting for an answer she called out, "Larson, where are you?" The lucky carpenter tried to draw back in the shadows, knowing full well what she had in mind.

Benson stared at me for a minute. He said gruffly, "Very well, if you can talk Larson out of his cottage, go ahead, play hero!"

I didn't feel very heroic right then. Two hours later, when we had the bullet out of Joe and had him bedded down comfortably for the night, Sue cosied up to me in our double sleeping silks and murmured, "What a guy has to go through out

here to get a little privacy!"

Poor Larson!

Bailey and Sorenson set up their lab outside our cabin door. Joe's wound was seriously infected, and none of our cautiously applied remedies would control the raging fever with which he awoke the first morning. He lay, apathetic, eyes half closed, murmuring, "Tala! Tala!"

The doctors seized the opportunity to launch a study of Sirian microbes, diseases and earth molds. Sue and I took cultures from Joe's wound, and the medics experimented with the effects of local mold products similar to the penicillin series. By force-feeding we managed to keep Joe alive until Bailey, one morning, held up a hypo full of clear liquid and told us how to administer it.

Joe responded at once. The following day he began sitting up and vociferously demanding, "Tala, Tala!"

"Must be his wife or girl-friend," Sue deduced. She was wrong. Joe began making motions of a person lifting a vessel and drinking. When we offered him water he refused, repeating, "Tala!" and making more drinking motions. He tried to rise, but the pain in his swollen thigh stopped him. He sank back licking his lips like a man dying of thirst, and in spite of his general improvement, he stayed in a sullen, subdued attitude.

As his wound closed and the swelling reduced, Joe's temperature, which had reached a fabulous 142 degrees F., stabilized at 137 F., thereby confirming Benson's prediction that the natives would display a much higher metabolism. Sue, who had spent hours stroking the fevered brow, had grown used to Joe's hot-bloodedness, and she teased me about my relative "frigidity".

Until Joe got his "tala" I made disappointing progress at teaching him our language. He picked up our words for those few items that pertained to his comfort, such as food, drink, bedpan and pillow—he revelled in the luxury of our down-filled pillows. But at first he evinced little interest in communication.

Then one morning we arose to find him standing and clinging weakly to the door jamb, searching the perimeter of the clearing with frantic eyes.

We scolded him, but he ignored us. He spotted a fellow native examining one of the unfinished huts, which were going up at the rate of one a day. He called out in a loud, clear voice, and the little golden creature came running over to investigate.

It was a lovely little female, and I told Sue, "We have a reunion on our hands. Must be his mate."

But Joe was quite indifferent to her charms. She seemed tolerably happy to see him, touched his bandages with long, gentle fingers, then hurried off to the forest as if in response to his commands. Joe made no effort to follow. He seemed still to realize that he was in good hands and was profiting by the care he was receiving.

However, he chafed for the ten minutes or so before her return. We waited with high curiosity. I bet Sue that we were about to learn what "tala" was. When the female approached again we were mystified. "Why it's just a mango," Sue said. Indeed, the yellow-skinned, kidney-shaped fruit which the little native bore carefully in both hands appeared to be one of the over-sized specimens we had named after its smaller Earth counterpart.

Joe reached greedily for the fruit, poked a hole in the rind with a pointed forefinger and drank deeply. Watching from the door of our bedroom, we could smell a delightful, tangy scent that was only vaguely typical of the Sirian mangoes we had eaten.

To our surprise, as Joe drank, the skin collapsed like a plastic bag. "It must be a different species, or else it's much riper than any we've gathered," Sue said.

When Joe paused to breathe, the female took the fruit from him and sucked at it enthusiastically. They sank down on Joe's bed and took turns drinking the juice until the quart-sized skin was crumpled and empty.

I fear I interrupted an incipient romance in order to retrieve the discarded skin. The female wrinkled her nose and made for the door. I watched her roll unsteadily across the clearing with eccentric little lurches. The bland smile on Joe's handsome face deepened my suspicion. I pointed to the skin and asked, "Tala?"

He nodded, patted his stomach and repeated, "Tala!"

From that moment our relations improved immensely. Joe enlisted the help of

various females to keep him supplied with skins of tala, and with the satiation of his craving he took a completely new interest in life.

We spent hours every day working out our language difficulties. He learned so rapidly that I abandoned learning his language in favor of teaching him ours. Even such abstract concepts as time and space proved no obstacles. He grasped the purpose of my wristwatch after a single day's demonstration of its relationship to the passage of Sirius across the sky.

Using a pencil I had managed to convey our symbols for large numbers. Joe could count up to any number now, and he seemed actually to understand the open-end nature of our system of enumeration.

It made possible a mutual agreement on such matters as the number of "days" in a year, which he was mildly interested to learn numbered 440 on his planet. Then a startling piece of information came from him when I asked how long his people lived.

"Two years. Maybe three," he replied. Because of the shorter days, a Sirian year about equalled an Earth year, and I found it difficult to believe that these wonderful little animals lived only two or three years. He persisted until I believed him.

He was strangely vague when I tried to determine the common manner of death. Indeed, personal death was a concept either so hazy or distasteful to him that he refused to dwell on it. The most he would convey was that there were always new faces in the tribe, and the old faces rarely remained more than three years. At this time, he described himself as being more than a year old.

This was only one of several startling items that were revealed in our conversations. The golden people matured in three months to fully grown adults. A female could bear several babies a year and usually did. Yet Joe insisted that his tribe was the only clan on the face of the planet, so far as he knew, and that it numbered fewer than a thousand individuals.

There was no such thing as monogamy or even polygamy. True, at night when the air was cooler, they paired off, male and female, and each male chose from among several favorites. But there was no formal nor permanent mating

arrangement.

Benson, who had set up a sheltered desk outside Joe's window in order to listen in with an anthropologist's avid interest, posed the question which grew into quite a mystery. Under such fruitful conditions and ideal environment, why hadn't Joe's people overrun the planet? Even with the brief life-span, each female should produce many babies.

Joe had no answer. The problem didn't interest him, and he refused to ponder it. He'd squat in the corner jealously guarding his limp-skinned mango, nipping at it occasionally when our questions failed to make sense.

We were all, incidentally, quite curious to taste Joe's tala juice, but it was his sole property. His lady-friends would hand it to no one but him, and he guarded it selfishly. Bailey and Sorenson had enlisted the help of our two organic chemists to examine the moist residue of the empty skins, but with their limited lab facilities all they could do was make guesses that the coveted juice was the product of fermentation or enzymic action with which we were unfamiliar.

As a psychologist I knew that Joe responded to the tala similarly to the way a human dipsomaniac does to alcohol. When he was well-supplied he was cheerful and happy. When he ran out, he became taciturn and irritable. His frequent resort to the liquor, when we tried to force him to answer troublesome questions, confirmed my suspicion that there were certain matters his brilliant mind simply refused to embrace, and the simplest way to avoid worrying about them was to take another drink of tala.

Benson and I discussed this one afternoon while Joe was taking a nap. We sat in the shade of my hut spooning the lush pulp of a mango into our mouths. He said, "Everything points to a race of super-intelligence held down by sheer degeneracy."

"You mean the tala-drinking?" I asked.

He nodded. "For one thing. Our work parties report that they never stop drinking the stuff. The older ones get quite plastered. I've seen it myself. Disgusting. And they have no common sense of, of—well, I shouldn't say decency, because obviously morality as we know it just doesn't exist. But thank heavens they don't care for the scent of humans."

I said, "Don't depend on that too much. I asked Joe about it, and he said that we

don't necessarily smell bad to them. It's just so alien to any scent they've known that they tend to shy off. Joe is quite used to it now. He lets Sue rub his back and his head. She's made quite a pet of him."

Benson didn't like this news at all. He pondered thoughtfully for a moment. "That means that they'll all gradually get used to being around us. I don't like it, Phil. They're just human enough to have a bad influence on the colony. They're dissolute and entirely without ambition. In fact they seem to have damned little race survival instinct at all."

I had pondered this many times, but it hadn't struck me as especially dangerous to the colony. Benson went on, "We have a glorious planet here, rich in minerals and other natural resources. By comparison, Earth is so worn-out and depleted and over-crowded that the contrast is almost too great."

"What are you driving at?" I demanded.

"Just this. From the first the biggest problem here has been to prod everyone to work. We have a civilization to build here, and that means clearing more land, breaking the soil, mining, construction, manufacturing."

"Look," I said somewhat impatiently, "you don't expect 80 people to accomplish all this in four years, surely?"

"I expect progress," he said firmly. "Do you realize that when we finished the last of the forty houses that virtually ended the building program? Work on the two warehouses, the water system, sewage disposal plant and the commissary we planned is almost at a standstill."

"The people want time to finish up their homes and make them comfortable," I objected.

"That's what they say," he told me, "but they're fooling away their time."

"Phil, we've only been here a month, and—"

"And if I hadn't pulled a blue alert," he interrupted, "we wouldn't even have the residentials built yet. Now they've got their precious privacy, and the pressure is off. They'd rather go chasing off into the woods to hunt exotic fruit and peek at the natives than get on with the project."

I hadn't realized things were this serious. "Don't they obey orders any more?

What about your work schedules?"

"I've pushed them as hard as I can without forcing a test of my authority," he said. "They claim they deserve time to get adjusted and relax a little before buckling down."

"I agree with them," I said. "They're all serious, industrious people, and this is still an adventure with them. It will wear off pretty soon, and they'll be yearning for comforts of Earth. They'll buckle down when the rainy season hits," I predicted.

"I wonder. Here's one good example. Look over there. Donnegan's food detail is just now returning with its first load. They left three hours ago." He yelled over to the foreman.

Donnegan, a large, pleasant-faced biologist sauntered over to us. Benson said, "Was the *expedition* successful?"

Donnegan brushed off the sarcasm. "Fooling aside, it is getting to be something of an expedition to find fruit. The natives are cleaning it out near at hand."

Turning to me Benson said, "There's another thing. The little devils have settled all around us, and everything is community property with them. Not only do they strip the fruit but they pick up anything that isn't nailed down and wander off with it."

"That's odd," I said. "Joe indicates that they place no value on possessions normally."

"Oh, they don't keep things," Donnegan explained. "They pack them off, fiddle with them and then we find them strewn all over the forest. Sometimes I'd like to wring their little necks!"

Benson looked up at him quickly. "Sounds funny coming from you, Paul. You were one of their chief defenders at the meeting last week."

Donnegan's face darkened. "That was last week, before I found out a few things. As a matter of fact, I think it's time you knew about them, too." He squatted down by us and unburdened himself.

As it so often will, a barrier had erected itself between the colony members and their leader, Phillip Benson. Donnegan somewhat shamefacedly confessed what had gone on behind this curtain of silence.

It seemed that two weeks earlier Bromley, one of the chemists, had contrived some rather crude, old-fashioned, sulphur-and-phosphorus, friction matches. Trading on the native's delight with fire, he had bribed them with matches to give him one of the tala-mangoes which he tasted, then promptly proceeded to swill until he was quite drunk.

In a generous mood he passed out matches to other male members of the colony who, in turn, made the barter and joined the party.

"The stuff is really delicious," Donnegan admitted. "And it doesn't even give you a hang-over."

"Go on," Benson invited coldly.

Within a few days, Donnegan related, everybody was nipping on the tala. Bromley was turning out a steady supply of matches from his lab, and they were now the going currency for trading with the natives. In order to keep their wives quiet the men brought the super-ripe mangoes home and shared them.

The precious fruit, it developed, came from regular mango trees but reached the desired, fermented condition only at the leafy crowns of the trees where even the nimble, light-weight natives found it hazardous and difficult to reach them. Bromley said that he knew of several native casualties from fatal falls that had occurred since the traffic in tala increased.

Benson asked the question that was in my mind. "What caused you to come to me at this late date?" he demanded. "Something more serious must have happened."

"Well, I didn't mind the tala-drinking so much—but, well, Captain Spooner and I came back to his hut one afternoon this week and found his pretty little wife with one of the natives—a male. Spooner thought it was a big joke—he was a little drunk at the time, and so was his wife. But I don't think it's any joke at all."

Benson was on his feet, his face livid. "What else?"

Bromley said, "I checked around a little bit, and I found that quite a few of our people are making pets out of the natives. The little devils have got used to our

scent, and they'll do anything just to watch a match burn."

"But the quarantine?" I said.

"I guess they figure it's safe enough. Personally, I don't. But they feel that since you and Sue have escaped any disease there's no reason for the non-fraternizing rule, not even in closed spaces. Several couples I know hold parties every night in their huts after dark. They invite a couple of natives who supply the tala. They all sit around a candle. The natives sleep there."

He kicked at an empty tala skin that Joe had tossed out the door earlier. "Things are out of hand, and I'm ashamed I haven't come to you sooner, Benson."

Phil was so outraged he couldn't speak. I said, "Thanks, Donnegan. You did the right thing."

He left us, and while Benson was struggling to control his anger I said, "It's a wonder they haven't burned the place down. The forest must be damp enough to sustain fire, or they certainly would have set one."

"It might have been better," Benson said, "if they had burned the whole damned planet up! And you thought I was exaggerating! There you have it, a perfect set-up to make beachcombers out of the whole colony. Plenty of free food, liquor, beautiful native girls and a mild climate."

"And native boys," I added, remembering suddenly that I was harboring one of the "pets" under my own roof.

Benson clenched his fists. "From the first I knew what the answer must come to. I just didn't have the guts to face it."

I nodded. "I suppose we'll have to drive them off."

"Drive them off, *nothing*! They're nomads, and they'd be back sooner or later. There will always be people in the colony willing to deal with them secretly, and the natives are clever enough to circumvent any discipline I aim against them."

"What else can you do, short of—genocide?"

"Why rule out genocide? Sam, face it! Race extermination is the only permanent and satisfactory solution."

The thought was abhorrent to me, but he argued, "If we don't eliminate them

entirely they'll always be around to plague us. Just picture what this or any future colony would look like after a year or two of uninhibited mingling and loafing and swilling down that tala. Is that the civilization that Earth sent us out here to establish?"

In every part of the universe where living conditions have been too kind and discipline too lax, men have been known to *go native*, and suddenly I felt that Benson had been much more acute in his apprehensions than I, a graduate psychologist who was supposed to understand human nature.

Somewhat subdued I said, "How do you plan to accomplish a complete extermination? If we start hunting them down they'll just fade into the woods. Besides, you'd have a devil of a time getting agreement among our people to take on such a messy project."

"It has to be done, that's all. I want you to keep completely quiet about what we've learned until I can think about it. Bromley should have some ideas. He's a biologist."

When Benson said, "biologist", the obvious solution popped into my head. "If we could sterilize them—all the males, anyway—they have such a short life-span—"

"Too slow. Besides, how are you going to coax all the males to lie down and—" His eyes opened wider, "Radiation!"

"Exactly. We take them for a tour of the ship, including the X-ray booth, and pour on the power."

"Might be done at that. But it would be so slow."

Slow or not, no better plan was conceived among six of us who met secretly that night in Benson's new ship quarters. Donnegan brought his fellow biologist, Terrence Frost, and I had contacted the two medics. We reached swift agreement as to the necessity of taking steps, and decided to work on my rough plan. It was also voted not to divulge our intentions to the others, and then the meeting broke up.

When I returned to my hut, Jane was sitting cross-legged just outside my door

visiting with Susan. I thought she would be curious about the confidential nature of the meeting from which she was excluded, but she had other things on her mind. She stood up and said, "I think your patient is recovered, and you've got a problem, mister." She stalked off into the night.

I looked at Sue's pink face and half-guessed the answer before she told me. It seemed that Joe had suddenly developed amorous inclinations. Sue had the habit of stroking his head like a pet dog, and this evening, without warning, Joe had begun returning the caresses in a manner so casual and gentle that Sue hadn't noticed the trend.

From a more objective viewpoint, however, Jane had observed the rather unplatonic indications of Joe's attitude and mortified Sue by drawing her attention to it with an acid remark.

In my fury I fancied that Joe had tried to take advantage of my absence. His cleverness in avoiding such advances in my presence was nullified by his error of assuming that Jane would pose no obstacle.

At present he sprawled in his corner beside an empty mango skin, breathing rapidly, innocently asleep. The incident served to drive home Donnegan's story and steel me against the many twinges of conscience I was to suffer in our campaign to wipe out Joe's race.

It also served as an adequate excuse, in Sue's eyes, when I told Joe the next morning that he was quite well enough to return to the forest. This was a fact we both had known for over a week, but Joe in his indolent way, had been quite content to remain and talk with me endlessly. Until now, I had welcomed his presence as an inexhaustible source of information.

He accepted the dismissal without rancor and promised to return and visit us next spring.

"Next spring?" I said.

"We will leave soon," he said. "We go south in the autumn."

"Wait," I said. And I told him that as a gesture of friendship we had decided to take all males of his race for a tour through the ship. Would he take this word to his people?

He said he would, but his face became very thoughtful.

That afternoon they formed a short line at the ramp, and the "tours" began. The line was short because they refused to wait long for anything, but as the line shortened, others came from the woods to take their places. To produce a favorable "press" on our show and thus assure perfect attendance by *all* the males, Benson rigged several mechanical displays of flashing lights and whirling devices.

They were delighted, and when they got to the X-ray booth, to induce them to stand still we set up a gas torch with a beautiful, vermilion, strontium flame. The only problem at this point was to get them to move on after they got their painless dose of sterilizing radiation.

Every tenth "golden boy" was shunted into a small chamber filled with *orgon*, the instant anaesthetizing gas, and Dr. Sorenson, wearing an oxygen mask, would catch him as he fell, take his specimen, hand it through a slot to Dr. Bailey and then drag the unsuspecting victim into the fresh air where the nurses took over with more wonders to distract his attention.

This running spot-check on the collected semen samples assured us that our radiation was effectively destroying the spermatozoa.

I sat at my old place at the base of the ramp, weeding out the occasional females who tried to sneak in and also checking to see that we had no repeats.

Our method was simplicity itself. As each native finished our tour an attendant atomized a faint but very permanent stain of waterproof dye on the hair of the right shoulder blade. It was hardly noticeable unless you were looking for it, and that was one of my jobs.

In two days we "toured" 481 males.

A week later the night rains began, and our unwelcomed neighbors vanished.

Benson had postponed his little lecture deliberately, and now he called us all together for a fatherly talk which I helped him prepare. He began abruptly.

"Since nature has been so bountiful in providing us with tala, I don't intend to proclaim any silly prohibition regarding its consumption. With a little reflection, however, I hope that all of you can understand that we must have some control. I

am fully aware that many of you arranged your own private channels for obtaining this liquor, but with the departure of our tree-climbing friends the easy source has dried up.

"Now, to prevent some of you from breaking your fool necks trying to climb the trees yourselves, I propose that we place tala in the commissary as a normal ration to be issued equitably to all—when it is available. And working together, our clearing parties will, no doubt, fell enough mango trees to give us all a fair taste."

Benson's unexpected tolerance and remarkable proposal was received with mixed embarrassment, relief and enthusiasm. He went on, "We have enjoyed almost two months of rather unrestrained partying, and I'm not going to rail at you for some of the illicit behaviour that came to my attention. So far the intimacies which some of you took with the natives have produced no epidemics nor bastard offspring on either side. However, were I to accept your actions as typical of the future, I would consider our colony doomed already and write off this planet as unfit for further investment by Earth civilization.

"Instead, I feel you will, during the winter months, regain your perspective and apply yourself to the principles which brought us here and must continue to bind us together if we are to survive as a permanent culture."

Benson's speech had the desired effect. Without the little people around to distract us, the colonists plunged into their work, and things got done. True, a rather disproportionate number of logs brought in by the falling crews turned out to be mango-wood, but the tala-rationing program added incentive precisely where it was needed. The perimeter of our clearing advanced rapidly, the cultivating and planting parties followed closely behind, and the sawmill added an industrious sound to the whole operation.

As Benson had hoped, when the people buckled down they once again began yearning for the conveniences they had left on earth. The chemists finally contrived suitable raw materials for the plasticizer and began manufacturing screens for our gaping windows, much-needed pipe for our water and sewage systems and even a few "frivolous" luxuries such as cups, saucers and fruit bowls. The commissary and other public buildings were planked out roughly, and the hospital-clinic was completed before the first two babies arrived.

The history-making blessed event was an honor and an onus to Captain Spooner and his young wife. To father the first human offspring on Sirius XXII was the

fond hope of many of us, but Spooner and the Second Officer had something over a light-year head-start on the rest of us.

Infant Spooner arrived just 5-1/2 months after our landing. The Mate's baby came two weeks later. Sue herself was satisfyingly pregnant. By spring it was obvious that Earth's gynecologists had chosen the members of our colony well, and there would be no dearth of young blood. Fully a third of the women were expecting, and Sue's date indicated she would have won the derby if it hadn't been for the ship's officers' perfidy.

The colony as a whole was in good shape. As the most pressing work was disposed of, the men took turns at the pleasant hunting details, and we began enjoying fresh meat from the small game of the forest.

On one such trip I brought back a live little animal that looked like a cross between a three-toed sloth and a teddy bear, except that he had a long, woofly snout like an ant-eater. He seemed to be hibernating in the crotch of a small tree, and when I shook him down he cuddled up and clung to my neck so lovingly that I decided he'd make a good pet for Sue.

The little cub kept nipping affectionately at my neck on the hike back, and he clung so close he was a nuisance, but Sue was delighted. We had to improvise a cage at night to keep him from mauling us and keeping us awake.

Sue named him, "Toots", and we were the envy of all the camp. When Joe and his people returned three weeks later, and we discovered the truth about Toots, the others were happy they hadn't acquired a similar pet.

It was late spring, and the mango trees were rapidly refilling their high branches with the tala-fruit. We now had a roofed central kitchen where the women prepared our meals. We ate at long tables in the open.

Shortly after the noon meal one day, Joe and his people returned. He caught up to Sue and me as we were strolling to our hut for our daily fifteen-minute siesta. He appeared tired from the journey but quite glad to see us. I felt the pangs of conscience as I added my hypocritical welcome to Sue's warm greeting.

In his old room we sat on the rough furniture I had fashioned, and Joe eyed Sue's

fruitful contours. "A baby soon, eh? We have many babies among us."

"You—have?" I said.

"Many were born on the return trip. They slowed up the females with their sucking. For eight days they are a burden on the mother."

Sue exclaimed, "Eight days? Then what happens?"

The subject did not greatly interest Joe. "Then they find their own food—if the *koodi* does not find them first."

"What in the world is a *koodi*?" Sue asked with a shiver.

Joe was silent for a minute. He wrinkled his broad brow and looked at me. "Samrogers, you asked me many questions about how we die. I did not understand this death for a long time. Now I know. It is when the *koodi* comes. He comes to the very young and to the old. The babies are too small to hold him off. The old drink much tala, then the *koodi* comes to them. This is my third year, and my thirst for tala is great. The *koodi* will come."

His words painted a clear picture of a superstitious concept of death, personifying it even as humans refer to the "grim reaper". But Sue took a different view. "What does the *koodi* look like?" she persisted.

Joe looked puzzled. He raised a long, four-segmented finger and pointed to a corner of the room where Toots was curled up like a fur neck-piece. "He looks like that. There is a *koodi*."

My first impulse was to reject the statement as ridiculous. Toots was as harmless as an over-sized kitten. Besides, the manual made no mention of—

Sue made a small sound in her throat. Her face was colorless. "Sam! Get him out of here!"

"But the manual—"

"The manual didn't mention Joe's people, either," she said half-hysterically. "*Get Toots out of here.*"

Still unbelieving I walked over and hauled the little fuzzy animal up into my arms. Instantly, he cuddled close and rammed his pointed snout under my open collar and began nibbling at my neck. I took him outside, and out of perverse

curiosity I let him have his way with my neck. At first it tickled, as always, but instead of batting his head away I let him nibble with his soft, pointed lips.

Sue called out, "Sam what are you doing? Kill him, Sam!"

His lips spread into a little circle on my flesh and began sucking gently. There was no pain, just the throb of my jugular under his mouth. Now his long, soft, hairy arms became firmer around my neck. I jerked back and they gripped hard. A chill of panic stabbed me, and I could feel the taut flesh of my neck drawn more deeply into his puckered lips.

I tugged at him silently, not wishing to frighten Sue. He wouldn't come loose. In broad, noon-daylight I had a Sirian vampire in my arms, threatening to rupture my jugular vein and kill me within speaking distance of half a hundred people. I tried to level my voice. "Joe, would you come out here, please?"

He came at once, stared with a blank expression and said, "You have been drinking much tala?"

"Help me, dammit!" I said, holding my voice down. "I can't shake him loose. He's trying to—" The long, tight arm squeezed off my breath. In turn I tried to strangle him, but under the thick fur was a bony protection where there should have been soft neck.

"It does no good to kill the *koodi*," Joe said. "There is always another. Once they hold you tightly it is too late."

Sue thought differently. She came through the door like a hell-cat. Catching up her garden hoe she swung a blow that, had it missed Toots, would have crushed my skull. But Sue didn't miss. I fell on my back, and Toots let go, dead of a broken spine.

The "liquor control board" was Benson's best idea. Not only did it put tala on a legitimate basis, but it controlled our dealings with the natives. Bromley, the chemist, who was the original offender, was charged with manufacturing the wooden matches, and the medium of exchange was concentrated in the hands of the commissary "purchasing agent".

The reason that Benson sanctioned the controlled tala trade with the natives

stemmed from our apparent failure to sterilize the males. There was, indeed, a huge crop of native babies, tiny little dolls that looked like spider monkeys and dropped from their mothers' breasts after little more than a week.

The brisk tala trade was part of our program to keep the natives in close association while we devised ways and means to discover the cause of our failure. All quarantine rules had long since been dropped, and Sorenson and Bailey began inventing ruses to lure the males into the gas chamber again.

Weeks passed while we worked our way through the whole male population again, testing for fertility and X-raying it wherever we found it. Through Joe we advertised new wonders to be seen in the ship, and as the sight-seers left we tagged each with an atomized spot on the other shoulder, indicating that he was still sterile or had just become so.

This time we tallied 496 males which, according to Joe, was certainly the whole masculine population. The mystery of our failure at genocide forced an unpleasant decision on Benson. The biologists and medics insisted that we must win the natives' confidence even further to gain their cooperation. As the heat of summer bore down and the mercury rose, we eased off on the work schedule and deliberately planned social functions to which we had Joe invite a group of natives. There were picnics and beach parties where our guests brought their own tala, and ours was carefully rationed. Group singing entranced the little golden people, and they took remarkable delight in the discovery of their own, sweetly pitched voices. Enterprising Joe, with his remarkable memory, soon became unofficial song leader, and all day long we would hear the natives practicing.

Sue's baby came, a sturdy little boy whom we named Richard Joseph—Sue insisted on the second name, and I couldn't argue her out of it without revealing my reasons. Within two weeks the clinic's nursery was full of babies, and it was at this point that the natives' interest became deeply stirred.

The language barriers were breaking down rapidly. Many of our regular visitors were females, and with Joe's help as an interpreter they were soon able to ask questions. Their greatest curiosity hinged on the fabulous care we gave our infants.

Although I wouldn't permit Sue to do it, several of our women began using female natives for baby-sitters. This led to the first basic behaviour change we had noticed. The females began to pay more attention to their own offspring. It

was as if they had just discovered the pleasure of fondling their babies and watching them crawl and kick and gurgle. Even after the first week they were still carrying them around, finding choice morsels of fruit for them, fanning off the insects and singing them to sleep with their new-found abilities to make music.

Benson noticed it and called a meeting of the secret six. He said, "Our little program had better work this time or we are in for it. Apparently this *koodi* animal that Sam had the tussle with is the principal population control, and now the mothers are packing their kids around until they're old enough to fight off the *koodi*."

Donnegan shook his head. "Damned if I can find out where we slipped up. Frost and I just finished a series of tests with native ova and human sperm. They don't mix. Of course, we didn't expect them to, but what in hell is the answer?"

I hadn't known of this project. I said, "You didn't think that our male colonists __"

Benson scowled with exasperation. "We don't know what to think, Sam! We sterilized 481 native males last fall, and the babies are just as thick as ever."

I said, "Well, we got to 496 of them this time. That should do it for sure. Joe says he'll keep a lookout for any males without the two stains on his shoulder."

Benson narrowed his eyes. "You know, it strikes me that Joe is being awfully helpful. What reason did you give him for wanting this information?"

"He didn't ask," I said.

Our 12-month year was composed of 37-day months, except February which we shorted six days to make it come out even.

According to this calendar the "May-flies" came in July, just a month before our first anniversary. The little winged insects were a seasonal life-form, one more item that escaped the exploratory party, and for which we were unprepared.

They came out of the north, and they struck us before we could take shelter in the ship or our plastic-screened huts. They were a little smaller than flying ants,

and even their long wings were jet-black. Their bites were infinitesimal, but each one smarted like a prick with a hot needle.

In the midst of the confusion of rescuing babies and herding everyone in doors, I noticed that all the natives had disappeared into the forest. Everyone had suffered a hundred bites or more, and we were sorry, swollen sights. Sue insisted that I cover myself and make a run for the clinic to see if Dr. Bailey had any remedies for the bites. Richard Joseph was crying loudly from the irritation, so I agreed.

It was only 75 yards to the clinic, and I made it without collecting many more stings. But the doctors had nothing to offer. They were dabbing various salves, astringents and pastes on test patches of their own skin, but nothing seemed to have any effect at all.

"All we hope," said Sorenson, "is that the flies aren't microbe-carriers."

I started out the door to return then stepped back and peered through the screen. The forest was erupting with natives. They staggered into the clearing, headed for the center of it and sank down as if with great weariness. On and on they came until the ground among our buildings was literally paved with their prone bodies.

"Poor devils." Bailey murmured as the clouds of flies continued to sweep through our village. "Nothing we can do, though. I wonder why they come out in the open? You'd think they had better protection in the trees."

I had no answers, so I covered my head again and made a dash for my own hut. Inside I brushed off the clinging flies and stamped on them. "The medics don't have any help for us," I said. Then I saw him.

Sue was struggling to hold Joe on his feet. His arms were draped loosely over her shoulders, and for a second I couldn't decided whether he was ill or making a pass at Sue.

I pulled him off her by one shoulder. He swung around and toppled into my arms. Remarkably few insect bites showed under the transparent haze of golden hair, but he reeked of tala.

"You're drunk," I yelled at him. "A lot of help you are at a time like this!"

"Tala," he said from loose lips. "Much tala."

"You've had much tala, all right!" I said disgusted.

Sue said, "We've got to let him stay in here, Sam. The flies will eat him alive out there." She went to the window and knocked the flies from the outside of the screen. Then she screamed. I thought she had just discovered the massed natives, but she kept on screaming until I went to her and looked out.

In the late afternoon sun, fuzzy little brown animals were waddling out of the forest, closing in on the 900 or more natives lying senseless in the clearing. *Koodi!* Dozens of them.

I forgot my screaming wife, my crying infant, the drunken wife-stealer slumped on the floor. I forgot the torture of my own stings. All I remember is snatching my pistol from its holster that hung by the door and plunging out and pulling the trigger until fire ceased to come out of it. Then I was kicking and smashing with a tree limb, and every blow smashed one of the vile little ghouls into the grass. I thought I saw Benson firing and kicking, but I blacked out before I could be sure.

I regained consciousness with the flies still keening in my ears. Sue was calling my name and slapping me sharply in the face. Joe was trying to pull me to my

feet, but the last thing I remember is the both of us collapsing to the ground.

I awoke days later with a burning fever and gloriously drunken sensation of floating. Joe brought a fruit to me when he saw I was stirring. I drank the thin, tangy juice in one breath and sank back into a deep sleep again.

My next drink came from the long, slender fingers of a pretty little female native. This time it was water, and I stayed awake. Joe came in, saw I was awake and came back in a few minutes with Benson and Dr. Bailey.

They both looked terrible, Benson especially. Bailey said, "Take it easy. Sue's at the clinic. She and the baby are all right, but you damned near didn't make it."

Benson said, "Can you talk?"

I cleared my throat and decided I could. He waved Joe and the female out. Then he and Bailey sat down beside me. I asked, "Any casualties?"

"Two of our babies and thirty-six native babies. Some of the *koodi* came in after dark."

It sounded strange, Benson's listing native casualties with our own.

The memory of the *koodi* attack brought a wave of nausea over me. I said, "Benson, I'm sorry, but I'm all done trying to murder Joe's race. I want no further part of it."

Benson's face was thin and drawn, and he stared at the floor. "If we haven't murdered it already," he said, "there will be no more attempts while I am in charge." He covered his face with his hands. "Bailey. Tell him, Bailey."

The doctor's voice was gravelly and weak. "If it hadn't been for the natives we'd all have died. The venom from the flies paralyzed everyone the second day after the swarm hit us. The flies were gone the next morning, but every soul in the colony passed out. Joe and his friends took care of us, poured tala down our throats and fed us."

"But they were soused," I said.

"Their only defense against the flies. The little black devils left the natives pretty

well alone, and it appears that the tala was responsible. Could be that the stuff is what neutralized the toxin, too. They must have poured a gallon of it down me, judging from the empty skins by my bed. At any rate, they kept us alive until we could get up and feed ourselves."

"Why did they come into the clearing when they drank the tala?" I asked.

Bailey said, "Joe told us that the day he saw Sue kill the *koodi* that was attacking you, he got the idea that he should do something about them himself. Through his efforts the natives no longer take the little devils as an inevitable evil. They kill them wherever they find them now. And when they had to get drunk to save themselves from the flies, Joe passed the word for them to head for the clearing. The *koodi* usually avoid the sunlight, but it was late in the afternoon. They came anyway."

"Phil," I said, "did I see you out there with me, killing the little bastards?"

He nodded silently.

"You had changed your mind about the natives at that time?"

"I—I suppose so. Don't rub it in, Sam. It's hard enough to live with the thought of how wrong I was. All I can do now is pray that whatever failed in our first try failed again. Joe's people have made the human race look pretty dismal. They have every right to their planet, and if we are foolish enough to go native, well—at least we have a stronger survival instinct."

At that point Susan came in carrying Richard. He had the hiccoughs. Sue kissed me. "Richard just drew his ration of sterile tala from the clinic. He still has a slight fever. But thanks to Joe and Harmony—"

"Harmony? Who's that?"

"The native girl who helped Joe nurse us. Her name is really Hah-ah-arm-ig-hin-ih-hee, or something like that. She answers to Harmony, though."

And she did. Hearing her name the little golden girl came through the door towing Joe by one hand.

I said, "One of your favorites, Joe?"

He ran a caressing, four-fingered hand over her shoulder. "I like her," he admitted. "She wants to call me husband like Sue calls you."

Bailey smiled. "It seems there is a new fad among the natives. Something like monogamy, I understand."

I said, "What do you think of the idea, Joe?"

He thought it over. "I have not made up my mind."

Sue pressed him, "Why not marry Harmony, Joe?"

In the blunt manner in which he so often made his curious revelations, Joe blurted out, "Because I am in much demand among all the females. It is—very pleasant."

Bailey's eyes widened. He ordered, "Bend over, Joe."

Joe obliged so we could all examine his back. There were two brown stains on his shoulder blades as there should be, but Bailey was not satisfied. He poked a finger into them and examined the skin under the hair. "Mango pitch!" he announced. "Stained clean down to the skin. Did you do that, Joe?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"I knew you would force me to go into the ship with the others if I didn't have the stain."

Benson looked up, shocked. "Then you—you knew what we were trying to do?"

"Yes. You and Samrogers spoke of it outside the hut one day. You thought I was asleep. Some of your words puzzled me, so I stayed away from the ship. Then I found out what they meant."

"But you helped us get the others to go into the ship!"

"It was what you wanted," Joe said simply. "Later, when we went south, the females saw that only Joe's favorites continued to have babies. So Joe became very—popular."

I said, "You mean they figured it out?"

Joe smiled. "Did you think we do not know about—" he paused to dredge among his amazing store of human idioms, "—the facts of life?"

Bailey shook his head. "What a man! What a race! Think what they would be if they had a human's survival instinct!"

"And thumbs," I added.

End of the Project Gutenberg EBook of The Test Colony, by Winston Marks

*** END OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE TEST COLONY ***

***** This file should be named 32676-h.htm or 32676-h.zip *****
This and all associated files of various formats will be found in:
        http://www.gutenberg.org/3/2/6/7/32676/

Produced by Greg Weeks, Mary Meehan and the Online
Distributed Proofreading Team at http://www.pgdp.net

Updated editions will replace the previous one--the old editions
will be renamed.

Creating the works from public domain print editions means that no
one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation
(and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without
permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules,
set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to
copying and distributing Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works to
protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG-tm concept and trademark. Project
Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you
charge for the eBooks, unless you receive specific permission. If you
do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the
rules is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose
such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and
research. They may be modified and printed and given away--you may do
practically ANYTHING with public domain eBooks. Redistribution is
subject to the trademark license, especially commercial
redistribution.

*** START: FULL LICENSE ***

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg-tm mission of promoting the free
distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work
(or any other work associated in any way with the phrase "Project
Gutenberg"), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project
Gutenberg-tm License (available with this file or online at
http://gutenberg.net/license).

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg-tm
electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg-tm
electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to

and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. "Project Gutenberg" is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation ("the Foundation" or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is in the public domain in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg-tm mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg-tm works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg-tm name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg-tm License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg-tm work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country outside the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg-tm License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg-tm work (any work on which the phrase "Project Gutenberg" appears, or with which the phrase "Project Gutenberg" is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.net

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work is derived from the public domain (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work

with the phrase "Project Gutenberg" associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg-tm License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg-tm License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg-tm.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg-tm License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg-tm work in a format other than "Plain Vanilla ASCII" or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg-tm web site (www.gutenberg.net), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original "Plain Vanilla ASCII" or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg-tm License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg-tm works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works provided that

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg-tm works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, "Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation."

- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg-tm License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg-tm works.

- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.

- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from both the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and Michael Hart, the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread public domain works in creating the Project Gutenberg-tm collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain "Defects," such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the "Right of Replacement or Refund" described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH F3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS' WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTIBILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be

interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg-tm work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg-tm work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg-tm

Project Gutenberg-tm is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg-tm's goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg-tm collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg-tm and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation web page at http://www.pglaf.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Its 501(c)(3) letter is posted at http://pglaf.org/fundraising. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's principal office is located at 4557 Melan Dr. S. Fairbanks, AK, 99712., but its volunteers and employees are scattered throughout numerous locations. Its business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887, email business@pglaf.org. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's web site and official page at http://pglaf.org

For additional contact information:
Dr. Gregory B. Newby
Chief Executive and Director
gbnewby@pglaf.org

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg-tm depends upon and cannot survive without wide spread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit http://pglaf.org

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg Web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: http://pglaf.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works.

Professor Michael S. Hart is the originator of the Project Gutenberg-tm concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For thirty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg-tm eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg-tm eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as Public Domain in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our Web site which has the main PG search facility:

http://www.gutenberg.net

This Web site includes information about Project Gutenberg-tm, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.