

# Feet of Clay

Robert Hoskins

Project Gutenberg

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Feet Of Clay, by Phillip Hoskins

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](http://www.gutenberg.net)

Title: Feet Of Clay

Author: Phillip Hoskins

Release Date: June 7, 2010 [EBook #32724]

Language: English

\*\*\* START OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK FEET OF CLAY \*\*\*

Produced by Greg Weeks, Graeme Mackreth and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net>

cover

*sick man*Life is pretty strange when a god who is good and benevolent must prove that he has

# Feet of Clay

**BY PHILLIP HOSKINS**

*Illustrated by Paul Orban*

The problem,"said Cassidy, "would seem to be simple." He thumped his outsized knuckles against the desk. "Almost too simple."

"Why?" The other was a wearer of the black and silver uniform of Extrasol Traders; a short man, made shorter by the beer-barrel shape of his body and the extreme width of his shoulders. His head was capped with close-cropped gray curls.

"Why?" he repeated. "I've been studying it ever since it first cropped up, and I must admit that it's been beyond me."

"I must confess, Dillon," said Cassidy, "I wonder how you ever rose to the managerial ranks of Extrasol. I find it hard to imagine a personnel man stupid enough to put you in charge of even a backwater planet like this Kash. Surely somebody in the home office must know how dumb you are?"

"My dumbness is not the subject of this conversation," said Dillon, grimly. "I didn't like the idea of calling in a trouble-shooter. I liked it even less when I found out it was to be you."

Cassidy grinned. "You mean my wonderful personality hasn't made an impression on you? I'm cut to the quick."

"I put up with you for only one reason. You know aliens, far better than I could ever hope to. You're about the best in the field."

"Only about? Really, Dillon, if you knew of someone better than me, why didn't you get them?"

"All right!" He shouted the words. "You're the best! But you still haven't explained why the problem seems simple to you." He pulled out a cigarette, and bit down savagely on the end, only to spit out the loose tobacco amidst a sputter of curses.

"The misfortunes of being feeble-minded," sighed Cassidy. "But for your sake, I'll take you by the hand, and try to lead you down the road of intelligence. But first, you better go over the situation once more.

"We are on Kash," said Dillon, visibly controlling his patience. "It's the fourth world of a G-type sun of the periphery, unnamed in the catalogues. For that reason, we have assigned it the native name. Kash is their term for both the star and the planet, and roughly translates as 'home of the Gods'.

"The planet was first contacted during the great galactic expansion of 2317, when the sole native language was taped. The planet is approximately two-thirds the size of Earth, but its density is somewhat less, so the gravity is about half that of Earth. It is moonless, and so far from galactic center that scarcely a hundred stars are visible in the sky. Thus a trained observer can usually pick out the other five planets of the system with no trouble at all." He paused, and took a drink of water.

"Six months ago it was contacted by Unit 317 of Extrasol Traders...."

"Namely you," said Cassidy.

"Me. A month was spent mapping the planet and searching out native villages. I then returned to base and picked up supplies necessary for setting up an outpost. Two months ago I returned.

"And all Hell broke loose...."



Night fell quickly, and with little relief on Kash, for the stars were few and far between, and shed little light. Dillon stepped out of the office that was doing double-duty as living quarters until separate quarters could be set up, and started for the nearby well. He cursed as he realized his flashlight still lay on the desk, but the light pouring from the open door was enough to see by, and he decided against returning.

As he walked, he breathed deeply of the tangy night air, and sighed with satisfaction. This world was infinitely more pleasurable than the last he had posted, and he intended to enjoy his stay.

He let his thoughts ramble as he walked and so almost ran down the waiting alien before he saw him. The native's huge eyes gleamed softly in the spill of light from the office, and the gray down that covered his body and head, except for the face, seemed soft and alive.

"Tarsa, Bila," said the Earthman, using the native greeting.

"Tarsa, starman. May the Gods shine their eternal light on you."

"And on you," Dillon said, observing the ritual. "But what brings you here at night?"

"The night is beautiful, is it not, starman? It shines with a glory all its own. At times it would seem to outdo its brother, the day."

"Indeed," he agreed. "Your world is one of the loveliest I have yet seen, and my travels have led me over as many stars as there are waves on the sea. But surely you did not come to talk merely of the night and its beauty."

"Alas, no," sighed the native. "My task is a most unhappy one, for sorrow hangs heavy over the village. The women and children are weeping, and the men know not what to do in the face of calamity. It seems as though the Gods themselves have turned against my people." He wiped his eyes with the back of his hand.

"What would you with me, Bila?" asked the Earthman. "Surely I cannot be of any assistance?"

"As a man from the sky, surely you have met the Gods in open battle before!" cried the alien. "And just as surely you must have defeated them, else you would not be here this night."

"I am flattered, Bila. It is true that the Gods of the universe and I are not total strangers. Exactly what is wrong?"

"It is Toll, the son of Kylano. He has fallen from a cliff, and the bones of his arm are broken and need curing."

"But isn't that a job for the priest?"

"Aye. But our priest has been on a pilgrimage these past ten days, and is to be gone another thirty or more. There is no one left with the necessary knowledge. You will come?"

"I'll come, Bila. But first I must get a bag from the office. With it I may be able to help the boy."

"Ah, you too have an herb basket like the priest's? Truly you are a friend of the Gods."

"Not quite like the priest's," said Dillon, smiling. "But it serves much the same purpose." He hurried up the path and into the shack, emerging a moment later with the first-aid bag that was standard equipment for all men isolated from the services of a doctor.



"That's where you made your first mistake," said Cassidy. "Regulation 1287-63C, paragraph 119 states 'no man shall give medical aid to alien races unless a team of certified specialists has checked out all such medicines with respect to such race and certified them safe. Penalty for breaking rule: Revocation of any

licenses; restriction to home world for three years; and/or five thousand dollars fine.' You really did things up right. You should have left that bag in the safe where it belonged."

"Well, I didn't," said Dillon. "And it's too late now to talk of what I should have done. At any rate...."



"Where is the boy, Bila?" asked Dillon as he came up to the alien again.

"At my village, starman. Come." He slipped down the path and was soon swallowed by the darkness. The Earthman hurried after, afraid of being lost in the almost impenetrable night.

He had forgotten the flashlight again, and he cursed as he stumbled over an unseen obstruction.

"Bila!" he called.

"Yes, starman?" The alien appeared as if from nowhere.

"I'm afraid that I'm not as gifted as you when it comes to traveling at night without light. You had better let me hold onto your shoulder."

"Of course, starman. I am most sorry for causing you trouble."

"It's my own fault. I should have remembered the light. Let's get going again." He placed his hand on the alien's shoulder, and they started off again.

Despite his guide, he twice stumbled over obstructions, and would have fallen but for his grip on the other's shoulder. Bila waited while he steadied himself, and then started off again, keeping up a fast pace.

The village lay three miles from the post, and during the day, Dillon considered it nothing more than a brisk walk. But the blindness that came with the dark wiped out all realization of time and space, and he soon began to think that they must have passed it by, when the alien spoke.

"We are here, starman."

They rounded a bend, and a cluster of huts came into view, lit by the dim light of

a few scattered lamps. The alien threaded his way through the narrow lanes between the huts, and stopped outside one of the largest in the group. He held the hangings aside, and Dillon stooped to enter.

The hut was already crowded with natives. The smoke from half a dozen of the sputtering lamps hung like a shroud over the interior, and the Earthman's eyes were soon smarting. He wondered how the natives, with their much larger eyes, could stand it.

The injured boy lay on a pallet in the center of the hut. An animal skin had been thrown over him, with the broken arm exposed. Dillon knelt by him, and felt it over carefully.

"A clean break, thank God," he said, more to himself than his audience.

The boy whimpered, and he reached for the bag, and rummaged around. Finally he pulled out an already prepared hypo, loaded with a sedative. He swabbed the boy's good arm, and pressed the needle home.

The natives moved forward when they saw the needle, and some of them began to mutter. But the boy quickly dropped off into an untroubled sleep, and they settled down.

The Earthman took hold of the broken arm, and marvelled at the frailty of it. The bones had to hold a lighter weight than those of Earthmen, and thus were correspondingly weaker. He felt that he could snap one of them with his hands.

He straightened the arm out, as gently as he could, and then pulled. The broken ends slid together with a satisfying pop, and he quickly bound them with a splint from his bag. He wrapped the bandage tight, and tied it. Then he arose, picking up his bag.

"He should be alright now," he said. "I'll stop by in the morning, when he's awake, and give him a going-over."

"His arm," said Bila. "It is ... fixed?"

"Yes. He's young, and he should heal fast. Three weeks from now he'll be out with the other children, playing games and just as active as ever."

"We thank you, starman," said Bila. "We have not the words to say just how happy we are that you have helped us."

"It's nothing," said Dillon, embarrassed by the show of gratitude. "All Earthmen would do the same."

"Ah, your magic must be even greater than that of the priests. It is most unfortunate that the village priest was away. But the Gods have smiled on us, by sending you instead."

"He'll be back soon, I hope?" said Dillon. "The priest, I mean."

"Alas, not for at least thirty days, and perhaps more. He knew not where his pilgrimage would lead him."

"But if you have more troubles like this?"

"Our misfortunes," said Bila, his face downcast. "If the Gods see fit to abandon us to the miseries of the world, what can mere men say? If some must die, than they shall surely die."

"No!" He regretted the word the moment it was out, but it was too late to recall it. The milk was spilt, and crying would be foolish at this point. "No. If you have troubles, come to me. I will do what I can, although I am not sure that it will be much."

"Ten million thanks, starman!" His eyes glistened with joy. "Our people shall be eternally grateful."

"You'd better save your thanks, until you're sure that I can help you. But right now, I'd appreciate a guide back to the post, and a lamp, so I don't fall anymore."

"Of course. It shall be done immediately." He motioned for one of the men in the hut, who came with a lamp. Bila held the hangings aside, and the two passed outside into the blackness again.

The trip back to the trader's shack passed without mishap and Dillon went to sleep quite pleased.



Ten days passed. They were days of intensified effort for Dillon, as he went about the task of setting up the rest of the post. The warehouse came first, and the living quarters. The office that had been serving double-duty reverted to its



primary function.

Occasionally a few natives would drop around to gaze at the work-in-progress, but they would soon grow bored, and drift away to other amusements. He had twice been back to the village to look at the boy, but so far nothing else had come up to require his meagre medical knowledge. He was beginning to think that he might last out until the priest returned. He had been rereading the regulations covering contact, and the penalties were much too harsh for his liking. He began to worry about hiding traces of his one experiment.

The noonday sun was on the wane when he finished wrestling the last of a group of bins into the warehouse. He pulled out his kerchief, and wiped the accumulated sweat from his eyes. The summer season was full on the land, and the heat was as bad as any he had seen on Earth.

He brought his lunch out to the office porch, and sank down in the rocker that he had brought from his last post. There was a slight breeze blowing diagonally across the clearing in front of the building, and he shifted around to receive its full benefit.

The first bite was scarcely in his mouth when Bila came into sight around the bend of the path. He cursed silently, and put down his sandwich. He stood up to welcome the alien.

"Tarsa, Bila," he said. "What brings you here today?"

"Sadness again wearies our people, and we know not what to do. The Gods are indeed angered with us, and our priest is still away."

"Just what is it this time?"

"It is Kylano. He is at death's door, and the messengers of the Gods can be heard waiting to take him beyond." Two tears broke loose and rolled down his leathery gray cheeks.

"The boy's father?" said Dillon. The alien nodded.

"But what is wrong with him?"

"Alas, we do not know. He was swimming in the lake, when a demon possessed one of the fishes, and bit him on the leg. When he came out of the water, a fever lay heavily over him, and he has become unconscious."

"And you want me to save him." It was a statement, rather than a question, and the native recognized it as such.

"If it be within your power, starman. If you do not come, he must surely die."

"All right, Bila. I'll do whatever I can." He ducked inside the office, and came out again with his bag. They set off down the path.



"Your second major mistake," said Cassidy. "You were lucky with the boy, but you should have come to your senses enough to leave the bag behind on the second call. You were just stepping out into deeper water."

"But the man was sick, and I didn't know what else to do but use the medicines. I couldn't let him die!"

"Why not?"

"Why not? I've got feelings and a conscience. That's why! I couldn't just stand by and do nothing. Especially when the sedative worked on the boy!"

"It would have been far better to let one man die than to have the aliens come to regard you as higher than their own priests."

"It's easy enough for you to say what I should have done here, but I think your own actions would have been far different if you had been in my place."

"I doubt it. I'd never have been made trouble-shooter, if I didn't have the brains to avoid a mess like that. I still think you're just plain stupid."

"My thoughts of you are better left unsaid. At any rate, when we got to the village...."



It was the same hut, and a crowd that may or may not have been present the earlier night. The numbers were the same. The only change was the lack of the overhanging pall of smoke from the lamps.

The man occupied the same pallet as the boy, and the crowd made way for

Dillon as he moved to his side. It was readily apparent that he was very ill, and Dillon uttered a silent prayer that he had something in the kit to help him.

The leg wound was nasty and crusted over. He swabbed it clean, blanching when he saw its depth. Steadying himself, he bound it tightly, and sat back on his heels to ponder his next move.

The bandage would prevent any further infection, but the Earthman was afraid the damage had already been done. The fever lay heavily on the native, and he tossed and turned in his coma. The drugs in the bag were all intended for use by Terrans only, and an attempt to aid the slight alien might only result in death. Whereas if he were left alone to ride out the fever, he just might come through all right.

Kylano let out a muted sob, and struck out wildly, nearly hitting Dillon in the face. He cursed, and turned to his bag, selecting the most catholic antibiotic it contained. He looked up at the watching crowd, but they just stared back impassively. He cursed again, and swabbed a spot on the native's arm, and thrust home the needle.

He threw the empty hypo back in the bag, and shut it savagely. Then he stood up, and looked around for Bila.

"A drink of water, please," he said, catching the other's eye.

"Certainly, starman," he replied, handing over a gourd.

Dillon drank deeply, then wiped his mouth. He handed back the gourd and picked up his bag. As he pushed his way through the crowd, Bila followed.

"Kylano will be well now?" said the alien.

"I don't know. I just don't know. I hope so."

"Is there anything more you can do?"

"Perhaps. If I knew just what he was sick with, and I had the right drugs to treat it, I could do a lot. As it is...." He left the sentence hanging.

"If the Gods will it, he will live."

"Pray that they will it. In the meantime, you might bathe his forehead every now and then. It'll help to make him more comfortable."

"In any event, we thank you, starman. With our priest gone...."

"Why did your priest leave on such a long journey, Bila? I should think he would be more concerned with the care of his flock."

"The ways of the priesthood are beyond the comprehension of ordinary men. When the Gods speak to them, they obey, no matter how onerous the orders may be. If men must suffer during their absence, it is unfortunate. But it must be."

"Then I'd think that your priests would see to it that someone in the village would know what to do in case of emergency."

"Oh, no!" He seemed horrified at the thought. "Knowledge is for the Gods to give to the chosen ones. Common men would not be worthy of it, for it is certain that they do not have the intelligence to deal with it properly. Only the priests are wise enough to be so honored. Priests and men from the stars," he added, as an afterthought.

"Well, in any event, I hope you don't need me any more...."



"But they did need you," said Cassidy.

"Unfortunately, yes. Four more times in the twenty days before the return of the priest."

"What were the troubles?"

"Once, it was to aid in childbirth—my first adventure as a midwife," he said, remembering the event and his shame at his ignorance in the matter. He had had to take directions from the woman. "Once, a hunter had fallen in an animal trap, and broken both his legs," he continued. "And twice, it was for sickness."

"The same one as this Kylano?"

"I don't know. I couldn't hope to diagnose it, so I just shot them full of antibiotics, and prayed for a miracle."

"You should have prayed for brains instead. But all of your sick ones recovered?"

"Yes. I couldn't seem to do anything wrong, and it wasn't long before the natives were beginning to look on me as the personal representative of their Gods. It was embarrassing, the way they fawned over me."

"Tell me," said Cassidy. "You said you read the regs over. Why in the name of all that's holy didn't you have the sense to follow them?"

"I couldn't stand by and watch them die! I had to help them, Cassidy. Damn it, I *had* to!"

"Yeah, sure. But go on."

"Well, to shorten matters, the local priest finally got back from his pilgrimage, and took up his old duties. All went well for about a week, and then another alien became ill. The priest heard about it, naturally, and went to his aid. But it seems my percentage of recoveries was better than his at its very best. They wouldn't let him even near the sick one. Instead, they sent for me."

"You went?"

"Of course. I didn't know the priest was back, and what else could I do?"

"I shudder to think. What happened?"

"The native got well, and the tribe practically pitched the priest out on his ear. He went running to his superiors, and they called a council of war. They banned the natives from the post, and threatened to cut off any who were seen with me from all priestly privileges.

"The tribe made an almighty stink. They called their own council, and there was practically civil war. That's when I called you. Or, rather, the nearest trouble-shooter."

"Ah, me. Why is it that I, Cassius Cassidy, get saddled with all of the real stinkers in the galaxy? I don't mind shooting other people's troubles for them, but I do resent the fact that the messiest ones get dumped in my lap. Sometimes I feel like resigning."

"Cassidy, one of these days...."

"Oh, simmer down. I said there was a simple solution to your problem, and I knew what I was talking about. The natives have been so taken in by your ridiculously lucky flukes that they think you're the next thing to a God. Right?"

"Right." Each looked as though the other were something unmentionable, left over from the last cleaning of the cesspool.

"So we just..." He leaned forward and outlined his plan.

---

Five days passed, peaceably. The natives gave the post a wide margin; not even Bila showed his face. Dillon began to think that maybe there was a chance things would go back to normal by themselves; and that Cassidy's plan would not be necessary.

The first four days were merely a continuation of the heat. The two Earthmen sat around the office, speaking only when it was absolutely unavoidable, and then only in snarls. Dillon sent out a rush request for air conditioning equipment, omitted, by some mistake, from the supplies.

The fifth day was as sunny as ever, but a stiff west wind sprang up, and the temperature was bearable. Cassidy smiled for the first time in days, and Dillon tried to be pleasant to him.

The sixth day broke with an unceasing torrent of rain, and the men returned to their surly grumbling.

"I hope the post isn't washed away," said Cassidy. "This storm begins to assume the aspects of the Biblical flood."

"We're safe enough," said Dillon. "Only...."

"Only what?"

"Nothing. Just a hunch."

"Good or bad?"

"Bad. All bad. I've got a feeling we're due for a visit."

As if on cue, a knock came on the office door. Dillon opened it, and stood aside for the thoroughly bedraggled alien waiting outside. Bila was a sorry caricature of himself, with his down plastered to his body. Water dripped from him in a steady stream.

"Tarsa, starman," he said.

"Tarsa, Bila," replied Dillon. "I've been expecting you."

"Oh? Do you then have the powers of foreseeing the future, too?"

"No," he said, laughing. "It's just that it's been several days since you were last here. You were overdue for a visit."

Cassidy cleared his throat, and Dillon turned to him.

"This is Cassidy, Bila," he said. "He is my brother from the stars, and has come to visit me for a short while."

"Tarsa, Cassidy," the native said, gravely.

"Tarsa, Bila. I have been hoping to meet a member of your people."

"Oh? Has the fame of Kash spread far through the universe then?"

"Indeed, all of the civilized worlds talk of Kash and its gentle folk. It is a common ambition to be able to come here and see you in person. It is hoped that soon such travel will be most frequent, to the reward of both of our peoples."

"Indeed," said Bila. "I thank you in the name of my people. Will you yourself be here long?"

"Unfortunately, no. But when I go I will take fond memories as souvenirs."

"What is so important that it brought you out in this storm, Bila?" asked Dillon, breaking into the conversation. "Your troubles must be pressing."

"Indeed, they are. The Gods frown heavily on our village this day, and I have come once more to seek your intercession."

"What is the matter?" asked Cassidy.

"Alas, the trouble is in my own household. My wife lies at the door to death, and I fear she is fast slipping beyond."

"Haven't you had the priest in?" asked Dillon.

"Against your great and wondrous magic, Dillon, what is the priest? He is like a lost little boy, unable to tell North from East, and helpless in the face of death. Only you have the power to bring her back to the world of the living, as you did

with Kylano and the others."

"I thank you for your trust," said Dillon. "I only hope it is not misplaced."

"You will come?"

"Of course. As soon as I dress for the storm, and get my bag." He turned to do so, then was struck by an afterthought. "By the way, do you mind if Cassidy comes with us? He would appreciate the chance to see your village."

"It will be an honor."

"Good. Get into your togs, Cass."

They were soon ready. Dillon grabbed up his bag, and he followed the native out into the storm. The rain blew straight toward them, and they bent forward, into the wind. The trip to the village was a fight all the way.

The village itself had become isolated; an island in the midst of a shallow lake. They waded across, to the hut that was Bila's. He held the hangings aside, and the Earthmen stepped into the stink of the alien crowd.

The omnipresent lamps were lit, and the smoke hung heavy. Both of the Earthmen were soon wishing they had protection for their smarting eyes.

The natives stopped their keening, and made room for the two men. They both moved forward, and bent over the woman. Dillon could see that she was as sick as the others, but whether or not it was the same disease, he could not say. For the eighth such time, he wished he had taken medical training as a youth, in deference to his family's wishes.

"It's hot in here," said Cassidy. Sweat beaded out on his forehead, and he wiped it away with a shaking hand.

"Small wonder," said Dillon, "with all these people here. They must up the temperature by twenty degrees." He opened his bag, and dug out a swab. After cleaning a spot on her arm, he dug out a needle, and filled it from an ampoule.

"Dillon!"

He whirled around. "Cass! What's the matter?"

"I ... don't know. Woozy. I feel woozy." He staggered, and fell forward, unconscious.



"Cass!" He bent over the man, and turned him over. Cassidy's face was white, and the sweat rolled off in rivulets. Dillon felt for a pulse, and then pulled out a stethoscope. Baring the other's chest, he listened for a beat.

"What is it, Dillon?" asked Bila. "What is wrong?"

"I don't know. He's sick." He looked worried.

"Sick?" The natives stared at each other, unbelieving.

"Yes, sick! Earthmen get sick too, you know!" He bared Cassidy's arm, and swabbed it clean. Then he pressed home the needle he had prepared for the woman.

"He will get well?" asked Bila.

"I don't know." Dillon felt for a pulse again. Disbelief washed over his face, and he sank back on his heels.

"What is it?"

"He's dead."

"Dead?" Amazement took hold of them.

"Dead." The Earthman stood up, shaking his head. "But your wife, Bila. I must attend to her."

"No." The native stepped between the man and woman, and held out his arms.

"No? Why not?"

"The Gods have frowned on you, starman. It is obvious that they are dissatisfied with you, for they took your brother."

"But just because Cassidy died doesn't mean your wife will." He stared at the lesser being, dumfounded. "But she might, if not treated."

"We shall get the priest. We cannot run the risk of offending the Gods by permitting you to touch her."

The Earthman stared from face to face, but the same message was written on all. Hopelessness took the place of question, and he turned, and stumbled from the hut, and into the storm.

"Take the man to the post," said Bila. Several of the men hurried to do his bidding. They carried Cassidy out into the night, without looking back.



"Simple," said Cassidy. "Just like I said." He was hunched over his coffee, his ham-like hands soaking up the warmth from the cup.

"Simple," said Dillon. "I don't get it. Just why did they stop me from treating the woman?"

"We come from the stars, which the natives associate with the home of the Gods. We don't look quite like their legends say Gods should, but they figured we must be close to them, so they credited us with omnipotent powers. The priests claimed the cures they affected were done with the grace of the almighty, and the natives figured your cures came from the same source."

"I can't figure why they wouldn't even let me touch her," said Dillon. "It doesn't make sense."

"Actually, if you had given her the shot without me on the scene, and she had died, they probably would have accepted it as the will of the Gods. The priests fail once in awhile, and they just claim that the Gods have wanted that particular person to die. But when you were unable to save me, another man from the stars, and therefore presumably a close acquaintance of the Almighty, they could come to only one conclusion: The Gods withdrew their blessings from you. After that they wouldn't have let you touch a sick pig—if they have pigs here." He drained his cup.

A roar sounded down from the sky, building up into a wail that scraped the spines of the hearers. It rose to a crescendo, and then came a jarring shock that shuddered the whole building.

"My chauffeur," said Cassidy. "Hot-rodding, as usual." He rose, and picked up his baggage.

"You know, Dillon," he said, "You're a jerk. I'll tell my grandchildren about you. You're a perfect example of what not to do." He shook his head. "A horrible example."

endplate

END

**Transcriber's Note:**

This etext was produced from If Worlds of Science Fiction February 1958. Extensive research did not uncover any evidence that the U.S. copyright on this publication was renewed.

End of the Project Gutenberg eBook of Feet Of Clay, by Phillip Hoskins

\*\*\* END OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK FEET OF CLAY \*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\* This file should be named 32724-h.htm or 32724-h.zip \*\*\*\*\*  
This and all associated files of various formats will be found in:  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/3/2/7/2/32724/>

Produced by Greg Weeks, Graeme Mackreth 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](http://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](http://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 MERCHANTABILITY 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.pgla.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](mailto: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  
[gnewby@pglaf.org](mailto:gnewby@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.