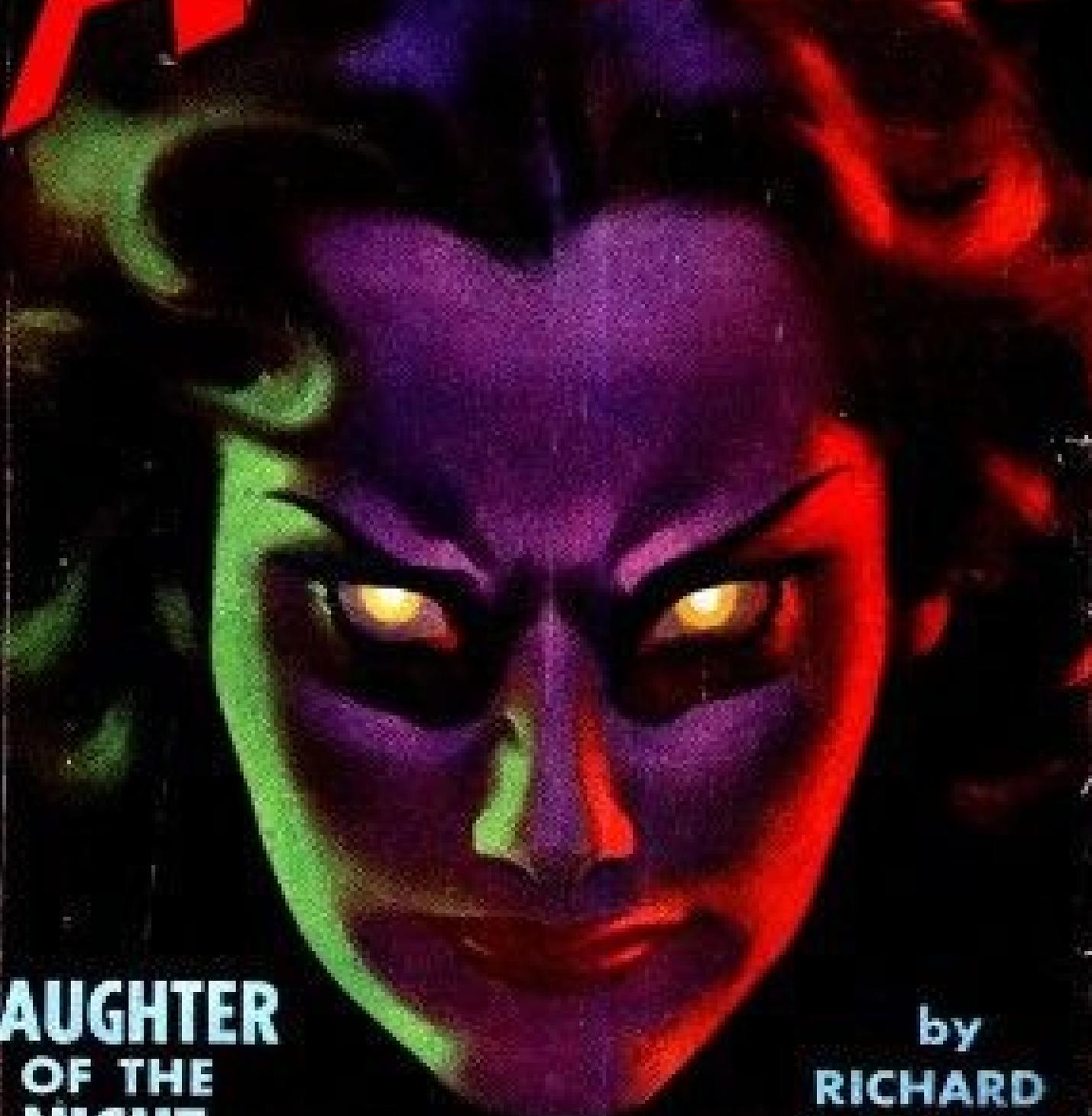


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## STORIES



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OF THE  
NIGHT**

by  
**RICHARD  
S. SHAVER**

**THE RED DWARF FIGHTS THE SORCERER QUEEN**

VOLUME 28  
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# **ONCE UPON A PLANET**

## By J. J. ALLERTON

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The mighty King Miotis came down to Earth to recapture his lost desire for war. But what he saw on this planet, caused him to feel differently.

Once upon a planet there was a mighty warlord. The warlord's name was Miotis. Some might think it an odd name, but then it is entirely probable that the people of this planet would think the name of Smith or Jenkovitz odd. Be that as it may, however, the important thing is that Miotis was the name of this warlord, whatever one may feel about his name.

Now, Miotis was not just a mighty warrior, he was the *mightiest* warrior on the planet. As such, he controlled the life of every person there. For isn't it a truism that war bends men's destiny in the strangest fashions? So Miotis, with his entire life devoted to the art of destruction, was able to direct the lives of his subjects.

But one day, to his consternation and amazement, he found that the peoples of his planet had wearied of the sport of war. In the middle of his last campaign, his men as well as his enemies had laid down their arms and had refused to carry on as was their wont. And no amount of threat or punishment could make them change.

On this particular day when our story starts, Miotis was in his palace, his massive head leaning against a muscular palm, and his gaze intent on the face of his vizier, Kannot. It was not the sort of face Miotis was especially fond of seeing, for it was old, wrinkled, full of cunning and wisdom.

The vizier was, as always, full of words, and as he spoke one blunt finger tapped the side of his rather bulbous nose: "So you think it strange, mighty Miotis, to find that life is boring?"

"I do not find that *life* is boring," Miotis replied. "Life is never boring. It is *I* who am bored. That is the reason I called you here. I could have called any one of my nine hundred concubines for enjoyment, or had my warders drag forth some of my prisoners and found sport in torturing them. Yet, I did not, and I wonder why. In the past, these diversions made pleasant the passing of time. Now, I feel an ennui too great to even want to bother to summon one of these which used to give me so much pleasurable excitement.

"Tell me, vizier, have I become so full of war that I cannot live without it?"

Kannot clasped his hands behind him and rocked back and forth for several seconds, the while he bent a thoughtful and appraising eye upon his King. For Kannot knew the vagaries of the man before him and knew that a single word, a single gesture which would displease the great Miotis, would make fewer Kannot's days. Therefore, when he spoke again, it was with care, weighing his words so that he could give his opinion and yet not endanger his life.

"Methinks, oh greatest and wisest of Kings," Kannot said, "that since war has but a single end, something phenomenal in the universe must have occurred to make that end seem less reasonable."

He lowered his eyes, yet made sure he could peer beneath the hooded lids to see how his words were affecting Miotis. There was no sign on the other's face to show how he felt.

Kannot continued, "By that, I mean death may have become less attractive as a means of immortality. Is it not true, also, that you, the greatest and most noble of warriors, has yourself felt this same reluctance recently to even plan a war?"

The warlord's head nodded slightly in agreement.

"Therefore, I have come to the conclusion that some force of which we have no knowledge has made its presence felt—"

"Now you have presented the problem," Miotis interrupted. "But it is not enough. I want a solution. Already I am weary of this do-nothing life, though it is but a week since we have laid down arms."

Kannot made a sign of obeisance.

"Now go," Miotis said, "and seek out the cause and the solution. One week, vizier, I give you. No more! Your head shall roll, otherwise...."

---

The trumpets announced the arrival of the vizier, and at the sound the players stopped their tune and the dancers their dance. Miotis, looking as though he hadn't stirred from the position Kannot had left him in the week before, lifted his eyes to the bent figure making its way across the immense length of the hall.

"Mighty Miotis," Kannot began, his head bent and his eyes lowered in the correct attitude of court procedure.

"I bid you speak," Miotis said.

"My Lord, the words I have to say are for your ears alone," Kannot continued.

The warlord waved a hand, and as if by magic the court was emptied but for the guards who never left their posts.

"Speak, old one," Miotis commanded.

"I have found the cause, mighty one," Kannot said. "A surprising one, however, and perhaps an unbelievable one...."

The vizier did not look up, and his face betrayed nothing of what he felt. Yet, his aged heart was beating as if it wanted to escape the flesh in which it was imprisoned. The next words he would utter could spell his doom.

"I sent couriers in every direction, to all the courts of all the lands, to our friends as well as to our enemies. And on their return I discovered one fact in common: Not a single nation was interested in war. Something happened to each—"

"Old one," Miotis broke in, "you weary me with these boresome details. Come to the point! I know we are all tired dealing death. Why?"

"Because anger has fled from our minds and hearts," Kannot said, and his head lifted. He had spoken the words which had lain in him, the terrible words which could mean his death. And now the die was cast. The proof of his assertion would soon be shown.

An oddly bitter smile broke on the face of the man on the throne. It was the smile of a man who had learned the taste of utter defeat.

"So you have told me that which I knew in my heart," Miotis said. "Strange, that I, who loved nothing better than the sound of a sword's blow against armor,

should even find the touch of steel repugnant now. Yet, it is so. I cannot carry a knife without having my flesh crawl, even though a scabbard protects me against its touch. Shall we all become a nation of shepherds? Shall we never again know the glory of battle? Tell me, vizier. Perhaps age has lent you an inner wisdom?"

"Wisdom's words are for the historian," Kannot replied. "I, Kannot, have no time for talk. The planning of deeds is my way. And I have a plan.

"Anger must be found again!" Kannot's voice rose shrilly. "It is our only salvation. But, mighty Miotis, we must look elsewhere than on this planet. There is a planet called Earth...."



Miotis' brow knit in thought. A planet called Earth, he thought. H'mm! But how were they to get to it? And having got there, did Kannot want them to invade? No, that couldn't be it. Already, the very thought of invading for purposes of conquest went against him.

"... On that planet," Kannot continued, "wars and death by violence are commonplace. There is never a day or week that does not pass but that somewhere men fight men. What better goal do we need?"

"You have done well," Miotis said. "I could ask for no more. Yet a question persists in my mind. How can you arrange for anger to come to the breasts of us here from the planet beyond the grey mists of outer space? We have no space ships, nor for that matter, the means of making them."

"I speak not of space ships or of men using them," Kannot responded, "for in that matter we have no choice. My thought was in another direction and using another means. I have discovered the way to make a soul-transfer. To put it into words you will better understand, I can do what death does, hold a soul in suspense."

"Which is supposed to have what meaning to me?" Miotis asked.

"Simply this," Kannot said, "I can make a single soul fly through the vast boundaries of space and into another human body which will be waiting for it. There is but a single man I know who can serve as vehicle—you, mighty Chieftain."

For the first time, Miotis' features showed change from the set expression he wore as a sign of his Kingship. Amazement made him blink, and the hand holding his chin fell to the side of the throne, the fingers tapping against the rich cloth. But after a minute, his face cleared and he looked with brighter interest at his vizier.

"Of course," he said. "Who else should go? And already I have a plan of action. Now tell me what must be done and how soon...."



Bly Stanton rolled over and groaned aloud. His hand shook as he lifted it to feel a throbbing temple. His fingers felt a sticky wetness, and memory returned to him—the raiding party of Himlo men, his discovery of them, and the alarm he had sounded, the fight, and then the blow which had felled him.

He rolled onto his stomach, shoved his hands under him and heaved himself erect. A sigh of relief escaped his lips. Except for the buzzing in his brain, he felt all right.

Stanton looked down at his dust-covered clothes, and his fingers brushed at the dirt and mud, but when they came to his shirt they halted. There was a hole in his shirt, high up, near the heart. It was not a hole exactly, but rather a slit which could have been made either with a knife or sword. There was a dried welt of blood surrounding the skin. A shudder passed through his tall, strong frame, as he realized that it was a miracle he was alive. For whatever had done the damage had penetrated deep into the flesh.

The moon was full, and after a few seconds had passed, Stanton bent and searched for his weapon which, he was sure, would be close at hand. But as he found and picked up the long, double-edged sword, a shudder of distaste went through him, and he dropped his weapon and let it lay there.

Once more his fingers brushed at the wetness on his temple. He wondered why the blood was still coming from his head wound, while the cut in his chest had dried up.

He peered around to see if his attackers were anywhere in the vicinity, and decided that his immediate location was clear of danger. Another instant of orientation, and Bly Stanton bent low and scurried from one patch of cover to

another until he reached his goal, the tunnel mouth. Here he would be safe for the present. The Himlo would not dare to follow him here.

His eyes, long accustomed to the sight of the broken arch, passed over the inscription worn deeply and almost illegibly on the green-with-age metal—*Chicago Greater Subway, 2107 A.D.* He was interested only in knowing whether or not danger lurked in the shadows. Again he sniffed. A small smile stole across his mouth. Then the lips tightened in their wonted thin slit, and he started forward at a long lope into the darkness.

Here and there were offshoots, darker passages which disappeared into the Stygian gloom. But his path led straight ahead. Then he was before a barricade of rocks, the barrier which his men had placed against the coming of their enemies.

"Ho, John!" Stanton shouted.



The walls echoed the sound, which was followed by a dying whimper of a voice. "Hi ... Hi! Who goes ...?"

"'Tis I, Bly Stanton," Stanton yelled.

There was a short interval of silence, then a concerted roar of glee, and a dozen men clambered over the rock pile. They shouted his name as they all tried to touch him at once, and there was adoration in their welcome as they pulled and hauled at him.

At length he managed to free himself of their embraces, and as he stood apart, he asked: "What happened? Did I manage to warn enough of our men?"

"Warn us and knock their ambush into a cocked hat. They fell to pieces and ran like scared rabbits when we hit them from all sides. But Mark Smith saw you fall, and he said that the sword which was thrust into you went all the way in to the hilt," one of them said.

"I guess Mark was looking from the wrong angle," Stanton explained. "For sure I'm all in one piece. Got a bloody knock on the head, though. Well, let's get back to quarters. I've got a piece I want to talk over with you all."

A hundred torches made a smoky light of the pitch which otherwise would have been in the vast cavern-like room. Three hundred and ten men stood about in various attitudes of attention, all listening to the tall man perched on a flat piece of concrete, facing them.

"I cannot explain why I feel this way," Bly Stanton was saying. "But this I know, and for sure! No more killing for me. No more hiding in stinking places like this, waiting for the sun to go down so a man can venture out and be a man. No, sirs! Bly Stanton is going out, and in broad daylight. Bly Stanton is going out and bloody well away from this place, out to where the sun hits hills and trees and open spaces. And Bly Stanton is going alone if he has to...."

It was an ultimatum, they knew.



Mark Smith, a short, swarthy-faced man in breeches clipped short at the knees and a leather jerkin for a shirt, stepped forward and waved a casual hand to get his leader's attention.

"I take it, Bly," he said, "that you are bound to leave. Well, that part may be all right. Surely you have a right to leave if you want to. But by the same token you must grant us the right to ask why. We have been together too long for so abrupt a leave-taking."

"And right you are, Mark," Bly replied. "I owe that and more to each and every one of you. Three hundred odd of us, all who are left of millions. And against us, as they have been for a hundred years, the Himlo. And how many of them are left, would you say? A thousand? Not many more, surely. Think, men, some thirteen hundred men, perhaps a few more. No children, no women, just men.

"I don't have to tell you what happened three hundred years ago. History has no meaning to us any more. For are we not eternal? Death can only come to us by violence. Well, not any more for me. Bly Stanton has come to life. That is how I felt when I came to back there in the ruins, that a new life had been granted me. Well, I intend to live it fully, at peace. I tell you, Mark, and you, John, and Abel and all the rest of you, when I picked up the weapon which I had dropped to the ground, it was as if I had picked up a live coal. I could not wear it, the brand of murder. For we are all murderers, we and the Himlo——"

"Again," Mark Smith interrupted, "I agree with you. We and our enemies are murderers. Thirteen hundred and some odd murderers. And before we are done, there will be less. But that is how we have lived for too many years. So many, we can no longer change our ways. Peace is a lost word with us."

"With you!" Stanton said sharply. "But not with me! I have found it again. And I do not intend losing it quickly. I say I leave these scenes and these ways. Tonight. Who will leave with me?"

He looked about with expectant eyes, but the light in them died as his gaze swept the cavernous depths and looked into face after face and saw not a single one which agreed with him. It was not so much a sign of revolt, but an acceptance of a fact three hundred years old.

"Then I go alone," he said with finality. "This has become a bitter world, a world without woman or child, but it is the only world we will ever know. And I am going to live peacefully in it. Good-bye."

They opened their ranks to let him pass. Until the last of them was reached, Bly Stanton thought there would be no answer to his farewell. Then a tall, thin man stepped in front of him. He was Grant Hays, one of the four with Smith, John and Abel, who formed the inner leaders under Stanton. Grant and Bly had always been the closest of friends.

"Bly," Hays said, his eyes steadfast and warm. "Wait. Before you go.... There is more than man to meet out there. The Himlo are one thing, nature another. You must take weapons."



Stanton shook his head hard. "No!" his voice thundered, and sent echoes answering from the walls. "No! I will never draw a blade against even a rat. The old races had their sayings—one I remember well—'Live and let live.'"

"Good-bye, then, Bly Stanton," Hays said. "And good luck."

Bly Stanton did not turn as he clambered over the rock ramparts. And after a while the night hid him in its sable fold.

The man climbed the last ridge of the giant sand dune and looked down at a setting moon sending a long slanting fan of silver over an immense lake. He had

seen the lake many years before, had almost forgotten its existence so long ago had it been.

He turned and looked at the ruins, rising pyramid-like from the tree line to the north. Chicago had been the name of a vast city which had existed here. There had been other cities as large, and some larger. From the deepest recesses of his mind, Stanton remembered an almost forgotten fact. There had been more than three *billion* people on the Earth at one time. Then, on an afternoon long gone, a bomb was dropped on one of the cities. It had been called an atom bomb. The name of the destroyed city was soon forgotten, as were the other cities which were soon wiped off the face of the Earth. For man had discovered in the atom bomb a weapon which proved to be the agency of his destruction. It led to bigger bombs, better bombs, more efficient bombs, and at the last a bomb which by chain reaction killed almost all the people on Earth. And those whom it did not kill it made sterile.

That was the beginning of the end. For in the new way of life, the force of creation died. Men thought of nothing but hatred of other men. So they fought, first with weapons of complex design. Then, as the creative desire was stifled, the weapons became more simple, until at the last man went back to a sword and a knife blade for his murderous tasks.

But it was in the death of woman that man suffered his worst loss. With sterility, woman felt their reason for existence was no longer justified. And so they died, one by one, until now there was no record of any.



These were the thoughts of Bly Stanton as he plodded over the ridge of another dune. Then, all thoughts were wiped from his mind. He dropped to his knees at the sight of the blaze in the hollow between two dunes directly below.

Their proximity to the fire and the light of the moon combined to make their features readily discernible. There was no mistaking the Mongoloid features of Himlo men. And if that was not enough, two of them were dressed in garments of fur which would have identified them immediately. The wind was coming from their direction, so Bly was safe for the moment. They had keen senses of smell, and had the wind been otherwise, Bly would have been discovered.

He retreated like some huge beetle, on all fours, backward, as if he had been

suddenly confronted by a larger beetle. When he had traveled some few yards and saw only the serrated ridge of sand interposed between him and the sky, he rose, turned, and started for the edge of the water.

Though he felt no fear of these men, Bly found it the better part of discretion to move swiftly from their path. He ran at a trot, a long lope which covered ground with a minimum of effort. The whole of the night went by, and still Bly Stanton moved in the easy pace he had set himself. The dawn found his lean figure bounding along the edge of the sand.

Hunger forced him to pause, then, and seek food. There was wild fruit on trees a half mile inland. He ate some apples, and washed down the meager meal with water from a spring. Then he found shelter and lay down to sleep. Travel by night, he reasoned, was the best way.

The sound of voices awakened him. They were voices the timbre of which he had never heard before. He parted the brush under which he had lain through the day, and peered out cautiously. His eyes widened at the sight they saw. Strange creatures, a tribe of which he knew nothing, squatted in the sand a hundred feet from the water. They wore tight-fitting garments which hugged their bodies so tightly that every curve was clearly outlined. And they had figures which were not familiar to Stanton.

It was not strange, for these were women.



Had Bly Stanton been less interested in what he was seeing and more alert to what was closer at hand, he would perhaps have escaped the noose which suddenly slipped over his shoulders and pinioned his arms neatly to his side. Bodies encased in metal jackets leaped upon him and made useless his struggles. He was jerked to his feet, and voices shouted to others below to come forward. He understood the words, for they were speaking in the same tongue that was his.



**They flung themselves upon him from all sides and bound him**

## hand and foot

---

There was a Naila, a Valis, another called simply She, and a tall strong woman, older than the rest, called Mary. Mary seemed to be the leader, or at least the one with the most authority. It was to her Bly was brought.

"Mary," one of the guards said, "the first of what we hoped to find."

The woman looked at the man appraisingly. He was the first she had ever seen. He seemed of good stock. She was quick to note he wore no weapons. It surprised her, for even if he had no enemies, there would be wild animals about.

"Yes," Mary said softly, "the first. Then the book was true. There *are* men in this world." She made a sound of laughter deep in her throat, stopped, then said to Bly, "We have come a long way. Do you talk? Can you tell me whether there are others like you?"

"Like me and different," Bly replied.

The women exchanged glances.

Mary spoke again: "How do you mean?"

It did not take long for Bly Stanton to tell the history of the three hundred men of his group, and that of the Mongoloid Himlo men, the last of the invaders who were the remnants of those who came across from Asia. All the while he spoke, his senses were full of these women. There was a long silence when he finished his tale.

"The books did not lie then," the one called Naila said. "And what about children...?" her voice faded.

"The last of the great bombs did irreparable damage," Mary said. "But we will talk of that later. You have told us that there is a battle to the death between you and these Himlos. Then why are you unarmed? Where are your weapons?"

It was the first time Bly had been asked the question directly. And it was the first time he had to think about it. He let his mind assemble the facts in their proper order, and after a while he spoke:

"I do not *know* why, except that I no longer want to know either the touch or feel of a sword or knife. I do not want to harm anyone. Nor can I explain why I feel this way."

Suddenly one of the women made a sound of horror. They turned to her and saw she was staring in fascination at the torn part of Stanton's shirt where the sword blade had entered. Mary and several others gathered closer, and Mary parted the fabric to see the wound better.

"Look!" she exclaimed in wonder. "How deep it is."

For the first time, then, Bly Stanton saw the wound for what it was, a death wound. He wondered—had he become immortal?—not in the sense he knew, but in actuality, where death even by violence was not the end.

He put out his hand and said: "Let me have a blade."

Without hesitation, Mary handed him the blade which hung at her right side. Placing the point against the flesh, he put both hands about the hilt and plunged it deep into him with all his strength, until only the hilt was to be seen.

Miraculously, he felt no pain. The blade when Stanton withdrew the steel showed virgin as it had entered, and not a drop of crimson dyed the entrance it had made in the flesh.

One of the women put into words what they all felt: "This is magic. Death is gone forever now."

*It was in that very instant that the soul of Miotis entered into the body of Bly Stanton.*



Stanton felt a sudden elation. More, a consciousness of vast powers. He was immune to death. But were his companions? He looked Mary full in the eyes as he said: "It seems that nothing can kill me now, even violence. What of you?"

She knew what he meant. And with as little hesitation as he had shown, did what he did with the blade in her fingers. Her face in an instant became a grotesque mask of pain and horror. A fountain of blood poured from the self-inflicted wound. She tried to say something as she sank to her knees, but nothing came

out.

"Only he is immortal," Naila said, awed. "For look! Mary is already gone. Hail immortal...."

It was the acknowledgement of his supremacy.

He took advantage of it on the instant. "Good. I can use you all. We must first rid ourselves of these men, my enemies. Come, call the others of your tribe and I will lead you to them."

He knew without being told that there were many more of these women. For surely not so few would have come, armed as they were, into a strange land. At his words, several of them sped around a headland which hid the cove beyond. Naila took his arm and led him forward. His eyes widened when he saw the four sailing ships in the large bay beyond the headland.

There were five hundred women all armed and all ready and willing, when they heard the situation, to do his bidding. Nor did he take long to give his commands.

Daylight was breaking when they came to the tunnel which was the headquarters for the tribe from which Bly Stanton had come. He deployed his forces with the greatest of care, making sure the surprise would be complete when he came out. Then he entered. He knew at this hour that his men would be asleep. He was right. There were two hundred of the women with him, and these he placed all along the tunnel length, telling them to hide in the recesses along the walls.



His voice awakened his men. They crowded round him when he clambered over the barricade, and at the sight of the sword in the place where he usually carried it smiles broke on their lips.

"Bly! We have you with us again," Mark exclaimed.

"But of course," Bly said. "It must have been the knock on the head I got in the fight with the Himlos. But now it's clear. And I have news for you. We can get rid of our enemies in one fell swoop. They are as foolish as we. They too sleep in the daytime. Does that mean anything to you?"

"Are you sure?" Mark asked.

"Certain. I have seen them."

"Then let us wait no longer. By the time they come to their senses, it will be too late."

And it was. Only not as Mark had thought. For the immortal Stanton had become battle-crazed, and whether loyal comrade or enemy, he knew only to kill violently. It was Stanton himself who delivered the death blow to his good friend. The rest of his group fell easy prey to the women, who were even more savage than Stanton. It wasn't until it was all over that Bly noticed what his women companions had done. Each and every one of them carried a trophy hung in her belt, a horrible thing which leaked blood. They had cut the heads from those they killed.

All that day and the next and until the last of the Mongoloids had been eliminated, they hunted. They were no longer five hundred women when they were finished. But there were no more men, either. Each of the women carried a single head on her belt when they went back to the ships which had brought them. And Bly, also, carried one.

Bly Stanton was no longer the same man as the one whom they had discovered. The blood bath he had been in had done something to him. His nose had become pinched, and his whole face had changed, so that his eyes were narrowed now and his forehead, for some reason, lower. He no longer walked erect, but stooped and shambled oddly as he moved. His jaw jutted forward, and his teeth showed because of it. Little by little, he had found it more comfortable to be without clothes, until by the time they returned to the ships, the only article of clothing he wore was the belt on which hung his sword and knife.

Naila had taken Mary's place in the scheme of things. Still, she found she had to call Bly her superior. During the long days of slaughter, there had been little need of talk. Muttered directions had done for them.

But as they stood at the edge of the gangplank leading aboard, she said: "Come immortal! There is nothing left for you here."

"Nothing?" he asked, somewhat blankly. "Nothing...?"

"Of course not," she said. "In all of this world not another like you is left alive."

---

Through the brain of Bly Stanton shot a thought that was like an arrow—he, alone, of all the males in the world. What sort of world could it be? What was he to do in this world where there was nothing but woman, and man had no place? He peered at these women and saw them for what they were—beasts, cruel and vicious, shaped as humans. There was no compromising with nature. If one did not serve the purpose for which one was intended, then one served another purpose. He looked at these women who were the rulers of this planet and knew they had an empty rule, and a losing fight. For immortality, in the sense in which he had achieved it, was lost to them.

He shook his head from side to side, and slowly turning, started off without a word of farewell.

But Naila was not as Mary. There was a cunning in her which the other had never possessed. Before Stanton had taken more than ten steps, she was at his side. Her sword flashed in a blinding arc as it sped toward the man. There was a sickening sound as the steel met the flesh of the throat. And a bloody geyser bloomed where the head had been. A vicious grin leaped to her lips as she stooped and lifted the head.

But the grin changed to a howl of fear as the eyes suddenly opened and the lips parted and words came from them: "You forgot, Naila. Death comes not to me. Remember?"

She dropped the head and sped for the ship. The others, witness to what happened, followed as quickly as possible. What they did not see, of course, was that the eyes and lips had closed forever on the instant of their departure.

*For it was then that the soul of Miotis left the body of Bly Stanton.*

---

Kannot removed the mask from Miotis' face. The soul-globe lay to one side. Slowly the eyelids of the warlord raised. For a few seconds his eyes were blank. Then reason came to them.

"Did you ..." Kannot began, and wet his suddenly dry lips. "Did you get to where I sent you?" he finished.

The eyes of the man on the table blinked as though in signal. The lips moved but feebly.

"Can you talk?" Kannot asked.

"Later," Miotis whispered.

Kannot nodded in understanding. He had an idea of the ordeal his King had been through. The telling of what had happened to him could wait for a while.

Hours went by, and the man on the table slowly gained strength. But it was a long time later before he could talk.

"You sent my soul into the body of a mighty warrior," Miotis said. "Aye. A mighty warrior. I saw and learned many strange things. But of all the things I saw, only one stood out...."

"And what was that?" Kannot asked.

"War must die!" Miotis said.

"But war is already dead," Kannot said. "Remember, sire, it is the reason why you allowed the experiment—to seek ways of bringing war back to life."

"No! I saw what war can do to a planet, to man and to woman. It must never come back. From this day forward, the sinews of war will be removed. Look closely at me, Kannot. What do you see?"

It was then Kannot understood. He had transferred the souls of Miotis and of Bly Stanton. But the unforeseen had taken place. He had not merely transferred the two souls. He had done so permanently. And Bly Stanton, in the body of Miotis, had come to do what he realized now too late should have been done on the Earth long ago—abolish war forever.

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