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# The Relationship of Sex Role Stereotyped and Nonstereotyped Fiction to Achievement Motivation Imagery in Eighth Grade Honors Students

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THE RELATIONSHIP OF SEX ROLE STEREOTYPED AND NON-  
STEREOTYPED FICTION TO ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION IMAGERY  
IN EIGHTH GRADE HONORS STUDENTS

THESIS

Submitted to the Graduate Committee of the  
Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
Faculty of Education  
State University College at Brockport  
in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Science in Education

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by

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## ABSTRACT

A body of research has emerged to postulate the heretofore unexplained discrepancies between the sexes as to achievement motivation. This difference has been identified as the Motive to Avoid Success (M-s).

Books convey societal values and attitudes. The characters in books provide role models for children. Since many characters in books are stereotyped with respect to sex role, it follows that children assimilate values from these models. Not the least of these values is a stereotyped attitude toward role and function of gender within society.

This work was designed to study the possible relationship between the M-s in females and the negative perception of female success in males, and the influence of sex role stereotyped fiction in popular reading anthologies.

Forty-eight eighth grade honors students participated in the study. After treatment, results revealed that students exposed to the reading of stereotyped fiction did not show an appreciable increase in negative success imagery in their writing. However, students exposed to the reading of non-stereotyped fiction showed a significant decrease in the incidence of negative success imagery.

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## Chapter I

### Statement of the Problem

#### Background

Raised feminist consciousness has demanded an appraisal of current educational practices. Those most concerned with liberated doctrine and sexism in education have particularly targeted curriculum materials and declining female achievement as areas for concern.

Repeatedly, surveys and studies have substantiated the fact that in children's textbooks, in particular, there are often discrepancies between the portrayal of female characters and their male counterparts. In addition, there is also the question of female achievement that, according to a 1975 National Assessment for Educational Progress Report (NAEP), declines in comparison to the male after the fourth grade.

The NAEP found that in eight learning areas specifically, boys do better in four fields - math, science, social studies, and citizenship. In the other four areas, reading, writing, literature, and music, females consistently outperform males significantly only in writing and maintain a slight advantage in music. In reading and literature female achievement levels surpass those of males at age 9, 13, and

17, but fall behind males by the young adult ages, 26 - 35. This decline in performance poses an interesting question considering the fact that in the early grades, girls outperform boys in all areas (Bentzen, 1963).

The problem, then: What causes the decline in female achievement after the fourth grade?

This declining female achievement, according to various representatives of the psychological community, is basically attributable to a problem of motivation. However, with respect to the cause and effect of this motivation, the theories vary somewhat.

Some researchers (LaVach and Lanier, 1975) contend that as girls progress through school, they face increasing social pressure to conform to traditional sex roles and hence inhibit their motivational drive. Maccoby (1966) concurs that training for a passive dependent role may inhibit a girl's chances for intellectual or creative success. It is likely that this excessive dependency in girls, she explains, contributes to the decline in their achievement which becomes more apparent as they grow older. In fact, it seems reasonable that where great differences between the sexes are perceived, it would be more likely for successful achievement and femininity to seem incompatible (Baruch, 1974).



To more substantially link this decline in achievement to role training, Kagan and Moss (1962) found that the typical female has greater anxiety over aggressive and competitive behavior than the male. Therefore, she experiences greater conflict over competition. Later Kagan (1964) stated that "unnecessary conflicts are generated because of anxiety over deviation from sex role standards" (p. 163).

The brightest females suffer the most. They wish to conform to adult expectations of good academic performance but fear that such achievement may contribute to their unpopularity and appear to make them unfeminine (Coleman, 1961). As a result of these dual pressures, the brightest girls may do well but less than their best. After much time and research in the junior and senior high schools, Coleman (1961) concluded that females "are under a constraint from the culture not to be brilliant students," but exhibit, what he terms, a "holding down effort" (p. 250). It is further pointed out that boys appear to be more analytic, more independent, and more persistent in problem solving situations. "This difference increases with time, and by late adolescence and adulthood, the typical female feels inadequate when faced with most problems requiring analysis

and reasoning" (Kagan, 1964, p. 157).

In 1968, Matina S. Horner, not satisfied and believing the research on achievement motivation to be incomplete and irrelevant as to the female, undertook to explore the basis of sex difference in achievement motivation. Her first clue that something was amiss in this area was that women consistently scored higher on test anxiety measures than men. She conceptualized and ultimately isolated the Motive to Avoid Success (M-s) in her subsequent findings, explaining that for women the desire to achieve is often contaminated by the anticipation of negative consequences as the result of the success.

Declining female achievement is very real. The problem of sexist content in curricular materials has been well documented (Marten and Matlin, 1976; Mlinar, 1973; Rosen, 1971; Women on Words and Images - WOW, 1975). It would appear, then, that the relationship between textual content and female achievement merits some study. In addition, the effects of stereotyping on male attitudes toward the female should be carefully scrutinized as well. It is hypothesized herein that books are enhancers of the motivational conflict in females as well as the cause of additional psychological

phenomena in males.

Books are socializing agents and act as vehicles for the presentation of societal values (Weitzman, Eifler, Hokada, & Ross, 1974). Edward T. Hall in The Silent Language (1959) maintained that children are indeed assimilating the content and values of their books as they learn to read, without giving it any conscious thought.

In a now classic work Child, Potter, and Levine (1946) studied the relationship between children's textbooks and personality development. They concluded that school readers probably foster societal attitudes and influence considerable childhood learning. With respect to the sexes, they noted a striking differentiation between the roles of males and females in reader content. They stated:

To the extent that boys identify with male characters, and girls with female characters, this difference both in itself and as a reflection of facts that hold true of many other sources of influences on children, must have a profound significance on the differential development of personality of the two sexes.  
(p. 47)

As well as fostering attitudes, books or the characters in them provide role models for their readers. According to Wietzman, et al. (1974), books foster imitative behavior and beliefs as they conform to

acceptable standards of behavior.

In his research on role modeling Bandura (1962) has repeatedly established the potency of same sex models on the behavior of children. His work supports the contention of this study that characters in books provide role models for their readers. He states:

Once verbal skills become highly developed the presentation of models' attitudes and response patterns in the form of verbal description can be an effective method for shaping the behavior of others. (p. 240)

He also makes a case for the symbolic model which can describe in varying degrees of detail the appropriate conduct for given stimulus situations and which often take the form of social norms. Moreover, he maintains that:

The efficacy of normative models (symbolic) in shaping and controlling behavior has been abundantly documented by research in social psychology, particularly in studies of conformity and attitude change. (p. 241)

Specifically, then, what is found in school text books that should give cause for concern? The many recent studies and surveys that have been conducted on textbooks (Marten and Matlin, 1976; Mlinar, 1973; Rosen, 1971; WOW, 1975) consistently find that boys occupy the literature pervasively.

In 1972, in order to precisely document and analyze

the content of educational texts, WOW made its preliminary report of elementary school readers. The researchers studied 2,760 stories in 134 readers from 14 different publishers. Each story was carefully scrutinized. WOW found that these 2,760 stories were boy-centered by a ratio of 5:2 and described 147 occupations for men as opposed to 26 for women.

In response to purported claims of change from educational publishers, WOW undertook a similar study in 1975. A content analysis was made of 83 readers from nine major publishers, published since 1972. The researchers counted the number of males and females in illustrations, the number of stories primarily about males or primarily about females, and the number of biographies and occupational descriptions. In the books surveyed WOW (1975) found: boy-centered stories to girl-centered stories by a ratio of 7:2; male illustrations to female illustrations by a ratio of 2:1; male occupations to female occupations by a ratio of 3:1; and male biography to female biography by a ratio of 2:1.

WOW (1975) also found that boys in characterization are ingenuous, clever, curious, resourceful, persevering, industrious, strong, brave, heroic, helpful, skilled,

famous, competitive, adventurous, autonomous, and powerful. Girls, on the other hand, appear in books disproportionately to boys and are frequently depicted in uninteresting and traditional roles. These depictions are manifest in such descriptions as: passive, dependent, altruistic, kind, incompetent, victimizing, fearful, lonely, bored, aimless, and overly concerned with their appearance.

WOW (1975) ultimately concluded that the degree to which the treatment of males and females differ in educational texts is a good indication of current social expectations for each sex and offers some insight into the premises underlying these expectations.

Adult role models in books provide yet another crucial component of sex role socialization. By reading about adult men and women, girls and boys learn what will be expected of them when they grow older. They are, in turn, likely to identify with adults of the same sex and desire to be like them. Thus role models not only present children with future images of themselves, but they also influence children's aspirations and goals (Weitzman, et al. 1974).

By the age of 8, 99% agreement is found among children of both sexes as to which sex does which job,

what kind of person a girl or a boy should be and what the role limitations and expectations are (WOW, 1975). So it seems that books can teach girls to have low aspirations. Furthermore, they reflect American preferences for creativity and curiosity in males and neatness and passivity in females (Weitzman, et al. 1974).

This is not to say that books bear the sole responsibility for sexist indoctrination. Children are exposed to conventional sex stereotypes long before they learn to read. However, school text books do have a special place in this sexual socialization process as they convey society's official approval of appropriate role behavior (WOW, 1975).

Psychologists who are women are now beginning to call attention to the great damage done to both men and women by the narrowly defined role models. In a report to the American Psychological Association in September, 1970, the Association of Women Psychologists stated:

Psychological oppression in the form of sex role socialization clearly conveys to girls from the earliest ages that their nature is to be submissive, servile, repressed, martyr... the psychological consequences of goal depression in young women - the negative self image, emotional dependency, drugged or alcoholic escape - are all too common. In addition, both men and women have come to realize the effects on men of this type of sex role stereotyping, the crippling pressure to compete, to achieve, to produce, to stifle

emotions, sensitivity and gentleness, all taking their toll in psychic and physical traumas. (WOW, 1975, p. 43)

Recent psychological research has found that adult role models who exhibit stereotype sex role differentiation may impede rather than facilitate a child's sex role identification. The findings further reveal that children find it easier to internalize parental values when nurturance, the typically feminine role, and discipline, the typically masculine role, come from the same person, implying a negative relationship between the child's emotional adjustment and the degree of parental role differentiation.

It would appear, then, that both sexes suffer negative consequences as a result of sex role stereotyping. For the female, specifically, there exists a strong association between sex role stereotyping and fear of success (Baruch, 1974). Adult expectations reinforce these stereotypes and condition females to believe that males are inherently superior in several academic and non-academic areas.

For males the problem is perhaps more subtle. As well as creating problems with respect to their own achievement, pressure to achieve, et cetera, these same males learn and accept the negative stereotypes



surrounding women's achievement, and therefore, perceive female success negatively too (Monahan, Kuhn, & Shaver, 1974). For both sexes analytic thinking, creativity, and general intelligence are associated with cross sex typing or identification with both sexes. Thus rigid sex role definitions not only foster unhappiness in children but hamper the child's fullest intellectual and social development (Maccoby, 1966).

The theory that sex typing in children's behavior is brought about through direct shaping by socialization agents is probably the most pervasive point of view in the writing on the subject (Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974). For the most part psychologists concur that this shaping is done in the early childhood years, as early as 2, and most influentially by parents. That is not to say, however, that forces in later childhood do not still continue to modify attitudes, values, and beliefs. According to a Skinnerian view, there is no reason why external contingencies should not continue to shape and reshape the individual; "this view would not point to any developmental change in the relevance of the external socialization forces" (Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974, p.305).

### Purpose of the Study

It becomes the purpose of this study to determine whether the nature of fiction read by junior high school students, presumably well indoctrinated by this point as to their societal values and roles, contributes in any way to the M-s as defined by Horner (1968) and to the negative success imagery with respect to female achievement in males as per the findings of Monahan, et al. (1974).

The specific questions to be answered:

1. Will eighth grade honors students show evidence of negative success imagery in response to a verbal lead cue?
2. Does the reading of conventionally male fiction increase negative success imagery in males and females responding to a successful female actor cue?
3. Does the reading of conventionally male fiction rewritten to incorporate a female protagonist in a non-conventional female situation decrease negative success imagery in males and females responding to a successful female actor cue?

This study is the result of a need articulated by

Horner (1968) that "explorations are needed into the nature of both the personal and situational factors which arouse motivation to avoid success as well as those that minimize its influence" (p. 122).

It becomes the concern of this work, then, to isolate a cultural variable, namely fictional reading content - a "situational factor -" which might conceivably produce the M-s in females and the culturally learned negative response of males toward female success.

### Definitions

#### Sex Role Stereotype

A publically shared picture or assignment to role based on gender. Psychologically similar to the sex role standard which "refers to a learned association between selected attributes, behaviors and attitudes, on the one hand, and the concepts male and female, on the other. In effect a sex role standard summarizes the culturally approved characteristics for male and female" (Kagan, 1964, p. 138).

#### Conventionally Male Fiction

Fictitious stories described by traits as per the research of WOW (1975); stories in which males predominate and are portrayed in a wide range of situations and occupations. Inherent in this fiction are

the traits described by WOW (1975) that invariably depict the males as ingenuous, brave, adventurous, and the like.

### Limitations

This experiment was conducted in a middle income suburban school with 45 English honors students for a period of six weeks.

The students were limited to the reading of six stories in small group instructional units.

Scores of negative success imagery on written response protocols were determined solely on the basis of the work of Horner, Tresemer, Berens, and Watson (1973).

Furthermore, no attempt was made to control for the effects of outside reading.

### Summary

It has been documented that female achievement declines in comparison to the male after the fourth grade. Researchers have concluded that the problem for females is essentially a motivational one, though various psychological theories for the declining phenomenon are proposed as well.

However, in 1968, Horner isolated the M-s to ex-

plain the sex differences between male and female achievement motivation. Subsequent work on Horner's pioneering study in 1968 has revealed that males perceive feminine success in a negative light.

Bandura (1962) and Weitzman, et al. (1974) have established that books provide role models for both sexes. Therefore, it is postulated that there exists a discernible relationship between the content of reading materials and the motivation and attitudes of both sexes.

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## Chapter II

### Review of the Literature

In the past decade the problem of declining female achievement has generated an entire body of research. Many researchers believed that the explanation for the decline in feminine performance was to be found in the area of achievement motivation. This motivational concern arose as the result of renewed interest in the discrepancies in the findings of male and female achievement motivation measures. After many unsatisfactory attempts at resolution of the issue, a breakthrough was made.

In 1968, as part of her work on feminine achievement motivation, Matina S. Horner isolated the Motive to Avoid Success (M-s). It was this motive, Horner believed, that explained the heretofore ambiguous research findings and differences between male and female achievement. In the development of her theory Horner saw the dilemma in successful female achievement. She theorized that on the one hand, if females are successful achievers, they are not living up to societal expectations of behavior. On the other hand, if women fail, they are not living up to their own standards. For such women, con-

cluded Horner, the desire to achieve is often contaminated by the M-s. She further stated that fear of success in competitive situations was the result of anticipated negative consequences, that is unpopularity and loss of femininity.

Horner ultimately hypothesized: a) the M-s is far more characteristic of women than of men; b) it would be more characteristic of women who are capable of success and who are career oriented than of women who are not so motivated; women who are not seeking success should not, after all, be threatened by it; c) the anxiety over success would be greater in competitive situations than non-competitive ones; d) women's anxiety should therefore be greatest when they compete with men.

Horner defined her motive as "within the framework of an expectancy value theory of motivation - a latent stable personality disposition acquired early in life in conjunction with sex role identity" (1968, p. 22). Simply stated: with the M-s comes the fear that success in competitive situations will lead to negative consequences.

To measure this trait, Horner used a verbal Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) - like cue. Her rationale for the use of this cue: "the analysis of fantasy material

has over the years since Freud and Murray proven to be a useful and valid way to measure human motive" (1974, p. 49).

A verbal lead connoting a high level of accomplishment in a mixed sex competitive situation was included as part of her design. The lead was: "After first term finals, Anne(John) finds herself(himself) at the top of her(his) medical school class." The "Anne" cue was administered to female subjects, the "John" cue to males.

The specific criteria she used for scoring the response protocols were developed in accordance with Scott's (1956) results that showed what happens in a TAT "when a person is confronted with a cue or situation that represents a very real threat rather than a goal, or simultaneously represents both a goal and a threat" (Horner, 1968, p. 104).

The motive was scored as present if the subject in response to the thematic lead about a successful figure of their own sex made statements in their stories showing: 1) conflict about the success; 2) the presence or anticipation of negative consequences because of the success; 3) denial of effort or responsibility for attaining the success; 4) denial of the cue itself; 5)



or some other bizarre or inappropriate response.

Of the subjects (90 females and 88 males) tested, 65% of the females showed substantial evidence of the motive, whereas only 8% of the males showed any evidence of it in their imagery. The findings also indicated that the M-s is more characteristic of high achieving women, and that its occurrence is greatest in between-the-sexes competition. Of extreme importance was the finding that females low in fear of success performed in line with male data and consistently did better in a competitive situation than in a non-competitive situation. On the other hand significantly higher scoring fear of success females did better in a non-competitive situation than in a competitive one.

Horner, as a result of her findings, was able to conclude that "when fear of success conflicts with the desire to be successful, the result is the inhibition of achievement motivation" (1969, p. 38).

In 1973, Alper, concurring with Horner's opinion that achievement motivation theory had been largely inconsistent with respect to the female, began her research on the basic assumption that achievement fantasies in women were positively related to personal role preferences. She anticipated that strong achieve-

ment cued stimuli would "evoke significantly different achievement fantasies in subjects who accept traditional sex role imperatives as compared with subjects who reject them" (p. 11).

The subjects were 35 Wellesley College undergraduate women. A role orientation measure of each subject was taken using the Wellesley Role Orientation Scale (WROS). The achievement cue stimuli for the motivation measure included two pictures: one picture showing two women in a laboratory setting; the other showing two men in a machine shop.

As per the findings of Horner, more subjects in absolute terms did tell avoidance rather than success stories. However, unlike Horner's data, the differences were not statistically significant. In accordance with Horner's conclusion, the avoidance of success patterns was found to be more positively correlated with high achievers rather than low achievers. The ultimate findings in Alper's study supported her original prediction that achievement motivation in women is significantly related to sex role orientation, a learned behavior.

Kimball (1973), like Horner and Alper, began by rejecting Atkinson's (1964) male oriented theory of

motivation. She completed her work in a private school in Vancouver, British Columbia with eighth and twelfth grade subjects. Her aim: to study the development of attitudes about success and sex role in 49 male and 138 female subjects.

Kimball was primarily interested in finding out how her subjects would respond to a projective cue similar to the type used by Horner (1968). Each of her subjects wrote two stories, one of which contained a male name and one of which contained a female name. The results showed an increase in fear of success imagery for girls between the eighth and twelfth grades but no similar increase for boys. These findings are comparable to the increase in the fear of success Horner (1970) found among females between their first and last years of college. The girls, in addition, were as likely to tell a fear of success story to a cue in which a male name appeared. The same was true for boys. Kimball concluded, therefore, that if a person finds success threatening, he or she will project this fear onto a wide range of situations - even to a member of the opposite sex, and that any achievement situation which involves a fair amount of competition is conflict provoking in high school women.

The implications of Kimball's work underscores the finding that fear of success is greatest when women are making their most important occupational decisions. Like Horner, Kimball closes discussion on her work on the note that women are led to believe that the very activities which society values the most highly are likely to cause the greatest concern and possibly threaten their sex role identification with the ideal of 'femininity'.

LaVach and Lanier (1975), replicating the work of Horner, tested the hypothesis that the M-s exists in 85 high achieving black and white seventh, eighth, and tenth grade girls. The results indicated that the M-s was prevalent in high achieving girls and was positively correlated with increasing grade level as per the findings of Horner (1970) and Kimball (1973). However, the M-s was not found to be correlated with race.

In a similar study Baruch (1974) tested fifth, and tenth grade girls for the M-s, and her results showed that in the fifth grade 29% showed evidence of the motive. Whereas, in the tenth grade 33% of the girls revealed the presence of the motive in their imagery. As with the previous studies, there was an increase in the M-s as the subjects' ages increased.

In 1974 Monahan, Kuhn, and Shaver extended Horner's

(1968) work. Their design completely crossed the subject and task factors in the Horner experiment. These researchers rationalized that this type of Horner-like design would allow them "to distinguish and evaluate two different interpretations of the fear of success phenomenon" (p. 61). By explanation they maintained that one part of the phenomenon of fear of success could be labeled as "the concept of belief." This concept would assume that stereotypes are culturally learned. The other part of the phenomenon would be based on a more "psychodynamic view of femininity" as postulated by S. Freud (1965).

According to Monahan, et al., the actor in the cue - "Anne/John" - in Horner's (1968) work is of the same sex as the subject so that presumably the subject could identify with the actor and hence reveal his or her motives. Monahan, et al. concede that though this projective technique is well accepted in both clinical and research settings, "its use in Horner's study makes it impossible to determine whether the task factor or the subject factor is responsible for the experimental effect" (p. 61). In other words, is fear of success or negative response a function of sex of the subject or sex of the actor in the cue situation?

Monahan, et al. hypothesized, therefore, that if fear of success responses occur only in females, an "intrapsychic explanation" is suggested. That is, something about females causes them to have ambivalent or negative attitudes toward achievement. This concept, of course, would adhere more to a Freudian school of psychological thought. On the other hand, Monahan, et al. hypothesized that if the fear of success responses occur only with the female cue but for both sexes, a "cultural explanation" is suggested. By implication this would mean that "the stereotypes surrounding women's achievements are negative ones, learned and accepted by both sexes" (Monahan, et al. 1974, p. 61).

The experimenters further theorized that age is a crucial variable critical to the understanding of the nature and origin of the M-s. Monahan, et al. contended that if the phenomenon represents either an emerging personality trait or knowledge of a cultural stereotype, it should appear early and most importantly, increase rather than decrease with age.

In the actual experiment the researchers attempted to replicate Horner's (1968) findings among a sample of boys and girls in the sixth through eleventh grades. Fifty-two of their subjects were boys; 68 were girls.

The design consisted of four groups: 1) females presented with a female cue; 2) females presented with a male cue; 3) males presented with a male cue; 4) males presented with a female cue. The scoring of the cues and resultant protocols were similar to the Horner (1968) procedure. The results replicated Horner's (1968) findings. Twenty-one percent of the boys gave negative responses to the "John" cue. Fifty-one percent of the girls gave negative responses to the "Anne" cue. For the "John" cue there was no significant difference between the sexes in the proportion of negative responses. For the "Anne" cue, however, the boys showed an even higher proportion of negative responses than the girls.

The findings of Monahan, et al. appear to support the hypothesis that the sex of the actor in the cue rather than the sex of the subject is the most crucial variable in the projective response. It also seems to imply that:

Negative responses to female achievement because they occur in both sexes reflect beliefs that females embarking on a professional career in a traditionally male field anticipate, and to a considerable extent experience, all sorts of difficulties, hardships and internal and external conflicts (Monahan, et al. 1974, p. 63).

Though the Monahan, et al. (1974) findings are ambivalently at odds with the conclusions of Kimball

(1973) in terms of male and female response patterns, there appears to be overwhelming agreement that the M-s is a viable and discernible variable as first postulated by Horner in 1968. Equally as important is the consistent reporting of the researchers that the phenomenon of M-s appears to increase with age and particularly so with high achieving females.

#### Summary

The research has repeatedly established the existence of negative success imagery in male and female subjects as well as finding that the M-s in female subjects increased with age. The researcher, then, accepts Horner's (1968) challenge that there exists a need to study the "situational factors" that contribute to the M-s in females and extends the challenge to include negative success imagery of males toward female success (Monahan, et al. 1974) as well.

To meet these challenges, this study makes three basic assumptions: 1) that the content in books qualifies as a "situational factor" which might conceivably operate to alter existing negative success imagery in subjects of both sexes; 2) that the input which books provide students is a cultural variable and one that is modifiable; and 3) that the overwhelming



negative response of male subjects to the successful female actor cue is a culturally significant variable (Monahan, et al. 1974). The third assumption is a critical one since both male and female subjects will be integrated in groups in this work. The integrations of the sexes in this study will permit the researcher to effectively observe and statistically analyze group response trends to the input of fictional content in books.

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## Chapter III

### Design of the Study

It was the purpose of this experiment to determine whether the nature of fiction when stereotyped with respect to sex role in commercial reading anthologies or textbooks contributes in any way to the Motive to Avoid Success (M-s) as defined by Horner (1968) in females and negative success imagery in males (Monahan, et al. 1974).

#### Hypotheses

1. There will be no significant difference between the groups in pretest scores.
2. There will be no significant difference between the groups in the differences of their pretest and posttest scores.
3. There will be no significant difference in the negative success imagery of Experimental Group I ( $E_1$ ) following a period of treatment (A).
4. There will be no significant difference in the negative success imagery of Experimental Group II ( $E_2$ ) following a period of treatment (B).
5. There will be no significant difference in the negative success imagery of the Control Group

(C) following a no treatment period.

### Methodology

The subjects of the study consisted of a sexually mixed group of 45 eighth grade students in two honors English classes from a middle income suburban school. The honors students were selected on the basis of the findings reported in the literature that the M-s is more characteristic of high achieving females than low achieving females.

From the period three class, a total of 22 students participated, 17 female, 5 male. Twenty-three students from the period six class participated of which 12 were female and 11 were male.

Each student was administered a pretest verbal lead cue "connoting a high level of accomplishment in a mixed sex competitive situation" (Horner, 1974, p. 49).

The subjects were asked to respond in writing to the cue to yield a complete "protocol." No definite time limit was established for the completed writing of the protocol. Students were, however, directed to complete their responses prior to the end of the 45 minute class period during which the cue was administered. The pretest cue used: "Anne has won first prize in the science fair for her exhibit on car engines." See Appendix A

for cue and directions.

The protocols were scored according to the Scoring Manual for an Empirically Derived Scoring System for Motive to Avoid Success developed by Matina S. Horner, David W. Tresemer, Anne E. Berens, and Robert I. Watson, Jr. as part of an Office of Education Grant #OEG-1-71-0104(508) entitled "Success Avoidant Motivation and Behavior, Its Developmental Correlates and Situational Determinants." (Appendix B)

The subjects were then distributed into three groups. The groups were labeled Experimental Group I ( $E_1$ ), Experimental Group II ( $E_2$ ), and the Control Group (C).

The ( $E_1$ ) group consisted of a group of ten subjects (eight females and two males) from the third period class with the ten highest indices of negative success imagery on their protocols. The ( $E_2$ ) group consisted of a group of nine subjects from the sixth period class with the nine highest indices of negative success imagery (four female, five male). The control group (five females, five males) was selected at random - five subjects from each class.

Treatments were labeled as A and B. The control group (C) received no treatment. A coin was flipped to determine which of the two experimental groups

would receive treatment A and which would receive treatment B. Experimental Group I received treatment A; Experimental Group II received treatment B. Subjects were exposed to six consecutive weekly sessions of treatments.

#### Treatment A

Subjects read a total of six stories, one per session from the following categories of fiction: 1 - humor; 1 - mystery; 1 - science fiction; 2 - adventure; 1 - sport. Stories used were selected from leading commercial reading or language arts anthologies labeled by the publisher as appropriate reading grade level material for junior high school students. See Appendix C for stories.

In each story the main character or protagonist was a male. The story was conventional with respect to male role situation and stereotyped as per the findings of WOW (1975). At each treatment session subjects received a dittoed copy of the story to be read. They simultaneously read the story silently while the experimenter read it aloud. The stories were read aloud by the experimenter to insure uniformity of reading time and to minimize differences of comprehension levels. Each of the six treatment sessions began with

an introductory exercise similar to a directed reading activity and was followed by a comprehension check after the reading. See Appendix D.

### Treatment B

Students in this group ( $E_2$ ) read essentially identical stories as  $E_1$ . However, in each case the protagonist or main character was changed to a female. Appropriate names and pronouns were changed accordingly. A minimum of rewriting was done to preserve the plot and thematic integrity of each story. The same introductory exercise and comprehension check procedure was followed as for ( $E_1$ ).

After the treatment period, a posttest cue was administered to all of the original 45 subjects. The cue used: "After first term finals, Mary finds herself at the top of her medical school class." The directions used for the posttest cue were identical to those for the pretest cue. See Appendix A for cue and directions. The scoring procedure was also the same.

Students were not aware of the nature of the study. In order to prevent contamination of the study, the experimenter consistently followed the treatment plans for A and B. There was also a deliberate attempt at each session to refrain from "point of view" or "affective" discussions as to characterization, plot, or theme of

the story.

### Statistical Analyses

Two one-way Analyses of Variance were used to test hypotheses 1 and 2 to determine the differences between the groups in their pretest scores as well as in the differences of their pretest and posttest results.

In order to determine the precise nature of the experimental effect and in support of the Analyses of Variance, a correlated  $t$  - test was used to test hypotheses 3, 4, and 5.

### Summary

To determine the effects, if any, of fictional content on negative success imagery of middle income eighth grade subjects, pretest and posttest projective cue techniques were used as measures. Treatments were conducted weekly over a six week period.

The experimenter tested five hypotheses.

Two Analyses of Variance were used to test hypotheses 1 and 2 to determine the differences between the groups in pretest, and differences of pretest and posttest scores.

A correlated  $t$ -test was used to test the remaining three hypotheses to determine the effects of treatments

A, B, and no treatment on Experimental Groups I and II  
and the Control, respectively.

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## Chapter IV

### Findings and Interpretations

Since this study deals with the fear of success phenomenon in females (Horner, 1968) and the negative response patterns of males to female achievement (Monahan, et al. 1974), it is essential in this chapter to report the findings, depict the data, and formulate interpretations regarding the effects of stereotyped and non-stereotyped fiction on the same.

#### Hypotheses

1. There will be no significant difference between the groups in pretest scores.
2. There will be no significant difference between the groups in the differences of their pretest and posttest scores.
3. There will be no significant difference in the negative success imagery of Experimental Group I ( $E_1$ ) following a period of treatment (A).
4. There will be no significant difference in the negative success imagery of Experimental Group II ( $E_2$ ) following a period of treatment (B).
5. There will be no significant difference in the negative success imagery of the Control Group

(C) following a no treatment period.

### Findings and Interpretations

Prior to the statistical reporting, however, it is necessary to remark on the scoring of the response protocols both pretest and posttest.

#### Scoring:

An independent scorer\* was taught to rate the protocols according to the Scoring Manual for an Empirically Derived Scoring System for Motive to Avoid Success (Horner, et al. 1973). According to the directions in said manual, a scoring reliability of at least .85 should be achieved.

In accordance with the formula and recommendations therein, both the experimenter and the independent scorer rated all pretest and posttest responses. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient ( $r$ ) was used to determine scoring reliability. The reliability per period classes was as follows: period 3 pretest:  $r=.96$ ; period 6 pretest:  $r=.95$ ; period 3 posttest:  $r=1.0$ ; and period 6 posttest:  $r=.94$ .

#### Data:

The initial process in implementing the experimental design was the isolation of those subjects ex-

\*Patrick Canavan

hibiting any negative success imagery in their response protocols. Of the 45 subjects tested, 37 showed some evidence of negative success imagery in the pretest responses. See Appendix E for raw scores. The number and percentages of those exhibiting some negative success response imagery in their pretest protocols is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

## Presence of Pretest Negative Success Imagery (NSI)

	Period 3	Period 6	Total Subjects
No. of S's	22	23	45
S's with NSI	18	19	37
% of NSI	81.8%	82.6%	82.2%

Of the 22 subjects pretested in the period three class, 10 subjects with the 10 highest ratings of negative success imagery in their protocols were selected to serve as Experimental Group I. Of the 23 subjects pretested in the period six class, nine subjects with the nine highest ratings of negative success imagery in their protocols were selected to serve as Experimental Group II.

Experimental Group I was designated to receive

treatment A, the reading of stereotyped stories, and Experimental Group II was designated to receive treatment B, the reading of non-stereotyped stories. A toss of the coin determined the treatment each group was to receive.

The Control Group was selected at random from the remaining pretest protocols of both classes. Five from each class were selected to comprise the total 10 subjects to act as the control.

After the six week treatment period, all 45 subjects were administered a posttest cue. The presence of posttest negative success imagery appears in Table 2.

Table 2

Presence of Posttest Negative Success Imagery (NSI)

	Period 3	Period 6	Total Subjects
No. of S's	22	23	45
S's with NSI	17	14	31
% of NSI	77.3%	60.9%	68.9%

A one-way Analysis of Variance was used to test hypotheses 1 and 2.

Hypothesis 1: It was necessary to reject the null

hypothesis that there will be no significant difference between the groups in pretest scores. See Table 3.

Table 3

## Differences Between the Groups in Pretest Scores

	E <sub>1</sub> stereotyped	E <sub>2</sub> non-stereotyped	C no treatment		
Mean	4.9	5.44	2.2		
S.D.	1.1	1.51	1.48		
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	F <sub>.95</sub>
Between Means	58.72	2	29.36	15.667	3.37
Within Samples	48.73	26	1.874		
Total	107.45				

The critical F ratio at the .05 level of significance is 3.37. The calculated F ratio was 15.667. There does appear to be a significant difference between the groups in the pretest scores. It is reiterated that this study is primarily interested in determining the effects of treatments A and B on the two experimental groups.

It is crucial, therefore, that there be no signi-

ficant difference between the two experimental groups in pretest scores. Since the null hypothesis was rejected and there apparently is a difference between the groups in the pretest scores, it is therefore important to determine the precise nature of the difference. Is there a significant difference between  $E_1$  and  $E_2$ ,  $E_2$  and C, or  $E_1$  and C in the pretest scores?

According to the data (Appendix F), the critical difference between the groups in pretest scores is between  $E_2$  and C, and  $E_1$  and C.

There is no critical difference between the two experimental groups on the pretest scores. The differences between the two experimental groups and the control were expected as the subjects in the two experimental groups were chosen on the basis of having the highest negative success imagery scores. The control group, however, was selected from the remainder of the class who scored lower.

Hypothesis 2: It was necessary to reject the null hypothesis that there will be no significant difference between the groups in the differences of their pretest and posttest scores. See Table 4. For mean scores and standard deviation on posttest results, see Appendix G.

Table 4

## Differences Between the Groups in Difference Scores

	E <sub>1</sub> stereotyped	E <sub>2</sub> non-stereotyped	C no treatment		
Mean Difference	1.1	3.44	.2		
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	F <sub>.95</sub>
Between Means	52.52	2	26.26	6.79	3.37
Within Samples	100.72	26	3.87		
Total	153.24				

The critical F ratio at the .05 level of significance is 3.37. The calculated F ratio was 6.79. There is a significant difference between the groups in the differences of their pretest and posttest scores.

The critical difference between the groups in differences of pretest and posttest scores is between E<sub>1</sub> and E<sub>2</sub>, and E<sub>2</sub> and C (Appendix H). This critical difference establishes the fact that the significant difference in E<sub>2</sub>'s performance was the result of treatment B, the reading of non-stereotyped stories. That there is no significant difference in the differences of pretest and posttest scores between E<sub>1</sub> and C attests

that treatment A, the reading of stereotyped stories, and the no treatment period were ineffectual in producing a change.

A correlated  $t$ -test was then used to test the remaining three hypotheses. The data appear in Table 5.

Table 5

Correlated  $t$ -Analysis  
For Groups Between Pretest and Posttest Results

	$E_1$ stereotyped	$E_2$ non-stereotyped	C no treatment
N	10	9	10
Mean Diff.	1.1	3.44	.2
Calc. $t$	1.195	9.13	.514

Hypothesis 3: The researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis that there will be no significant difference in the negative success imagery of Experimental Group I following a period of Treatment A.

The critical  $t$  at the .05 level of significance on a two-tailed test is 2.262. The calculated  $t$  was 1.195. There appears to be no significant difference in the negative success imagery of  $E_1$  following a period of treatment A. The Treatment A, the reading of stereotyped stories, was apparently of little consequence in



posttest results. In light of the data presented, it can be concluded that the reading of sex role stereotyped fiction does not necessarily increase negative success imagery in eighth grade honors students.

Hypothesis 4: It was necessary to reject the null hypothesis that there will be no significant difference in the negative success imagery of Experimental Group II following a period of treatment B.

The critical  $t$  at the .05 level of significance on a two-tailed test is 2.306. The calculated  $t$  was 9.13. There is a significant difference in the negative success imagery of  $E_2$  following a period of treatment B. The treatment B, the reading of non-stereotyped stories rather than an initial difference between groups, it would seem, was responsible for the experimental effect. This reinforces the finding in the testing of  $H_2$  that there was indeed a significant difference between the groups in the differences of their pretest and posttest scores, and that it was  $E_2$  that differed significantly from the other two groups.

It appears, then, that the reading of stereotyped fiction rewritten to incorporate a feminine protagonist in a non-conventional female situation does indeed decrease negative success imagery in eighth grade honors

students.

Hypothesis 5: The researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis that there will be no significant difference in the negative success imagery of the control group following a no treatment period.

The critical  $t$  at the .05 level of significance on a two-tailed test is 2.262. The calculated  $t$  was .514. There is no significant difference in the negative success imagery following a no treatment period. That no change occurred in the control group could be attributed to the fact that though they had no experimental treatment, they continued to read on their own and in school fiction of a stereotyped nature.

#### Summary

The rejection of hypotheses 1, 2, and 4 supports the contention discussed in Chapter 1 that the reading of non-stereotyped fiction could conceivably produce desirable effects in readers. This desirable effect turns out to be a significant decrease in the negative success imagery in written response protocols.

By failing to reject hypotheses 3 and 5, it must be concluded that the reading of stereotyped fiction produces no discernible increase in the existing negative success imagery of readers.

That is not to say, however, that stereotyped fiction is not responsible for negative success imagery. It is quite possible that its occurrence is in some way developmentally related and observable prior to the eighth grade when students are more substantially indoctrinated as to appropriate sex role stereotypes.

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## Chapter V

### Conclusions and Implications

#### Purpose

The concern of this study has been the phenomenon of declining female achievement (Bentzen, 1963) and the negative male attitudes surrounding female achievement (Monahan, et al. 1974) specifically as they are related to the environmental input of "sexist" stereotyped fictional material.

The tenets that books perpetuate stereotypes (Weitzman, et al. 1974) and enhance the feminine motivational dilemma (Coleman, 1961) are now more firmly held to, given the recent findings reported herein.

Though the remarks were made more than 20 years ago when Child et al. (1946) first published their now classic study, their words are still meaningful today. With respect to reading material, the words, of Child, et al. (1946) are particularly potent.

It should cause little wonder that women are sometimes less fitted for creative work and achievement than men of similar aptitudes, for there is certainly much difference in the motivational training they receive for it. Not only does the informal training of boys and girls at home and in the community differ, but even the formal education they are receiving in the classroom differs because of

the books they read. (p. 48)

### Conclusions

The reading of conventionally stereotyped fiction does not contribute to an increase in negative success imagery in eighth grade honors students. This does not necessarily mean, however, that the reading of this type of fiction does not contribute at some earlier grade level to the development of this type of response pattern in written projective responses. The fact that negative success imagery exists at all in eighth grade students may mean that it is being continually reinforced by the nature of what students read in school.

Furthermore, it has been found that the reading of non-stereotyped fiction (females in unconventional role situations) tends to decrease the occurrence and amount of negative success imagery in eighth grade honors students. Perhaps the utilization of this information would free females to higher pursuits of excellence and success and males of burdensome sex role attitudes that limit the expanse of their psyches.

### Implications for Future Research

In light of the acceptance of the first null hypothesis, it would be interesting, enlightening, and

more conclusive to study the effects of fiction on negative success imagery in the earlier grades. Perhaps this phenomenon could be isolated within a developmental period at a point when it would be more susceptible to stereotyped print matter.

A clearer picture of the phenomenon would also be gleaned in a study of a similar nature isolating or segregating the gender variable to determine sex related differences to both sex stereotyped and non-stereotyped fiction.

The ultimate follow-up to this type of work, however, would involve a pilot project of a longitudinal nature whereby experimenters would trace subjects from kindergarten through the eighth grade testing at intervals to determine occurrences, changes, or developments of negative imagery response patterns in relationship to planned programs of fictional content.

#### Implications for Classroom Practice

In order to have impact in the classroom, teachers must be educated as to the desirability of reading non-sexually stereotyped material. It is not only important for them to recognize that stereotyped fiction exists, they must also realize that the reading of its non-stereotyped counterpart offers positive features in the

way of alleviating some negative attitudes in young adolescents.

There are perhaps some who would undoubtedly argue that since the reading of conventionally stereotyped fiction was found not to increase negative success imagery in subjects, it would be perfectly justifiable to continue to use existent stereotyped materials in lieu of more desirable and more expensive replacements. However, an ethical question is then raised: Is it justifiable for attitudes to remain unaltered when they might conceivably be beneficially modified to permit optimum psychological development in both sexes and prevent the motivational atrophy of many a would be successful female?

Of course, the most expedient but not necessarily the most feasible solution to the problem would be the immediate acquisition of a wealth of materials providing a variety of options for both sexes. The more realistic recommendation, however, would advise that while some new materials are being acquired, teachers could work within the confines of existing material and incorporate the teaching of critical skills regarding the sex role stereotype into their daily plans.

Properly trained, teachers could screen books and

other instructional media for sexist stereotypes. They could in turn teach their students to be aware of the sexist aspects of their environment in general and in printed matter in particular. More importantly, students could be taught to explore and modify attitudes as they are encountered. In summary, it becomes most crucial to develop critical thinking abilities in students as to an author's sexist language and concepts (Schulwitz, 1976).

In an attempt to relieve the long term pressures of the problem, educators should work in conjunction with textbook publishers. These publishers should be constantly made aware of current demands for more alternatives for the sexes. While many publishers have claimed change as a result of feminist pressure, little actually has been done to pervasively eradicate the more destructive sex-role attitudes from educational materials (Marten and Matlin, 1976).

Where genuine help and concern is forthcoming from publishers, educators should take it upon themselves to cooperate to the fullest.

Kagan (1964) has claimed that unlike many undesirable psychological states, it is possible to alter the associational link between domain of knowledge (medicine,



law, science, and finance) and the sex roles and existing orientation by modifying procedures and the atmosphere of the elementary schools.

In light of the present findings, the readers and textbooks that remain essentially unchanged despite demands from militant organizations should be the elementary "procedural" target of enlightened educators as it is believed that these materials still continue to exert pressure and influences that ultimately produce or reinforce the type of negative success imagery so in evidence in eighth grade honors students.

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**Appendix A**

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

Directions:

On the top of the next page you are going to see a sentence in quotation marks. Your task is to tell a story that is suggested to you by the sentence. Try to imagine what is going on. Then tell what the situation is, what led up to the situation, what the people are thinking and feeling, and what they will do. In other words, write as complete a story as you can - a story with plot and characters. You will have as much time as you need, but write the thoughts that are your first impressions.

This is not a test. There are no right or wrong stories, or kinds of stories so you may feel free to write whatever is suggested to you when you read the sentence. Spelling, punctuation, and grammar are not important. What is important is to write out as fully as possible the story that comes to your mind as you imagine what is going on. Notice that there is a page for writing the story. On this story sheet 6 questions are printed with about a 2 inch space for writing your story following each question.

If you need more space for writing your story, use the reverse side of the paper. Do not turn the page until you are told to do so.







**Appendix B**

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SCORING MANUAL

I. SCORING CATEGORIES

Scoring Weights

In the parentheses below each category are the names of the closest corresponding categories of Horner's original (1968) present-absent scoring system for "fear of success imagery." The prior system was used to tap subject's expectations about the consequences of highly successful achievement and therefore only very explicit success specific cues were used. E.g. "Anne finds herself at the top of her medical school class." This system does not require such specific cues.

A. CONTINGENT NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES +2

B. NON-CONTINGENT NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES +2

For both A and B (negative consequences because of success, negative affect because of success, bizarre, inappropriate, unrealistic or non-adaptive responses to the "success" situation described by the cue)

C. INTERPERSONAL ENGAGEMENT +2

(instrumental activity away from present or future success)

D. RELIEF +1

(Any direct expression of conflict about success)

E. ABSENCE OF INSTRUMENTAL ACTIVITY +1

(instrumental activity away from present or future success)

F. ABSENCE OF OTHERS -2

(opposite of fear of social rejection)

NOTE: This is a counter indicative category

Appendix C

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Coombs, C. Saddle Shy. In Adventures Ahead. New York:  
Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968.

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From the day Dad brought Cyclone home to add to the Bar-S riding stock, it seemed that vacation would never arrive. Oh, how I itched for the long rides out across the grama-grass flats, up into the oak-covered foothills, and on through the pinon pines, where, even on summer nights there's a sharpness in the air that makes you hunch deeper into your bedroll.

You can have your motorboats, automobiles, and airplanes. Give me a good horse with a shade of defiance in his eyes and plenty of vinegar in his hoofs. That's all. For a fellow like me, raised on the Bar-S, where, as the song goes, "the coyotes howl and the wind blows free," that's the making of a fine friendship. As you may have gathered, I like to ride.

So you can imagine what happened inside me that day during the noonday meal when mother showed me the letter she had received from Uncle George. It said that my cousin Bradford was headed west for a month's stay at the Bar-S.

"I-I didn't know he was invited," I said.

"Why, Chick," Mother looked across the table at me. "You don't sound a bit pleased. It's about time that you met some of your relatives. Don't you agree?"

"Well, sure, Mom," I said, "but why did it have to be Bradford?"

That brought a scowl from my dad. "And just what's the matter with Bradford?" he asked.

"Didn't you say once that Bradford didn't like to ride horses? That he was afraid of them?"

"Why-er, yes. Come to think of it, he is afraid of them. Had a pretty nasty spill when he was a little tyke. Never's been on one since. Can hardly blame him. Broke an arm and a couple of ribs."

"Oh, that is too bad," mother responded.

To me it was a grave tragedy: not the broken arm and ribs, but his dislike of the saddle. Naturally, I would be expected to entertain cousin Bradford while he was at Bar-S. That would be just lovely! Fat chance I'd have of getting in the rides I had planned. Besides, I just didn't relish cottoning up to a guy who was afraid of a horse.

"But there are lots of things to do," Mother went on. "You can sink some posts and set up that badminton outfit you got last Christmas from Uncle George. You can hike, or go swimming in Elder Creek, or ..."

But Mother just might as well have said I could go tie myself to an anthill. I was not happy at the prospects - not a bit happy.

It didn't seem to make a whole lot of difference though. Preparations for Bradford's arrival went on according to schedule. I found myself wondering what kind of fellow he must be.

And all the time I was preparing for Bradford's arrival, Cyclone was just wasting away down at the corral; just eating, sleeping, and getting fat. I grew more resentful each day.

The day Bradford was scheduled to arrive, I was trying to finish up repainting the old cookhouse, which we had converted into a "guest room," as Mother called it.

She and Dad came out of the house dressed for town.

"I guess you'd better stay here, Chick," Dad said.

"There's a boy coming out from Hillview this morning to help out with the roundup for a couple of days."

"But, Dad," I protested quickly. "What's the matter with me? I can rope and herd those creatures as well as--"

"Sure, Chick, sure," my Dad said. "That's not the idea. It's just that - well, it wouldn't be very polite to leave Bradford to himself in the first few days he's here. Now would it?"

I was in no mood to argue. The outlook for a warm, happy summer was fast chilling. I shrugged lamely and turned to vent my anger on the paintbrush.

"When the new boy arrives, maybe you can find something for him to do until we get back. Bradford's train is due about eleven fifteen, so we should be back shortly after lunchtime."

I could tell Dad was watching me closely. He knew how much I liked to ride in the roundups. He probably knew how I was pining away inside to get rid of that paint can and swing into Cyclone's saddle. But then, too, Dad had his own ideas about entertaining company. He likes that old Western hospitality!

I could see my job cut for me the coming month - a very sorry job, indeed - nursemaiding my saddle-shy cousin. I began to wonder if I'd be able to get my foot into a stirrup even once.

The folks drove down the dirt road toward Mesquite Junction.

I slapped paint onto the outside of that cookhouse with a vengeance. I was so intent on the job, and so intent on trying to figure out a solution to my approaching plight, that I failed to notice someone approach.

"Hi," the voice said right behind me. I spun quickly, saw the sandy hair, the broad grin, the even tan.

"Guess I got here a little earlier than expected, so--"

"Well, you just missed Dad," I said. "He told me you were coming. Maybe you can help me a little until they get back. Won't be long. Went into Mesquite Junction to pick up a cousin of mine."

"Cousin?" he said.

"Yeah, and what a cousin! Can you imagine a guy our age being afraid of horses? Can't imagine why he picked a ranch to spend his vacation on. A guy's lost without a horse out here, isn't he?"

"I suppose so, but--"

I had been watching him closely. There was something strangely familiar about this stranger.

"Now isn't this something?" I ladled the last bit of paint out of the can. "Lack about a half-pint of having enough to finish. Wanted like the dickens to wind up this job, too."

"Maybe I could go get you some more," he offered.

"Say, that's a good idea. Where'd you leave your horse?"

"I-I'd just as soon walk. Besides--"

"Walk! It's two miles to Mesquite Junction. Take too long. You'll need a fresh horse anyway." I tore for the stable.

I'm not in the habit of letting anyone but myself ride Cyclone. But he needed the exercise, and it certainly didn't look as if I was going to get the chance to give him much. I saddled him and led him gently out so he wouldn't kick dust into my new paint job.

"I guess you know the way to Mesquite Junction," I said, "There's a short cut right up there beyond that second giant Joshua."

"Yeah, I know. I came in that way." He was looking at me strangely. There seemed to be some kind of struggle going on inside him. I could see it in his eyes. "How-how's this horse?"

"Might be a little frisky," I said. "Hasn't had much exercise lately. So you can let him out a little. Shame to spoil a good horse like Cyclone just because of some fellow who let one spill scare him out of a lifetime of fun. Why, a fellow like that might end up finding he's afraid of his own shadow." I let my bitterness carry me away.

The new fellow got red around the ears. He started to say something, but changed his mind.

"Get Nile Green," I said. "Think a pint will do."

He looked at me for a long moment. Then he walked over to Cyclone, holding out his hand timidly, like no horseman I had ever seen. Then he slipped his left foot



into the stirrup and pulled himself up into the saddle.

"Well, Cyclone was friskier even than I had expected. He took a couple of mincing steps, then, as though sensing that his rider was a tenderfoot, sashayed quickly to the side. The newcomer flew out of the saddle and sprawled in the dust. He lay there for a moment. I didn't make any move to help him. He rose slowly to his feet. His face was the color of rain-washed ashes.

"C'mon," I said impatiently. "Quit clowning. If you don't hurry after that paint, that cousin of mine will be here. If he's the kind of fellow who's afraid of a horse, he probably wouldn't like the idea of a partly painted guest house. Don't use much rein. You don't need it with Cyclone."

He started to protest, but I turned on my heel and strode back toward the house. I didn't hear a sound for a few minutes. I was almost afraid to listen. Then there was the squeak of saddle leather as he remounted.

Cyclone's impatient hoofs began to play a rapid tattoo in the dust. The new fellow talked rapidly. The hoofbeats steadied. Then they were echoing down the road in a fast gallop. I turned just in time to see Cyclone and his rider cut off at the short cut beyond the Joshua. I followed their trail of dust for a couple of minutes, then turned back to my job - my other job.

I guess it was a half hour later when my folks returned - alone.

"The station agent said that the train got in early," Dad said. "Left his suitcase at the station." Dad's eyes were searching the sage-covered range.

"Oh, John," Mother twisted her wedding ring nervously, "if anything has happened to Bradford-"

"Chick," Dad said, "go saddle a couple of horses. We'd better have a look back along the cutoff. Pretty hot day to be without water."

Well, I wasn't trying to be clever; but actually, they hadn't given me a chance to get a word in edgewise. And just then I saw a small cloud of dust approaching across the flat.

"Looks like someone coming now," I announced.

"Well, it's no one afoot," Dad said.

Just then the rider came into view around the Joshua. He was coming at a good clip and was, to all appearance, enjoying the ride immensely. Could this be the same timid youth who had mounted Cyclone such a short time ago?

"Why, that's Cyclone!" Dad exclaimed. He shot me a questioning glance.

"John," Mother shouted. "John! That looks like -"

it is Cousin Bradford, sure as you're born."

Bradford reined up to a stop before us. He had one of those dusty grins spread across his face like something buttoned to each ear. He dropped from the saddle and gave my mother a big happy hug.

"Hello, Uncle John," he extended his hand to my father. "This sure is starting out to be a good vacation."

"I suppose you two boys have met," Dad said, hiding his puzzled surprise. "Can't imagine Chick letting any stranger ride Cyclone."

I guess I was supposed to look all flustered and puzzled at the strange turn of events. I'm sure I did.

"Hi," Bradford said.

"Hey, that's where we came in," I said. "Where's the paint?"

"Paint? Paint! I forgot all about the paint. I-I was having so much fun riding that I-well, it has been a long time since I've been on a horse."

"What's all this talk about paint?" Mother said. I tried to do some fast and fancy signaling, but I was too late. "There's another full quart of that paint on the shelf just inside the cook-er, guest house," she went on.

Well, I guess my face was red, all right. Bradford was watching me closely. I couldn't tell whether he was sore at me or not.

A slow smile flickered to life on Dad's face, too. We were all busy putting two and two together.

Bradford stepped over. "We haven't met formally, have we, Chick?" He extended his hand. "Hi, cousin," Then he lowered his voice. "You sure worked one on me that time," he said. Then he added, "And thanks-thanks a lot."

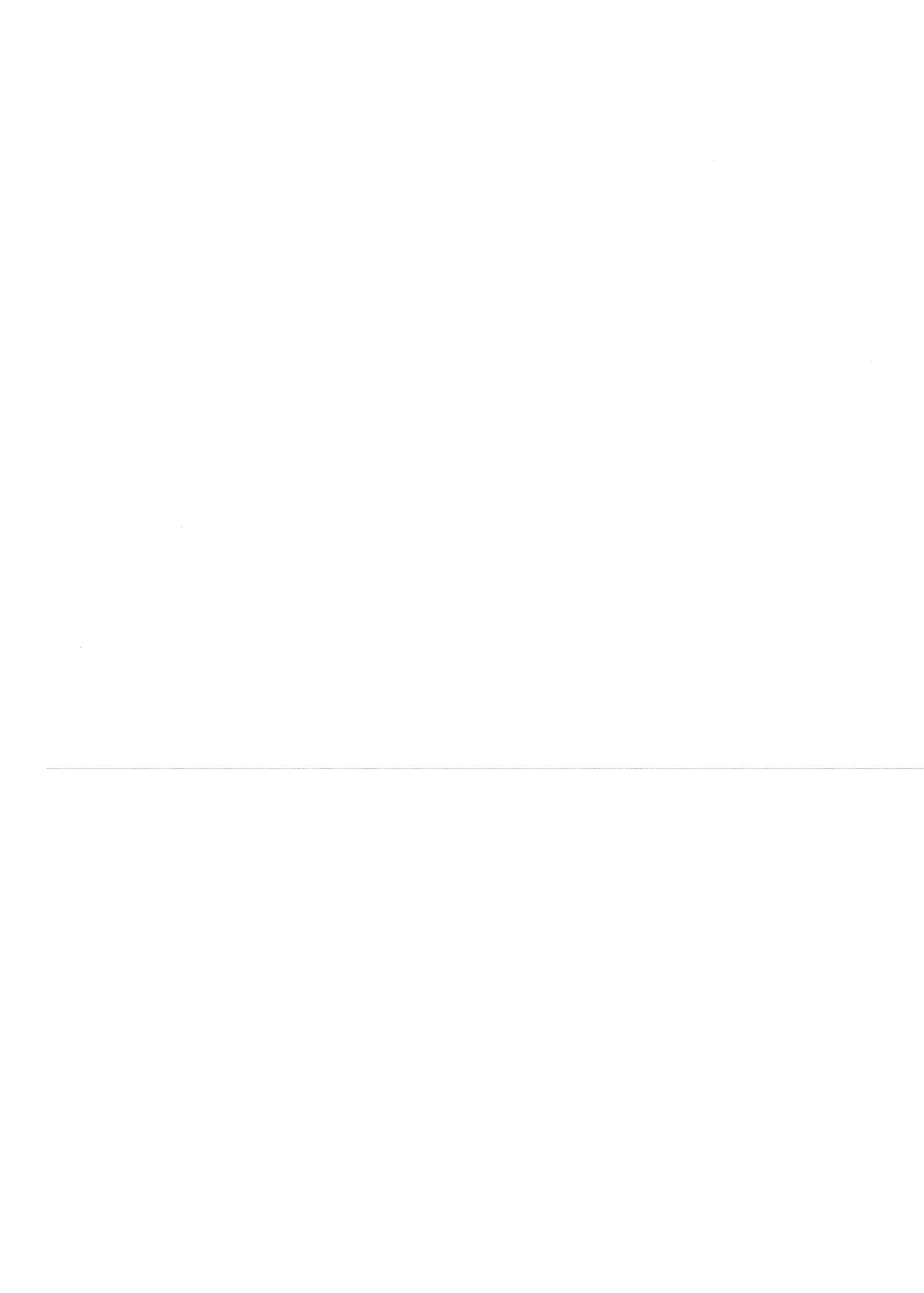
"Dad," I said, "I don't think you're going to need that extra man to help in the roundup, after all."

"Just as well," Dad answered. "Found out in town that he couldn't make it anyway. It looks, too, as if I've got a couple of pretty good punchers for the summer here right now."

Well, he wasn't wrong. The month Bradford stayed with us was really a good one. And we got a lot done, too - especially riding.

There was just one thing that I hadn't counted on. Brad had become so fond of Cyclone during that one eventful ride that it was a rare treat when I even got so much as a foot in his stirrup.

But then, that all comes under the heading of Western Hospitality, I guess.



From the day Mom brought Cyclone home to add to the Bar-S riding stock, it seemed that vacation would never arrive. Oh, how I itched for the long rides out across the grama-grass flats, up into the oak-covered foothills, and on through the pinon pines, where even on summer nights there's a sharpness in the air that makes you hunch deeper into your bedroll.

You can have your motorboats, automobiles, and airplanes. Give me a good horse with a shade of defiance in his eyes and plenty of vinegar in his hoofs. That's all. For a girl like me, raised on the Bar-S, where, as the song goes, "the coyotes howl and the wind blows free," that's the makings of a fine friendship.

As you may have gathered, I like to ride.

So you can imagine what happened inside me that day during the noonday meal when mother showed me the letter she had received from Uncle George. It said that my cousin Bradford was headed west for a month's stay at the Bar-S.

"I-I didn't even know he was invited," I said.

"Why, Cheryl," Mother looked across the table at me. "You don't sound a bit pleased. It's about time that you met some of your relatives. Don't you agree?"

"Well, sure, Mom," I said, "but why did it have to be Bradford?"

That brought a scowl from her. "And just what's the matter with Bradford?" she asked.

"Didn't you say once that Bradford didn't like to ride horses? That he was afraid of them?"

"Why-er, yes. Come to think of it, he is afraid of them. Had a pretty nasty spill when he was a little tyke. Never's been on one since. Can hardly blame him. Broke an arm and a couple of ribs." Mother continued, "It was pretty bad, too."

To me it was a grave tragedy: not the broken arm and ribs, but his dislike of the saddle. Naturally, I would be expected to entertain Cousin Bradford while he was at the Bar-S. That would be just lovely! Fat chance I'd have of getting in the rides I had planned. Besides, I just didn't relish cottoning up to a guy who was afraid of a horse.

"But there are lots of things to do," Mother went on. "You can sink some posts and set up that badminton outfit you got last Christmas from Uncle George. You can hike, or go swimming in Elder Creek, or ..."

But Mother might just as well have said I could go tie myself to an anthill. I was not happy at the prospects - not a bit happy.

It didn't seem to make a whole lot of difference though. Preparations for Bradford's arrival went on according to schedule. I found myself wondering what kind of looking fellow he must be.

And all the time I was preparing for Bradford's arrival, Cyclone was wasting away down at the corral; just eating, sleeping, and getting fat. I grew more resentful each day.

The day Bradford was scheduled to arrive, I was trying to finish up repainting the old cookhouse, which we had converted into a "guest house" as Mother called it.

She came out of the house dressed for town. "I guess you'd better stay here, Cheryl. There's a boy coming out from Hillview this morning to help out with the roundup for a couple of days."

"But, Mom," I protested quickly. "What's the matter with me? I can rope and herd those creatures as well as--"

"Sure, Cheryl, sure," my mom said. "That's not the idea. It's just that - well, it wouldn't be very polite to leave Bradford to himself the first few days he's here. Now would it?"

I was in no mood to argue. The outlook for a warm, happy summer was fast chilling. I shrugged lamely and turned to vent my anger on the paintbrush.

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"Guess I got here a little earlier than expected, so--"

"Well you missed Mom," I said. "She told me you were coming. Maybe you can help me a little until she gets back. Won't be long. Went into Mesquite Junction to pick up a cousin of mine."

"Cousin?" he said.

"Yeah, and what a cousin! Can you imagine a person our age being afraid of horses? Can't imagine why he picked a ranch to spend his vacation on. A person's lost out here without a horse, don't you think?"

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Mother shouted, "That looks like - it is Cousin Bradford, sure as you're born."

Bradford reined up to a stop before us. He had one of those dusty grins spread across his face like something buttoned to each ear.

"Hello, Aunt Jean," he extended his hand to my mother. "This sure is starting out to be a good vacation."

"I suppose you two have met," Mother said, hiding her puzzled surprise. "Can't imagine Cheryl letting any stranger ride Cyclone."

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Harper, R. The Samaritan. In Impressions. Boston:  
Houghton Mifflin, 1976.

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The ship was in the deep space, traveling with sleek mechanical precision. Its computers and drives were all working automatically, moving it along a planned course toward a certain planet of a certain star still four light years away.

Commander Max Landin, strapped into the deep-cushioned chair of the control room, carefully watched the maze of instruments around him while Edward Haverson, his first officer, prepared some food in the starboard compartment. William Berger, the ship's doctor, was busy in the aft-compartment giving the weekly foor injections to the other three crew members, the relief watch who were sleeping soundly in a state of suspended animation. Two weeks of checking the course and actions of the ship were followed by two weeks of sleep, like a long weekend. Six light years had passed since leaving Earth, although for them the passing of time was only a few months, and they were right to schedule with everything going according to plan.

Yet they were beginning to feel the remoteness of their situation, the complete and total isolation that was sometimes frightening. Max had noticed the strain first in Haverson, who was beginning to worry about things: little things like whether he was getting enough nourishment or too much exercise. Doctor Berger has assured him that all was in order, but even Berger was showing the effects of the fearfulness of the long flight.

In spite of being picked because of special space abilities and being trained for years in flights to the moon and Mars, a person could not get used to the weird, detached feeling of complete aloneness. Now, for the first time, humans were venturing beyond Earth's solar system, reaching into boundless space toward an unseen goal that existed only on their instruments.

A buzzer sounded on the control board. Moments later, Ed Haverson pulled himself into the compartment to relieve Landin. Giving over the control of the ship, Max floated back along the passageway to his quarters, where he strapped himself in his bunk for a few hours' sleep. But he lay there sleepless, thinking about his life and this ship and this flight, wondering what they were really doing a million miles from nowhere like a bubble on an endless sea. What were they really looking for? What did they expect to find?

Back on Earth he had looked up at the dark sky on starlit nights and dreamed his dreams. And later on, after years of preparation and training, he'd been

among the first crews to orbit the earth. What a small insignificant thing it seemed now, but what a fantastic adventure it had been then: the experimental trips to the moon and Mars that had followed, the ships and crews that had gone out and never returned. Space conquest was his life, but he was beginning to wonder if it was all worth it.

He slept uneasily and awakened, startled, at the sound of his name over the intercom. Haverson was calling him forward to the control room.

He found his first officer busy checking and re-checking the instrument data and finding the readings hard to believe. Haverson unstrapped himself from the chair and let Max slide in while he hovered near his shoulder. "You check it out, Skipper. I don't trust my readings."

Max Landin's hands moved over the control board, deciphering and checking the information. He let out a slow breath. There was no mistake. The instruments were registering a large mass, evidently an asteroid. But what was unbelievable to them both was that the mass was sending out a signal, a constant beamed signal that was registering on the ship's instruments.

Ed Haverson was frowning. "Then I wasn't wrong. The instruments aren't wrong."

"But, Skipper, what-"

"Call Will up here," Max said quietly. He was thinking now, thinking hard. Everything had been so routinely simple that he hadn't realized how lazy his thinking had become. Now whatever it was that was happening needed a calm, clear head.

William Berger pulled himself into the control room and moved in beside Max. "What is it?"

Max handed him the data book. Berger, after studying it a moment, stared at the signal on the scope, fascinated. He looked at his commander. "And it checks out? It's a real signal, not some freak of space?"

"It checks out," Max Landin said.

"But - who's sending it?"

The question hung there in the air. The hiss of the air-conditioners seemed loud in the stillness.

Seconds later, the signal was coming in stronger than ever. Max knew the time had come for a decision which the ship's instruments could not make. And the decision was his alone. As commander of the watch, he had complete authority over the ship. But altering the course was something planned only in case of an emergency, and as near as he could tell, the ship was in no danger.

He could simply stay on course and ignore the signal. He had no authorization for landing anywhere short of their fixed goal, even for a little while. It could lead to any number of difficulties: it meant risking the ship, the crew, the entire expedition. And, according to all their data, they were nowhere. Yet there was no denying the signal. He had double-checked everything.

His curiosity alone was almost overwhelming, but curiosity couldn't be the basis for a decision - a decision he would have to make soon or they would be out of range. Already the signal had grown noticeably weaker. He looked at Haverson and Berger. They waited, watching him, and there was nothing in their expressions to aid him in his choice. They were leaving it up to him.

And for all his arguments and sound reasoning, he knew with a terrible certainty what his decision would be. He felt it, as he felt now the reasons for their being out here at all: to seek and find and learn whatever there was to be found and learned. The ship could absorb a great deal with its automatic equipment. It could store far more knowledge than could man. But there were some things the ship couldn't do. It couldn't seek out and wonder about things, and it couldn't make decisions by itself. Max Landin could.

"Secure for landing," he said softly. "We're altering course."

With the new course coordinates fed into the computers, the ship homed in on the beamed signal and roared into the thin atmosphere of the mass. Its retro-rockets slowed the ship as it circled the mass twice before coming down on the guiding signal.

The ship came to rest, the hum of its instruments and the hiss of the air-conditioner units the only sounds in the cabin as they lay quietly for several minutes, gradually adjusting to the light gravity of the mass that let them unclamp and climb down and walk, instead of floating in weightlessness.

It was then that they heard the tapping on the ship's hull. They looked around, first at each other and then at the sealed port of the cabin that separated them from the air lock and the outer port of the ship. The tapping came again, loud and insistent on the outer hull. For a moment nobody moved, and then Max recovered enough to switch on the ship's floodlights and step to the view-scope.

Haverson and Berger were at his elbow. "What is it?" Haverson whispered anxiously.

"Nothing," Max muttered. "Can't make out anything at all." He turned away from the scope. "See for yourselves."

The floodlights barely penetrated the absolute darkness around the ship, revealing a little barren rocky ground. The scope couldn't be trained along the now vertical sides of the ship. And the tapping came again, louder: an eerie ringing sound that penetrated the length of the ship, playing on their nerves.

"Help me break out a suit, Will," Max said.

"You're not going out there?" Ed Haverson interrupted. Max gave him a hard look. "What would you suggest? Let whatever it is in here?" Certain now that only some form of intelligent life could have sent out a signal such as they had received, he didn't let himself even speculate as to what type of creature it might be. But whoever or whatever it was, it was waiting just outside the ship, and to leave without attempting contact was unthinkable.

He smiled uneasily, putting his thoughts into words, "To leave without at least shaking hands wouldn't be hospitable."

"What makes you think they're looking for hospitality?" Haverson asked quietly.

Max shrugged. "What makes you think they're not?"

He threw a switch, pressurizing the air lock. As Will Berger helped him into a suit, the tapping came again. "Shouldn't one of us go with you?" Will suggested.

"No," Max answered thoughtfully. "If they're unfriendly, I don't think two of us would be any better off than one. And the ship needs its crew. Besides, it's my responsibility."

They tested the suit and the communicator in the helmet. When the green light showed above the sealed cabin door, Max nodded. Ed Haverson handed him a thermal pistol and a solar torch and opened the airlock port.

Inside the lock, the tapping on the outer hull port was louder than ever as Max waited for the light above the cabin door to glow red when the chamber had depressurized. When the light finally turned red, it was several moments before he could bring himself to give the order over the communicator: "Open the outer port." His voice shook with excitement.

The outer door slid open, and Max Landin's light illuminated the man who was standing on the ship's ladder looking in. Suited in close-fitting, glossy-smooth

material, his face could be seen through the clear globe that covered his head. As the man raised a gloved hand to shield his eyes from the light, Max lowered his torch so that it shone on the deck of the chambers but still reflected on the alien in the open portway.

It was incredible. Except for a completely hairless face and head, the man was almost identical to themselves. And Max was suddenly aware that the alien was speaking. The voice was coming through his communicator, the sounds human but unintelligible. And then another voice, Berger's, cutting in: "Max? You all right?"

"Yes, yes, I'm all right."

"Well, what is it?"

"It's a man," Max Landin said.

The alien was talking freely now and motioning with his arm. He had not attempted to enter the ship.

"Listen," Max spoke hurriedly, "is Ed listening to this? He's the linguist. See if he can make any of it out."

Haverson's voice came in on the communicator: "Can't read him at all, skipper. It's nothing we've got on Earth. Does he really look human?"

"He's human," Max said. "He's motioning with his arm - I think he wants me to go with him."

Haverson's voice came back at him. "Skipper, he's got a language. I can crack it, sure, by breaking down the sound elements. But it'll take time."

Max had been watching the alien closely. The expression in the man's eyes was one of urgent need. "I'm afraid we don't have time, Ed," he said. "And he doesn't either. I'm going with him."

There was no answer on the communicator.

"Did you read me? Ed? Will?"

"We read you."

"I'll maintain contact," Max said. "If anything happens, reset the course coordinates and continue the voyage." He nodded to the alien, motioning him down. Then hooking his torch and pistol on his belt, Max climbed through the outer port and descended awkwardly down the ship's ladder to the ground.

Starting the magnetic locator on his belt so he would be able to find his way back, he started after the alien, who was shining his own lamp on the ground ahead of him and seemed to know exactly where he was going.

As they moved in silence across the dead mass, weird shaped rock formations rose like huge, ugly giants around them. Just beyond the small tight circles

of their lights pressed the formless dark of perpetual night. Max, hurrying along behind the alien, felt a growing and deep respect for the whole fantastic experience.

He'd known, of course, that somewhere among the countless number of worlds beyond the stars there had to be other intelligent races. They'd even found proof in the first expedition to Mars, where archeologists had probed the ruins and canals of a civilization that was old when the Earth was still in its Stone Age. But the chances were so slight of ever happening on other beings like themselves in anything as vast and unending as the universe - and that it should be happening to him!

"Are you reading us, skipper?" Haverson's voice came over the communicator, interrupting his thoughts.

"I read you," Max answered. "We're still moving away from the ship. Nothing to see but rocks and darkness."

Moments later, the alien stopped and pointed his lamp off to the right and up onto a ledge where the light illuminated the broken, mangled wreckage of a space ship - a ship almost twice the size of Max Landin's. Then the alien's lamp left the wreckage in darkness and shone ahead of him to where two more aliens in space suits waited, one of them standing, but the other lying motionless on the ground beside him.

Stunned by the sight, Max approached them cautiously, whispering into his mouthpiece. "Ed, Will? There are two more of them. And a ship! Or what is left of one. They don't belong here either. They crashed."

Moving to the alien on the ground, he knelt and peered through the globe. The man's features were ashy pale and there was blood in one corner of his mouth. His eyes were closed, but he was still alive, his breath coming in short shallow gasps. "One of them is hurt. Hurt bad."

Rising, he looked at the other two. The three of them, the man from Earth and the two from somewhere out beyond, stood there in their circles of brightness, staring vacantly at each other, no one seeming to know what to do next.

Max knew, of course, what should be done and what the aliens expected him to do. They had crashed, and somehow these three had survived. He saw now the instrument that had evidently been sending out the distress signal Haverson had intercepted. It was lying on the ground near the injured man, silent now that it had brought help. But that was the tragic irony of it.



There was no help he could give.

Will Berger's voice came over the communicator, and obviously the same thoughts had occurred to him: "They expect us to help them, Max."

"I know what they expect!" Max snapped. It was getting to him now, the hopelessness of an impossible situation. Berger knew, and Haverson too, that there was nothing he could do. Nothing any of them could do. He shivered involuntarily to think that the first contact with other beings - a chance meeting and maybe the only one they would ever have - should result in this.

"What are you going to do?" came Berger's voice, tense and uncertain.

"What can I do?"

Silence.

Then Berger's voice again. "We can't just leave them, can we?"

"You know the answer to that." Max's voice was harsh with the strain of command. "The oxygen and food replenishers, all carefully calculated for six men, not nine. There's nothing we can do." But he didn't really believe that - he wouldn't let himself believe it. He knew that somehow there must be something...

The alien who had led him here was motioning toward himself and the others and then pointing in the direction of Max's ship. Max slowly shook his head. Then, with motions and with signs scratched on the hard ground, he tried to explain their numbers and how three would be too many, and he seemed to be getting it across. The two aliens looked at each other and then back at the man from Earth, and their eyes burned with grim horror. Then one of them knelt and scratched three lines on the ground and carefully rubbed out two of them. He pointed to the remaining line and then to the injured alien lying beside him.

Ed Haverson's voice came over the communicator, "Skipper? What's happening?"

"He wants to know if one of them can go - the injured one."

It just might be possible, Max was thinking. Maybe, by making a few fine adjustments of the instruments, a few corrections, they could take on one more man. But only one.

"We might be able to take one," he said. "We'd be taking a chance."

"I think we ought to try, Max," Will Berger's voice cut in.

"But shouldn't we take one of the able ones?"

Haverson offered. "We'll have enough problems without the burden of an injury."

Max looked down at the alien on the ground. If there were only more time, they could find a way to communicate: find out who they were and where they came from. So many questions would remain unanswered - unless they could get one of them away alive. He didn't like the idea of taking an injured man either, but he felt the choice was theirs. He had to give them that much.

Stooping, he scratched a single line on the ground and nodded. The aliens bent over their companion and then straightened suddenly, shock and hurt in their expressions.

Max knelt beside the injured man. There was a froth of blood on his lips, and he was no longer breathing.

Will Berger's voice came over the communicator-- "Max, what's the decision?"

"The injured one is dead," Max answered.

"Then we'll take one of the others?"

"Yes," Max said, and he showed the aliens with signs and motions that one of them could still go. But only one. A terrible choice, he knew; but what else could they do? What they did almost unnerved him.

They looked at each other and then at the man from Earth, and they shook their heads. Kneeling slowly, they put out their lamps and bowed their heads inside their transparent globes. He could hear their voices over his communicator, murmuring softly in their strange tongue. He stared, almost unbelieving.

Will Berger's voice cut in, "Max, what's going on? Is one of them coming?"

"They're praying," said Max Landin soberly.

"They're what!"

"Praying. They're kneeling down with their heads bowed - praying."

"Oh."

Looking up at the black sky and the high, far stars, Max knew that somewhere among them was a sun and moon and the mother Earth, and God. He wondered if it was the same God. The thought brought tears to his eyes as he realized for the first time the real purpose of his life in space, the meaning of it and the reason for it. Now he knew what it was that he had to do.

As the aliens rose and turned on their lamps and stood in their meager pools of light, enclosed by the blackness of a world alien to them all, Max made his last decision - quickly, while the courage and the

dreams were there. Stooping, he drew two lines on the ground and pointed at the aliens and then toward the ship. Unfastening the locator on his belt, he handed it to one of them and motioned again toward the ship.

"Skipper?" Haverson's voice on the communicator.

"Have they decided?"

"They've decided," Max said. "They're coming."

"You mean both of them?"

"Listen," Max's voice was tight with emotion.

"Listen closely. One of them wouldn't go without the other, and we need them. We just can't afford to lose contact. Take them on board. Both of them."

"But, Max, that means--"

"I know what it means."

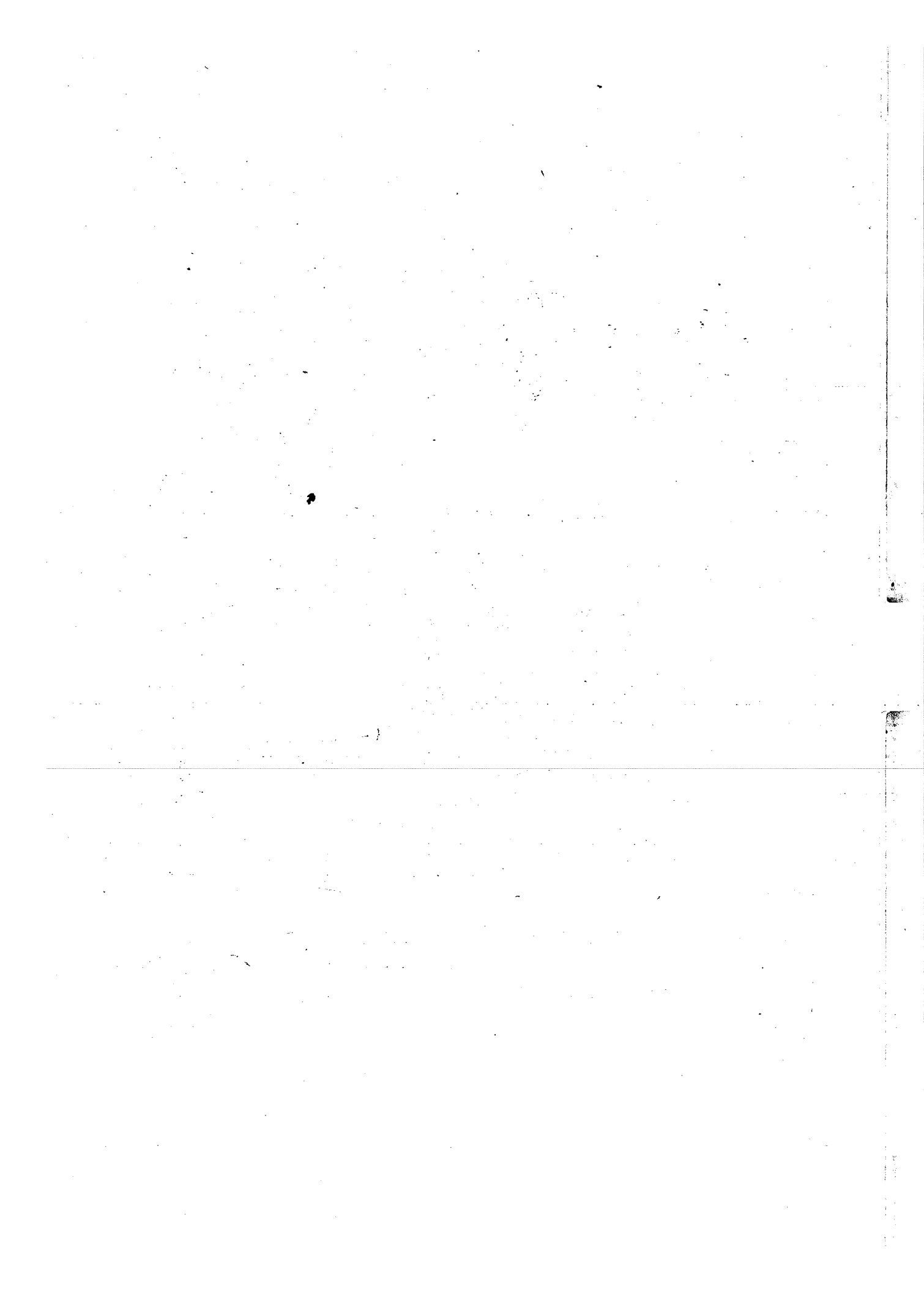
"Max, you can't do it!"

"You're both wrong," Max countered. "I can't do anything else. They're on their way. Take them. That's an order."

Reaching up to his helmet, he turned off his communicator and stood there, watching the aliens' light melt away in the blackness. Then he looked down at the dead one at his feet, and a quick cold terror gripped him. For a moment he was near panic. He wanted to run after them, to cry out. But he forced himself to look again at the sky, to realize that to die was not the worst thing that could happen to a person.

And a strange calmness came over him. Here for the first time was something besides black space, minerals, and metals, and dead worlds. Here was another race of people, and this way there would be time. He was giving them time to decode the alien tongue, to establish a common ground for communication - for understanding and knowledge. Switching off his torch, he stood looking up at the eternal brilliance of the farthest stars.

He no longer felt the terrible aloneness. Instead, he felt he really belonged. For the first time in his life, he really belonged in space.



The ship was in deep space, traveling with sleek mechanical precision. Its computers and drives were all working automatically, moving it along a planned course toward a certain planet of a certain star still four light years away.

Commander Maxine Landin, strapped into the deep-cushioned chair of the control room, carefully watched the maze of instruments around her while Edward Haverson, her first officer, prepared some food in the starboard compartment. Wilma Berger, the ship's doctor, was busy in the aft-compartment giving the weekly food injections to the other three crew members, the relief watch who were sleeping soundly in a state of suspended animation. Two weeks of checking the course and actions of the ship were followed by two weeks of sleep, like a long weekend. Six light years had passed since leaving Earth, although for them the passing of time was only a few months, and they were right on schedule with everything going according to plan.

Yet they were beginning to feel the remoteness of their situation, the complete and total isolation that was sometimes frightening. Maxine had noticed the strain first in Haverson, who was beginning to worry about things: little things like whether he was getting enough nourishment or too much exercise. Doctor Berger had assured him that all was in order, but even Berger was showing the affects of the fearfulness of the long flight.

In spite of being picked because of special space abilities and being trained for years in flights to the moon and Mars, a person could not get used to the weird, detached feeling of complete aloneness. Now, for the first time, humans were venturing beyond Earth's solar system, reaching into boundless space toward an unseen goal that existed only on their instruments.

A buzzer sounded on the control board. Moments later, Ed Haverson pulled himself into the compartment to relieve Landin. Giving over the control of the ship, Maxine floated back along the passageway to her quarters, where she strapped herself in her bunk for a few hours' sleep. But she lay there sleepless, thinking about her life and this ship and this flight, wondering what they were really doing a million miles from nowhere like a bubble on an endless sea. What were they really looking for? What did they expect to find?

Back on Earth, she had looked up at the dark sky on starlit nights and dreamed her dreams. And later on, after years of preparation and training, she'd been

among the first crews to orbit the earth. What a small, insignificant thing it seemed, now, but what a fantastic adventure it had been then: the experimental trips to the moon and Mars that had followed, the ships and crews that had gone out and never returned. Space conquest was her life, but she was beginning to wonder if it was all worth it.

She slept uneasily and awakened, startled, at the sound of her name over the intercom. Haverson was calling her forward to the control room.

She found her first officer busy checking and re-checking the instrument data and finding the readings hard to believe. Haverson unstrapped himself from the chair and let Maxine slide in while he hovered near her shoulder. "You check it out, skipper. I don't trust my readings."

Maxine Landin's hands moved over the control board, deciphering and checking the information. She let out a slow breath. There was no mistake. The instruments were registering a large mass, evidently an asteroid. But what was unbelievable to them both was that the mass was sending out a signal, a constant beamed signal that was registering on the ship's instruments.

Ed Haverson was frowning. "Then I wasn't wrong? The instruments aren't wrong or malfunctioning?"

Maxine shook her head slowly. "No, you weren't wrong. The instruments aren't wrong."

"But, skipper, what-"

"Call Wilma up here," Maxine said quietly. She was thinking now, thinking hard. She realized how lazy her thinking had become. Now whatever it was that was happening needed a calm, clear head.

Wilma Berger pulled herself into the control room and moved in beside Maxine. "What is it?"

Maxine handed her the data book. Berger, after studying it a moment, stared at the signal on the scope, fascinated. She looked at her commander. "And it checks out? It's a real signal, not some freak of space?"

"It checks out," Maxine Landin said.

"But - who's sending it?"

The question hung in the air. The hiss of the air-conditioners seemed loud in the stillness.

Seconds later, the signal was coming in stronger than ever. Maxine knew the time had come for a decision which the ship's instruments could not make. And the decision was hers alone. As commander of the watch, she had complete authority over the ship. But altering course was something planned only in case of an emergency,

and as near as she could tell, the ship was in no danger. She could simply stay on course and ignore the signal. She had no authorization for landing anywhere short of their fixed goal, even for a little while. It could lead to any number of difficulties: it meant risking the ship, the crew, the entire expedition. And, according to all their data, they were nowhere. Yet there was no denying the signal. She had double-checked everything.

Her curiosity alone was almost overwhelming, but curiosity couldn't be the basis for a decision - a decision she would have to make soon or they would be out of range. Already the signal had grown noticeably weaker. She looked at Haverson and Berger. They waited, watching her, and there was nothing in their expressions to aid her in her choice. They were leaving it up to her.

And, for all her arguments and sound reasoning, she knew with a terrible certainty what her decision would be. She felt it, as she felt now the reasons for being out here at all: to seek and find and learn whatever there was to be found and learned. The ship could absorb a great deal with its automatic equipment. It could store far more knowledge than could people. But there were some things the ship couldn't do. It couldn't seek out and wonder about things, and it couldn't make decisions by itself. Maxine Landin could.

"Secure for landing," she said softly. "We're altering course."

With the new course coordinates fed into the computers, the ship homed in on the beamed signal and roared into the thin atmosphere of the mass. Its retrorockets slowed the ship as it circled the mass twice before coming down on the guiding signal.

The ship came to rest, the hum of its instruments and the hiss of the air-conditioning units the only sounds in the cabin as they lay quietly for several minutes, gradually adjusting to the light gravity of the mass that let them unclamp and climb down and walk, instead of floating in weightlessness.

It was then that they heard the tapping on the ship's hull.

They looked around, first at each other and then at the sealed port of the cabin that separated them from the air lock and the outer port of the ship. The tapping came again, loud and insistent on the outer hull. For a moment nobody moved, and then Maxine recovered enough to switch on the ship's floodlights and step to the view-scope.

Haverson and Berger were at her elbow. "What is it?" Haverson whispered anxiously.

"Nothing," Maxine muttered. "Can't make out anything at all." She turned away from the scope. "See for yourselves."

The floodlights barely penetrated the absolute darkness around the ship, revealing a little barren rocky ground. The scope couldn't be trained along the now vertical sides of the ship. And the tapping came again, louder: an eerie ringing sound that penetrated the length of the ship, playing on their nerves.

"Help me break out a suit, Wilma," Maxine said.

"You're not going out there?" Ed Haverson interrupted.

Maxine gave him a hard look. "What do you suggest? Let whatever it is in here?" Certain now that only some form of intelligent life could have sent out a signal such as they had received, she didn't let herself even speculate as to what type of creature it might be. But whoever or whatever it was, it was waiting just outside the ship, and to leave without attempting contact was unthinkable.

She smiled uneasily, putting her thoughts into words. "To leave without at least shaking hands wouldn't be hospitable."

"What makes you think they're looking for hospitality?" Haverson asked quietly.

Maxine shrugged. "What makes you think they're not?"

She threw a switch, pressurizing the air lock. As Wilma Berger helped her into a suit, the tapping came again. "Shouldn't one of us go with you?" Wilma suggested.

"No," Maxine answered thoughtfully. "If they're unfriendly, I don't think two of us would be any better off than one. And the ship needs its crew. Besides, it's my responsibility."

They tested the suit and the communicator in the helmet. When the green light showed above the sealed cabin door, Maxine nodded. Ed Haverson handed her a thermal pistol and a solar torch and opened the air-lock port.

Inside the lock, the tapping on the outer hull port was louder than ever as Maxine waited for the light above the cabin door to grow red when the chamber had depressurized. When the light finally turned red, it was several moments before she could bring herself to give the order over the communicator: "Open the outer port." Her voice shook with excitement.

The outer door slid open, and Maxine Landin's light



illuminated the person who was standing on the ship's ladder looking in. Suited in close-fitting, glossy-smooth material, the face could be seen through the clear globe that covered the head. As the person raised a gloved hand to shield his eyes from the light, Maxine lowered her torch so that it shone on the deck of the chamber but still reflected on the alien in the open portway.

It was incredible. Except for a completely hairless face and head, the person was identical to themselves. And Maxine was suddenly aware that the alien was speaking. The voice was coming through the communicator, the sounds human but unintelligible. And then another voice, Berger's, cutting in: "Maxine? You all right?"

"Yes, yes, I'm all right."

"Well, what is it?"

"It's a person," Maxine Landin said.

The alien was talking freely now and motioning with his arm. He had not attempted to enter the ship.

"Listen," Maxine spoke hurriedly. "Is Ed listening to this? He's the linguist. See if he can make any sense out of it?"

Haverson's voice came in on the communicator: "Can't read him at all, skipper. It's like nothing we've got on Earth. Does he really look human?"

"He's human," Maxine said. "He's motioning with his arm - I think he wants me to go with him."

Haverson's voice came back at him, "Skipper, he's got a language. I can crack it, sure, by breaking down the sound elements. But it'll take time."

Maxine had been watching the alien closely. The expression in the person's eyes was one of urgent need. "I'm afraid we don't have time, Ed," she said. "And this alien doesn't either. I'm going."

There was no answer on the communicator.

"Did you read me? Ed? Wilma?"

"We read you."

"I'll maintain contact," Maxine said. "if anything happens, reset the course coordinates and continue the voyage." She nodded to the alien, motioning down. Then hooking her torch and pistol on her belt, Maxine climbed through the outer port and descended awkwardly down the ship's ladder to the ground.

Starting the magnetic locator on her belt so she would be able to find her way back, she started after the alien, who was shining his own lamp on the ground ahead of him and seemed to know exactly where he was going.

As they moved in silence across the dead mass, weird shaped rock formations rose like huge, ugly giants around the formless dark of perpetual night. Maxine, hurrying along behind the alien felt a growing and deep respect for the whole fantastic experience.

She'd known of course that, somewhere among the countless number of worlds beyond the stars, there had to be other intelligent races. They'd even found proof in the first expedition to Mars, where archeologists had probed the ruins and canals of a civilization that was old when the Earth was still in its Stone Age. But the chances were so slight of ever happening on other beings like themselves in anything as vast and unending as the universe - and that it should be happening to her.

"Are you reading us, skipper?" Haverson's voice came over the communicator, interrupting her thoughts.

"I read you," Maxine answered. "We're still moving away from the ship. Nothing to see but rocks and darkness."

Moments later, the alien stopped and pointed his lamp off to the right and up onto a ledge where the light illuminated the broken, mangled wreckage of a space ship - a ship almost twice the size of Maxine Landin's. Then the alien's lamp left the wreckage in darkness and shone ahead of him to where two more aliens in space suits waited, one of them standing, but the other lying motionless on the ground beside him.

Stunned by the sight, Maxine approached cautiously, whispering into her mouthpiece. "Ed? Wilma? There are two more of them. And a ship! Or what is left of one. They don't belong here either. They crashed."

Moving to the alien on the ground, she knelt and peered through the globe. The person's features were ashy pale and there was blood in one corner of the mouth. The eyes were closed but he was still alive, his breath coming in shallow gasps. "One of them is hurt, hurt bad."

Rising, she looked at the other two. The three of them, the woman from Earth and the two from somewhere beyond, stood there in their circles of brightness, staring vacantly at each other, no one seeming to know what to do next.

Maxine knew, of course, what should be done and what the aliens expected her to do. They had crashed, and somehow these three had survived. She saw now the instrument that had evidently been sending out the distress signal Haverson had intercepted. It was lying on the ground near the injured alien, silent now that it

had brought help. But that was the tragic irony of it. There was no help she could give.

Wilma Berger's voice came over the communicator, and obviously the same thoughts had occurred to her:

"They expect us to help them, Maxine."

"I know what they expect!" Maxine snapped. It was getting to her now, the hopelessness of an impossible situation. Berger knew, and Haverson too, that there was nothing she could do. Nothing any of them could do. She shivered involuntarily to think that the first contact with other beings - a chance meeting and maybe the only one they would ever have - should result in this.

"What are you going to do?" came Berger's voice, tense and uncertain.

"What can I do?"

Silence.

Then Berger's voice again, "We can't - just leave them, can we?"

"You know the answer to that." Maxine's voice was harsh with the strain of command. "The oxygen replenishers, all carefully calculated for six people, not nine. There's nothing we can do." But she didn't really believe that - she wouldn't let herself believe it. She knew that somehow there must be something. . .

The alien who had led her here was motioning toward himself and the others and then pointing in the direction of Maxine's ship. Maxine slowly shook her head. Then, with motions and with signs scratched on the hard ground, she tried to explain their numbers and how three would be too many, and she seemed to be getting it across. The two aliens looked at each other and then back at the woman from Earth, and their eyes burned with grim horror. Then one of them knelt and scratched three lines on the ground and carefully rubbed out two of them. He pointed to the remaining line and then to the injured alien lying beside him.

Ed Haverson's voice came over the communicator, "Skipper? What's happening?"

"He wants to know if one of them can go - the injured one."

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"I think we ought to try, Maxine," Wilma Berger's voice cut in.

"But shouldn't we take one of the able ones?"

Haverson offered. "We'll have enough problems without the burden of an injury."

Maxine looked down at the alien on the ground. If there were only more time, they could find a way to communicate: find out who they were and where they came from. So many questions would remain unanswered - unless they could get one of them away alive. She didn't like the idea of taking on an injured person either, but she felt the choice was theirs. She had to give them that much.

Stooping, she scratched a single line on the ground and nodded. The aliens bent over their companion and then straightened suddenly, shock and hurt in their expressions.

Maxine knelt beside the injured alien. There was a froth of blood on his lips, and he was no longer breathing.

Wilma Berger's voice came over the communicator, "Maxine? What's the decision?"

"The injured one is dead," Maxine answered.

"Then we'll take one of the others?"

"Yes," Maxine said, and she showed the aliens with signs and motions that one of them could still go. But only one. A terrible choice, she knew; but what else could they do? What they did almost unnerved her.

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Wilma Berger's voice cut in, "Maxine, what's going on? Is one of them coming?"

"They're praying," said Maxine Landin soberly.

"They're what?"

"Praying. They're kneeling down with their heads bowed - praying."

"Oh."

Looking up at the black sky and the high, far stars, Maxine knew that somewhere among them was a sun and moon and the mother Earth and God. She wondered if it was the same God. The thought brought tears to her eyes as she realized for the first time the real purpose of her life in space, the meaning of it and reason for it. Now she knew what it was she had to do.

As the aliens rose and turned on their lamps and stood in their meager pools of light, enclosed by the blackness of a world alien to them all, Maxine made her

last decision - quickly while the courage and the dream were there. Stooping, she drew two lines on the ground and pointed at the aliens and then toward the ship. Unfastening the locator on her belt, she handed it to them and motioned again toward the ship.

"Skipper?" Haverson's voice on the communicator, "Have they decided?"

"They've decided," Maxine's voice was tight with emotion. "Listen closely. One of them wouldn't go without the other, and we need them. We just can't afford to lose this contact. Take them on board. Both of them."

"But, Maxine, that means--"

"I know what it means."

"Maxine, you can't do it!"

"You're wrong," Maxine countered. "I can't do anything else. They're on their way. Take them. That's an order."

Reaching up to her helmet, she turned off her communicator and stood there, watching the aliens' lights melt away in the blackness. Then she looked down at the dead one at her feet, and a quick cold terror gripped her. For a moment she was near panic. She wanted to run after them, to cry out. But she forced herself to look again at the sky, to realize that to die was not the worst that could happen to a person.

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She no longer felt the terrible aloneness. Instead, she felt she really belonged. For the first time in her life, she really belonged in space.

Arthur, R. The Midnight Visitor. In Impressions. Boston:  
Houghton Mifflin, 1976.

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Ausable (Aw'zuh-buhl) did not fit any description of a secret agent Fowler had ever read. Following him down the musty corridor of the gloomy French hotel where Ausable had a room, Fowler felt let down. It was a small room, on the sixth floor, and scarcely a setting for a figure of romantic adventure. But Ausable in his wrinkled business suit badly in need of cleaning, could hardly be called a romantic figure.

He was for one thing fat. Very fat. And then there was his accent. Though he spoke French and German passably, he had never altogether lost the New England twang he had brought to Paris from Boston twenty years before.

"You are disappointed," Ausable said wheezily over his shoulder. "You were told that I was a secret agent, a spy, dealing in espionage and danger. You wished to meet me because you are a writer, young and romantic. You envisioned mysterious figures in the night, the crack of pistols, drugs in the wine.

"Instead, you have spent a dull evening in a French music hall with a sloppy fat man who, instead of having messages slipped into his hand by dark-eyed beauties, gets only a prosaic telephone call making an appointment in his room. You have been bored!"

The fat man chuckled to himself as he unlocked the door of his room and stood aside to let his discomfited guest enter.

"You are disillusioned," Ausable told him. "But take cheer, my young friend. Presently you will see a paper, a quite important paper for which several men have risked their lives, come to me in the next-to-last step of its journey into official hands. Some day soon that paper may well affect the course of history. In that thought there is drama, is there not?"

As he spoke, Ausable closed the door behind him. Then he switched on the light.

And as the light came on, Fowler had his first authentic thrill of the day. For halfway across the room, a small automatic in his hand, stood a man.

Ausable blinked a few times.

"Max," he wheezed, "you gave me a start. I thought you were in Berlin. What are you doing here in my room?"

Max was slender, a little less than tall, with features that suggested slightly the craftly pointed countenance of a fox. There was about him - aside from the gun - nothing especially menacing.

"The report," he murmured. "The report that is being brought you tonight on Russia's new missiles. I thought it would be safer in my hands tonight than in yours."

Ausable moved to an armchair and sat down heavily.

"I'm going to raise the devil with the management this time, and you can bet on it," he said grimly. "This is the second time in a month somebody has gotten into my room off that confounded balcony!"

Fowler's eyes went to the single window of the room. It was an ordinary window, against which now the night was pressing blackly.

"Balcony?" Max said, with a rising inflection. "No, a passkey. I did not know about the balcony. It might have saved me some trouble had I known."

"It's not my balcony," Ausable said with extreme irritation. "It belongs to the next apartment."

He glanced explanatorily to Fowler.

"You see," he said, "this room used to be part of a large unit, and the next room - through that door there - used to be the living room. It had the balcony, which extends under my window now.

"You can get onto it from the empty room two doors down - and somebody did, last month. The management promised me to block it off. But they haven't."

Max glanced at Fowler, who was standing stiffly a few feet from Ausable, and waved the gun with a commanding gesture.

"Please sit down," he suggested. "We have a wait of half an hour at least, I think."

"Thirty-one minutes," Ausable said moodily. "The appointment was for twelve-thirty. I wish I knew how you learned about that report, Max"

"And we wish we knew how it was gotten out of Russia," he replied. "However, no harm has been done. I will have it back - what is that?"

Unconsciously Fowler, who was still standing, had jumped at the sudden rapping on the door, Ausable yawned.

"The gendarmes," he said. "I thought that so important a paper as the one we are waiting for might well be given a little extra protection tonight."

Max bit his lip in uncertainty. The rapping was repeated.

"What will you do now, Max?" Ausable asked. "If I do not answer, they will enter anyway. The door is unlocked. And they will not hesitate to shoot."

The man's face was furious as he backed swiftly toward the window; with his hand behind him as he flung it up and swing a leg over the sill.

"Send them away!" he rasped. "I will wait on the balcony. Send them away, or I'll shoot and take my chances!"



The rapping on the door became louder. And a voice was raised.

"Monsieur (muh-syoor')! Monsieur Ausable!"

The doorknob turned. Swiftly Max pushed his left hand to free himself from the sill and drop to the balcony outside. And then, as he dropped, he screamed once, shrilly.

The door opened and a waiter stood there with a tray, a bottle and two glasses.

"Monsieur, the drink you ordered for when you returned," he said, and set the tray upon the table, deftly uncorked the bottle, and retired.

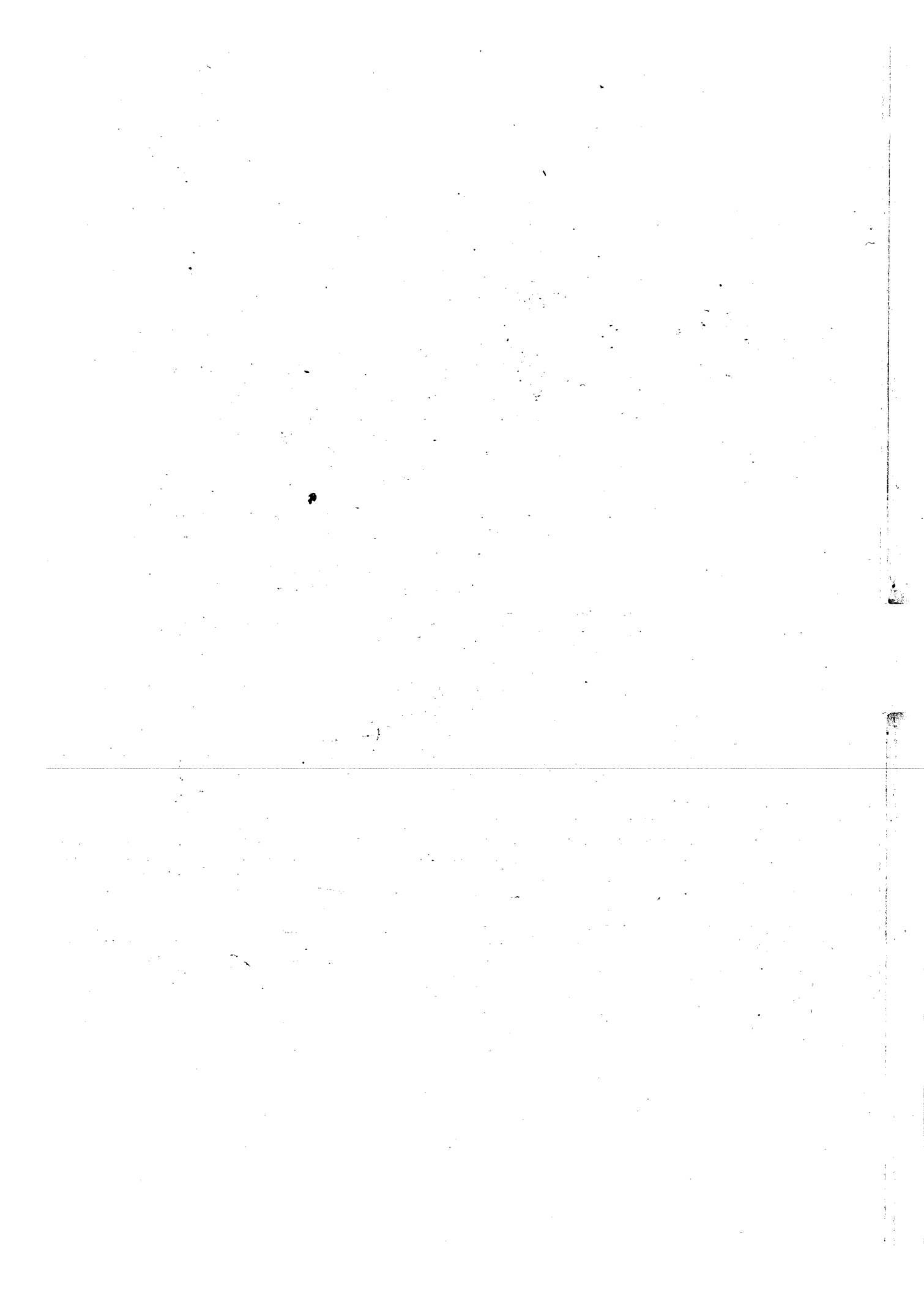
Fowler stared after him.

"But-" he stammered, "the police-"

"There were no police." Ausable sighed. "Only Henri whom I was expecting."

"But won't that man out on the balcony-" Fowler began.

"No," Ausable said, "he won't return. You see my young friend, there is no balcony."



Ausable (Aw'zuh-buhl) did not fit any description of a secret agent Fowler had ever read. Following her down the musty corridor of the gloomy French hotel where Ausable had a room, Fowler felt let down. It was a small room, on the sixth floor, and scarcely a setting for a figure of romantic adventure. But Ausable in her wrinkled dress, badly in need of cleaning, could hardly be called a romantic figure.

She was for one thing fat. Very fat. And then there was her accent. Though she spoke French and German passably, she had never altogether lost the New England twang she had brought to Paris from Boston twenty years before.

"You are disappointed," Ausable said wheezily over her shoulder. "You were told that I was a secret agent, a spy, dealing in espionage and danger. You wished to meet me because you are a writer, young and romantic. You envisioned mysterious figures in the night, the crack of pistols, drugs in the wine.

"Instead, you have spent a dull evening in a French music hall with a sloppy fat woman, who instead of having messages slipped into her hand by dark-eyed handsome men, gets only a prosaic telephone call making an appointment in her room. You have been bored!"

The fat woman chuckled to herself as she unlocked the door of her room and stood aside to let her discomfited guest enter.

"You are disillusioned," Ausable told him. "But take cheer, my young friend. Presently you will see a paper, a quite important paper for which several men have risked their lives, come to me in the next-to-last step of its journey into official hands. Some day soon that paper may well affect the course of history. In that thought there is drama, is there not?"

As she spoke, Ausable closed the door behind him. Then she switched on the light.

And as the light came on, Fowler had his first authentic thrill of the day. For halfway across the room, a small automatic in his hand, stood a man.

Ausable blinked a few times.

"Max," she wheezed, "you gave me a start. I thought you were in Berlin. What are you doing here in my room?"

Max was slender, a little less than tall, with features that suggested slightly the crafty pointed countenance of a fox. There was about him - aside from the gun - nothing especially menacing.

"The report," he murmured. "The report that is being brought you tonight on Russia's new missiles.

I thought it would be safer in my hands tonight than in yours."

Ausable moved to an armchair and sat down heavily.

"I'm going to raise the devil with the management this time, and you can bet on it," she said grimly. "This is the second time in a month somebody has gotten into my room off that confounded balcony!"

Fowler's eyes went to the single window of the room. It was an ordinary window, against which now the night was pressing blackly.

"Balcony?" Max said, with a rising inflection. "No, a passkey. I did not know about the balcony. It might have saved me some trouble had I known."

"It's not my balcony," Ausable said with extreme irritation. "It belongs to the next apartment."

She glanced explanatorily to Fowler.

"You see," she said, "this room used to be part of a large unit, and the next room - through that door there - used to be the living room. It had the balcony, which extends under my window now.

"You can get on to it now from the empty room two doors down - and somebody did, last month. The Management promised me to block it off. But they haven't."

Max glanced at Fowler, who was standing stiffly a few feet from Ausable, and waved the gun with a commanding gesture.

"Please sit down," he suggested. "We have a wait of half an hour at least, I think."

"Thirty-one minutes," Ausable said moodily. "The appointment was for twelve thirty. I wish I knew how you learned about that report, Max."

"And we wish we knew how it was gotten out of Russia," he replied. "However, no harm has been done. I will have it back - what is that?"

Unconsciously Fowler, who was standing, jumped at the sudden rapping on the door. Ausable yawned.

"The gendarmes," she said. "I thought that so important a paper as the one we are waiting for might well be given a little extra protection tonight."

Max bit his lip in uncertainty.

"What will you do now, Max?" Ausable asked. "If I do not answer, they will enter anyway. The door is unlocked. And they will not hesitate to shoot."

The man's face was furious as he backed swiftly toward the window; with his hand behind him he flung it up and swung a leg over the sill.

"Send them away!" he rasped. "I will wait on the balcony. Send them away, or I'll shoot and take my chances."

The rapping on the door came louder. And a voice was raised.

"Madame. Madame Ausable!"

The doorknob turned. Swiftly Max pushed his left hand to free himself from the sill and drop to the balcony outside. And then, as he dropped, he screamed once, shrilly.

The door opened and a waiter stood there with a tray, a bottle and two glasses.

"Madame, the drink you ordered for when you returned," he said, and set the tray upon the table, deftly uncorked the bottle and retired.

Fowler stared after him. "But-" he stammered, "the police-"

"There were no police." Ausable sighed. "Only Henri whom I was expecting."

"But won't that man out on the balcony-" Fowler began.

"No," Ausable said, "he won't return. You see my young friend, there is no balcony."

Morey, W. Deep Trouble. In Signposts. Glenview,  
Illinois: Scott, Foresman, 1975.

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We were eating dinner when Mr. Harmon came. Years at sea and as a cannery superintendent here in Alaska had molded him into a wide-shouldered, big-chested man with sharp, concrete-gray eyes and a voice that could be as tough and impersonal as our northern mountains. It could be gentle, too, as now. "How are things going, Norah?"

Mom said cheerfully, "We're getting along. Did you know Joey's going to work for Mr. Miller in the hardware store next week?"

"That's fine." The gray eyes turned on me with approval. "What I came for, Norah - an empty forty-foot cruiser was rammed by a tug this morning and sank off the end of the city dock in sixty feet of water. We want a diver to go down and put lines around it so we can raise it. Would you care to rent George's diving suit?"

"Of course," Mom said.

The gray eyes were on me again. "Is the suit in good shape? That - hole in the helmet been mended?"

"Yes," I said.

"Good. Bring it to the end of the dock in the morning. Cal Webber will be there to help load it on a flat barge."

"Who's going to dive?" I asked.

"Cal, from the cannery. He's had some experience."

After Mr. Harmon had gone, Mom smiled and said, "You'd better get the diving gear into the pickup tonight, Joey."

I went through the garage and took the canvas suit, lead shoes, metal breastplate, and lead belt from the old trunk and loaded them into the pickup. Luckily, the heavy air compressor was still in the trunk. I held the helmet. My fingers found the patch where the steel bar had penetrated. An overwhelming sense of fear and emptiness claimed me. For a moment I was almost sick.

I stowed the helmet in the pickup with the rest of the gear. Then I stood there, both hands gripping the side of the truck while the past rolled over me.

Last fall, almost a year ago now, Dad had been diving for the town, removing some old pilings that were a menace to navigation. I was his tender that day, as I had been for two years. Mr. Harmon was also there. Dad was diving from a low barge that was anchored near the pilings. He was down about thirty feet, when a tug went by close, making a big wave. The barge tipped and rocked. A steel bar about five feet long with a needle-sharp point lay on the floor of the barge. As the barge tipped, the bar rolled off into the sea and sank point first.

I yelled over the telephone, "Dad! Look out!" I heard the bar strike the helmet. Dad made an odd little sound. Then the air began boiling up from bottom in a long thick stream. I began screaming into the telephone.

Mr. Harmon grabbed the end of a line and, clothes and all, dived into the sea and swam down to Dad. He tied the line around him, and we pulled him up. The bar had pierced the helmet like a driven spear. I took one look and was violently ill.

Dad had made a good living diving, and I had wanted to become a diver too. Dad had taught me to dive in the quiet backwaters. In two years I made some thirty dives and had been down as deep as forty feet.

With my first dive I'd been dreaming how I'd someday dive in the South Pacific, the Gulf Stream, the Mediterranean. The day of the accident that dream died. The thought of getting into a diving suit again and entering those silent green depths terrified me.

But now I was thinking of it again. I didn't want to, but I couldn't stop. I went out alongside of the house and down the block, hoping somehow that I could walk away from my thoughts.

At the end of the block I leaned against a rock. I was still thinking about the sea and a lot of other things. Anyone who had ever dived could do this simple job. A hundred dollars for putting a couple of cables around a sunken boat. I thought what that hundred dollars could mean to us.

Until a couple of months ago, I hadn't thought about grocery bills, light, water, heat, or clothes for us. But late one night I found Mom frowning over columns of figures at the kitchen table. I asked what she was doing. "Just trying to figure out some way to make one dollar do the work of two. These are our monthly expenses. This is our year's total. That is what we have left in the bank."

I was amazed at our expenses. I could see that what I had thought was a good balance in the bank, wouldn't last many more months.

"The reason we haven't a bigger bank balance," Mom explained, "is that we've been making big house payments. Two more big payments and the house is ours. But I'm wondering how we're going to make them."

"I'll go to work; I'll get a job on a boat. I'm big and strong enough, and I'll graduate from high school this spring."

Losing a home or a job in a small town in Alaska is as serious a thing as can happen to a family. In a



big city where there are thousands of houses we could have found another to move into. But not in Orca City. There hadn't been a vacant liveable house in town for years. So we had to keep this home Dad and Mom had borrowed money to build. Now, that was up to me.

I hoped to get on with a fishing boat, but there were no openings. Mom finally came up with the hardware job. "Mr. Miller wants to talk to you about working for him, Joey," she said one day.

I wasn't interested in selling pots and pans, but I hadn't found anything else, so I went down to the hardware store and agreed to start work when Mr. Miller needed me.

That was more than a week ago. Tonight I wasn't thinking of the hardware store. I was thinking about the dive tomorrow morning. Cal Webber would get one hundred dollars for a very simple dive to put a couple of lifting cables around a boat. The whole job wouldn't take more than a few minutes on bottom, and sixty feet wasn't deep. But the very thought of going down again sent a wave of fear through me. I closed out thoughts of the dive and concentrated on the hundred dollars and how much it would mean to us. Once I had the suit on again, I told myself, I'd make it somehow. The important thing was to talk Mr. Harmon into letting me make the dive.

I went down the block and turned into the street where he lived. He was a good friend of Dad's and Mom's. But I stood a little in awe of him. I had seen how tough he could be at times.

Mr. Harmon was sitting on his porch with his feet on the railing, smoking a pipe. He removed the pipe as I turned up the walk and asked, "Nothing wrong with the suit I hope, Joe?"

"No, sir." I leaned against the porch railing trying to frame the right words. "It's about the job," I said. "We - decided not to loan the suit unless I did the diving."

"I see." Mr. Harmon polished the bowl of the pipe against a hard palm. "You've done some diving, I know."

"I was Dad's tender for two years too."

He nodded. "How many dives did you make?"

"About thirty. Dad taught me everything about diving."

"I'm sure he did." Those concrete-gray eyes bit into me. "Does your mother know about this decision?"

The lie came easily but those eyes stopped it. "No, but I can do it. We need that hundred dollars."

"This is a job for a man, Joe. This isn't diving for fun. You've never been in trouble on a dive. For all I know, you might panic."

"I wouldn't. Dad hammered it into me that I had to stay calm in trouble or I wouldn't get out."

"You don't know that you would. You've never been tested. This is sixty feet and in the open sea. That's a long way down if anything goes wrong."

"If I can't do the job, you don't have to pay me."

"That's fair enough. But I can't let you do it, Joe," he said. "Your father was a good friend of mine, and he wouldn't let you go down more than forty feet in still water. Neither will I."

"There was no good reason to go deeper then," I said. "Now there is."

"You're too young, Joe," he said bluntly.

I looked at him sitting there, rock solid. I was suddenly angry. "That's just an excuse."

"It could be," Mr. Harmon said mildly. "I'll give you an extra ten dollars to act as Cal's tender. Do you want it?"

I stalked off the porch without answering. I'd tried. But when I thought of that cold, deadly sea, I wasn't sorry I'd failed.

Next morning when I arrived at the dock with the suit and compressor, Cal Webber was there. Cal glanced at the diving outfit and asked, "You gonna work the telephone and tend lines, Joe?"

"Yes." A couple hundred feet away was where Dad's accident had happened. This was the first time I'd been back here.

Cal said, "They've got a small barge tied to the dock below. We can use it to dive from."

It didn't take long to load the equipment onto the barge. We had finished when the powerboat, carrying Mr. Harmon and Frank, the powerboat skipper, pulled around the end of the dock. Mr. Harmon said, "Good morning, Joe. Everything ready?"

"Yes." After last night I didn't think I'd ever feel the same about Mr. Harmon.

The powerboat towed the barge out about a hundred feet from the end of the dock, and Mr. Harmon dropped anchor into the sea. "This should be about it." He tossed two big coils of cable onto the barge and said to Cal, "Work one under the stern and the other under the bow. We'll fasten both ends to the barge. That will leave the cruiser lying in a cradle formed by the

cables. We'll bring out a big barge, fasten the cables to it, and at low water take up the slack. When the tide comes in, it'll lift the cruiser off the bottom, and we can float her into shore."

Cal nodded, "Sure, Sam, sure." He looked at me. "We might as well get started."

I helped Cal into the diving suit. He said, "There oughta be a line to slide down. Tide's beginning to run. It could sweep me away."

"Don't let much air into the suit, and you'll be able to sink faster," I said.

Cal nodded, "Where's the air valve?"

I showed him.

"There oughta be a divin' ladder."

"The barge is only a foot above the water," I pointed out. "You can jump in easy."

"I guess so."

I put the helmet over his head, screwed it tight, and locked it. I asked through the open faceplate, "All ready?" At Cal's jerky nod I closed the plate and screwed the bolt tight.

I put the earphones on and said, "You're ready to dive." I helped him down. He sat on the edge of the barge and dangled his legs in the water. Then he turned on his stomach and slipped in. Cal held himself waist high with his hands. He released his right hand and lowered himself to his chest, then to his shoulders. Finally, the helmet went under the length of his arm and air began boiling to the surface.

His right hand shot out, gripped the edge of the barge, and with a mighty heave he pulled himself from the sea.

I unscrewed the faceplate and asked, "Anything wrong?"

Cal's face was gray under his normal tan. Sweat beaded his upper lip. He said in a shaky voice, "Get this helmet off! Get it off!"

I said, "You've never been down before. You've never even had a suit on."

Mr. Harmon jumped to the barge and asked, "What's this, Cal?"

"I thought I could do it, Sam." Cal shook his head and shivered. "But sixty feet. That's a long way from air. If anything goes wrong - blooey!"

"Why you lying bum!" Mr. Harmon said savagely. "I depended on you."

"There wasn't anybody else around to try," Cal

defended himself. "It looked easy. For a hundred bucks it was worth a try."

"So I lose at least a week hunting for another diver." Mr. Harmon's voice was cold. "Cal, you're fired."

"Aw, now, Sam - " Cal began.

Mr. Harmon said, "Joe, you might as well take the suit home. Frank, tow the barge back to the dock."

The barge was towed back and made secure. Back at the dock Mr. Harmon said to me, "You'll get your ten dollars. Stop by the office on the way home." Then he stepped aboard the powerboat, and it disappeared around the corner of the dock.

I watched it out of sight, and a thought crawled into my mind. That aching emptiness was back in my stomach. I ran along the dock, went down a ladder, and stepped aboard Harley Martin's boat.

I asked, "Harley, can I borrow your rowboat?"

He waved at the boat tied to the stern, "Help yourself."

When I rowed around the end of the dock to the barge, Cal was out of the canvas suit and was lacing his shoes. He asked, "What're you doin' with the boat?"

"We're going to tow this barge back out over the sunken cruiser. I'll make that dive."

"Are you crazy?" Cal demanded. "Harmon won't let you."

"He won't know."

"He might come back any minute."

"Then we'd better hurry," I said. "You want to be my tender for ten dollars?"

"Listen," Cal reasoned, "Harmon'll half skin you. You saw how tough he can be. He gives the orders for any dive."

"I can dive it if I want. I want that hundred dollars. Are you going to tend lines for me or do I find somebody else?"

Cal bit his lips. Finally he said, "Move over."

We rowed out easily and dropped the anchor in the same spot. Cal hurriedly dressed me. He kept glancing about nervously. My palms were wet and I kept wiping them on my legs. I discovered my teeth were chattering and clamped my jaws tight. My heart was pounding harder than on my first dive two years ago.

I kept telling myself, "It's just another dive, a very simple one. It's only twenty feet deeper than you've been in the past. That's nothing. You know everything about a diving suit. Do exactly as you did

in all those backwater dives, and you'll be fine."

Cal had the helmet in his hands. "You ready?" he asked.

I nodded. He set it over my head, screwed it tight, and dropped the key in the lock so it couldn't come unscrewed and blow off. He closed the faceplate, and I was ready to dive.

I stood on the edge of the barge, adjusted the air, and felt it rush in at the back of my neck - cool, clean, hissing faintly. I kept thinking of that spot where Dad had drowned. For some reason I wanted to look at it. But I didn't. I quit thinking and jumped straight out into the sea. Sun, barge, and world were blotted out in the cold green gloom.

I sank swiftly, feeling the slight pull of the running tide. The upper light faded and became dull gray. The darkness thickened steadily, becoming a bodiless, fluid wall that pressed strongly against the faceplate and made itself felt throughout my body. The bottom of the barge was a shadow, then was gone. I was alone in a chill, strange world, sinking, sinking. Mr. Harmon had been right. Sixty feet is a long way down. My feet struck something solid, and a frightening shock rolled through me. My descent stopped. I was on bottom.

I stood a moment, letting my heart and breathing settle back to normal. I still felt some fear, but now I had it under control. I heard the reassuring tunk-tunk of the compressor, and the life-giving air continued to pour in in a cool stream on the back of my neck. Light from the surface penetrated poorly at this depth. I could see only eight or ten cloudy gray feet ahead.

I said into the mike above my mouth, "I'm on bottom. I'm going to start looking for the boat. Give me line."

"Good boy," Cal said. Air line slithered out of the gloom. I left the steel cable hanging, and moved off, leaning forward to drive against the push of the sea. My feet stirred up some silt that drifted off with the current. I plowed forward until Cal's voice said, "Hold it, Joe. You've taken out most of the air line. Try another direction."

I followed the air line back until it rose straight up toward the surface where the steel cable was hanging. Then I did an about-face and went off in the opposite direction. Once again Cal's voice stopped me. I found nothing. I returned to the hanging cable, my starting point, chose a direction halfway between the two ex-

tremes I'd already walked and moved off once more.

This time I took only a half-dozen steps when the bow of the boat came out of the gloom ahead of me. She lay partially tilted on her side, her stern disappearing into deeper water. I said to Cal, "I've found her. I'm going to attach the bow cable first. Give me all the cable slack you can."

I carried the cable to the bow of the cruiser, knelt and began scraping the silt under the keel. About four feet from the bow I found a crevice in the rock and shoved the end of cable through it. I went around to the opposite side and pulled all the slack. Then I carried the end of the cable back to my starting point. There I let the air build up in the suit and floated to the surface.

I broke water close to the barge. I handed Cal the cable end, took the second cable, and dropped back to the bottom. There I followed the first cable to the cruiser. I went to the stern and was about to begin scraping the silt from under the keel when Cal's voice said, "Oh, oh! Here comes the cannery powerboat with Frank and old man Harmon on board."

"Never mind him," I said. "I'll be through in about two minutes."

Here at the stern, the keel was not down solid on the rock bottom. I had no trouble shoving the cable under. I went around to the opposite side and pulled the slack through. From the stern I had to loop the cable over the top of the cruiser to take it back to the surface. I took hold of an open port and started to climb the side. That moment I distinctly felt the cruiser shift slightly under me. I froze there, waiting, fearing it might move again, maybe turn completely over. Some shift of current or my climbing the side had disturbed a delicate balance. Nothing happened, and I began to climb gingerly. I was brought up short by the tightened air line. It was hung up somewhere.

I backed down carefully and followed the air line around the stern, looking for the hang-up. There I found it. In going around the stern and climbing the side, I had dragged the air line along the bottom. It had slipped into the opening between the keel and bottom and had become wedged there. I got down on my knees and began digging the silt away so I could work the line out.

There was no longer an opening. The keel rested flat on the rock bottom. The movement I felt had been the cruiser settling those few inches. The line was

wedged tight, but somehow it had not been completely shut, and air still came through the helmet. I took hold of the line and pulled as hard as I dared. I leaned against the side of the cruiser and pushed, hoping that the delicate balance was still there, and I could rock the crack open. The boat was down solid. Some twenty tons of wood and steel lay on top of that line, and I had no way of moving it. I was trapped.

"I have to keep calm," I told myself over and over. "I've got to think." I wanted to yell to Cal. But Cal couldn't help. No one could. I had to get out of this alone.

Dad had carefully taught me the principles of diving and the mechanical operation of the suit. I reviewed those rules in my mind, reaching for some thought, anything I could use. A diver stays on bottom because of the weight of forty pounds of lead shoes, ninety pounds of lead belt, and seventy-five pounds of metal helmet and breastplate.

Any kid could figure that out. Without that weight a diver would shoot upward to sunlight and life.

But now the air line pinned me down. Without the air line - but that was life itself. I wouldn't drown immediately without it. The automatic valve in the helmet would close, keeping the water out; but I'd smother to death in minutes! My mind snatched at a thought and began racing. Then I had it. The answer was so frightening that my first impulse was to push it away. But even as I tried to reject it, I knew this was my one chance to get out alive.

I knelt there, surprisingly calm now, and worked out every detail before I called Cal. Then I said, keeping my voice quiet and even, "I'm in a little trouble," and explained what happened.

Cal's voice came back high with shock and fright, "You're trapped! Joe, you're trapped! What'll you do?" Cal was too excited. I said, "You told me Mr. Harmon was coming out in the powerboat. If he's there put him on."

Mr. Harmon asked calmly, "Yes, Joe, what's wrong?"

I gave him the picture and Mr. Harmon said, "Got it. Now, what do you want us to do?"

"Nothing yet." The sound of Mr. Harmon's calm, matter-of-fact voice settled me down even more. "This is what I have to do - cut the air lines loose from the keel so you can pull it up. Then I've got to take off my lead shoes and belt so I can float to the surface.

The air in the suit will float me only a few seconds, then I'll sink. You've got to be close enough to grab me in a hurry."

"That's too dangerous," Mr. Harmon said flatly.

"We've got to work out something else."

"I can't wait. My air line is pinched half shut now. I can see it. This boat can shift again any second. If it moves as much as a quarter of an inch, it can shut off all my air. I've got to get out now. I know what I'm doing. I've figured it out. This is the only way left. We've got to hurry."

"All right," Mr. Harmon said. "Don't cut the air line until we tell you. I'll have the boat over your bubbles in a minute."

Cal's voice said over the telephone, "All right, Joe. They've got the boat right alongside your bubbles. Come on up, kid. And good luck."

"Be there in a minute." I drew the knife from the scabbard, took hold of the air line close to the helmet, slashed through the tough rubber. With the second cut, the hose parted in a burst of bubbles. Immediately the hiss of fresh air into the helmet stopped. I stepped around the stern and cut the hose loose from the boat. Then I knelt and began working frantically at the buckles of my shoes. I kicked off one. Thirty seconds gone. The other resisted all efforts. I discovered I hadn't loosened the thong from the metal loop. An instant later it was off. Then I unbuckled the lead belt. Instantly I soared smoothly upward. The murky gray light changed swiftly to clear light. I looked up. The bottom of the rowboat was coming at me.

I broke the surface, and Mr. Harmon's big hands grabbed me and pulled me into the boat. The helmet was twisted off and Mr. Harmon said, "That was close! Too close! Joe, I ought to whale the daylights out of you."

I blinked at the wonderful sunlight and filled my lungs with fresh air. I grinned at Mr. Harmon.

He looked at me steadily. "You're getting out of that suit. We're taking no more chances. I'd rather leave that cruiser there till doomsday than go through this again."

"There are no more chances to take," I said. "The job's practically finished. The cable's under the keel. All I have to do is bring the end back to the surface. It's the simplest kind of dive. Besides, my lead shoes and belt are down there. I want to go back and get them and finish the job."



"You were lucky just now," Mr. Harmon said. "Don't push it."

"I'm not," I answered. "The luck was that you came along when I needed you. I figured out what to do."

Mr. Harmon said nothing while Frank, the powerboat skipper, rowed us back to the barge. Mr. Harmon kept looking at me, frowning, his eyes thoughtful. Then he said, "You're giving me the straight of this? All you have to do is bring the cable back to the surface?"

"That's right. I'll pick up the end and come up."

"All right," he agreed. "Frank, get the extra belt out of the pickup."

By the time Frank returned I was ready to dive again. I jumped in, taking the end of a rope down with me. On bottom I tied it to the lead belt I had discarded and sent up the belt. I sat on bottom and put on my lead shoes. Then I returned to the sunken cruiser and went to work on the second hoisting cable.

Ten minutes later I took the cable end to the top with me. The job was finished.

Cal got me out of the suit. We loaded it and the compressor aboard the powerboat, left the barge moored to the cables, and returned to the dock.

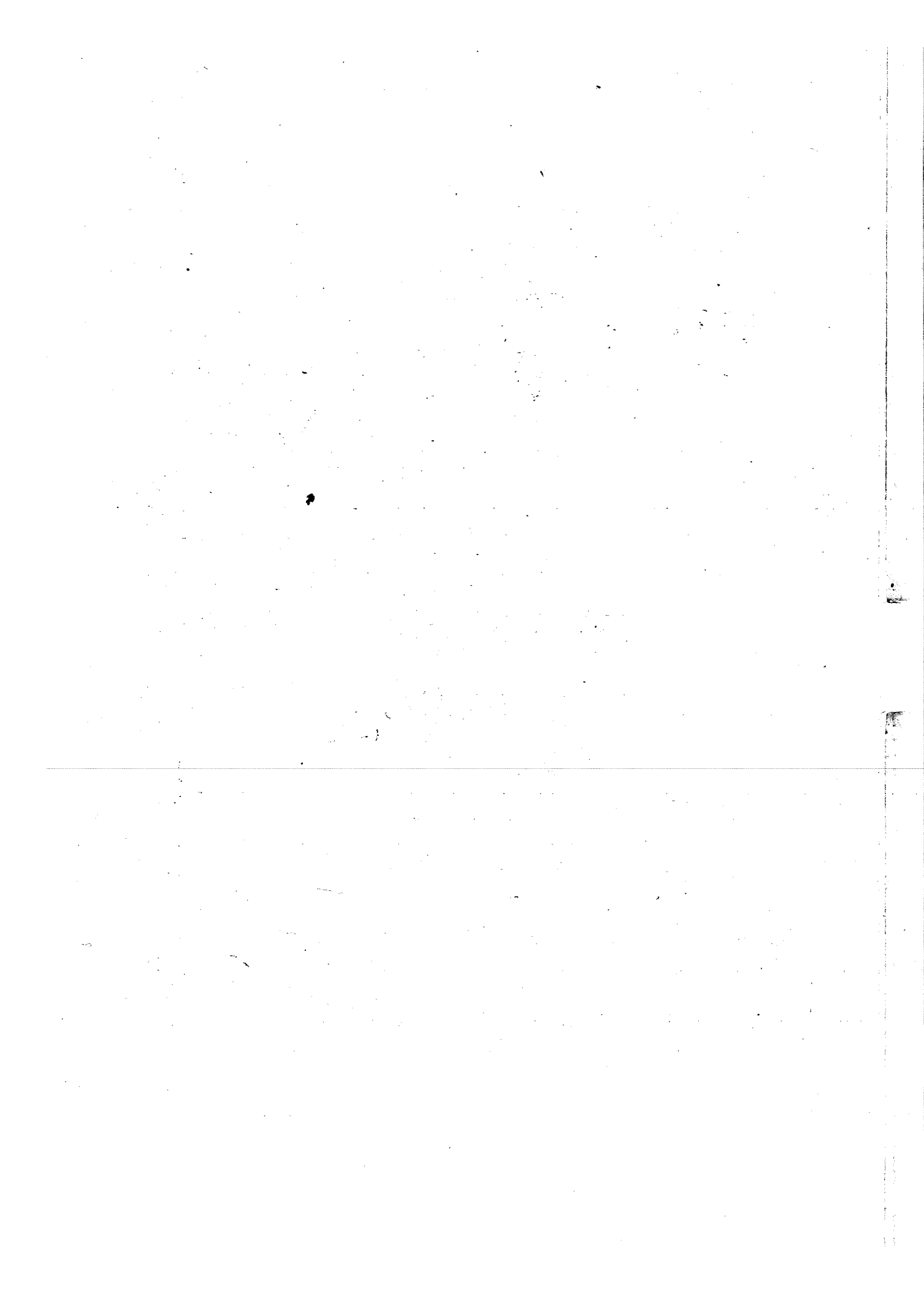
There Mr. Harmon said, "When you get everything into the pickup, come to the cannery office, and I'll give you your check."

It took almost an hour to load the diving gear and equipment and return Harley Martin's boat.

I got into the pickup and sat there a few minutes looking out at the bright day and thinking of this morning and what had happened. I thought of those chill gray depths and waited for fear to hit me. It came, but not the unreasoning fear I'd known with Dad's death. The sharp edge was dulled by the knowledge that I had handled myself well in an emergency. I was really aware now that there is deadly danger below and that death in a hundred ways is a diver's constant companion. But I knew that the things Dad had taught me could minimize the danger. I hadn't licked fear and perhaps I never would. But I could control it. I might dread going beneath the sea, but I could dive again.

I didn't feel like the boy who'd driven to the dock this morning to deliver the diving suit to another man, or the frightened one who'd jumped into the sea a little over an hour ago. That boy would not have talked up to Mr. Harmon. I remembered Dad once said, "Every time you lick a problem, you grow up a little more."

During that time I'd been trapped on the bottom, I'd done some fast growing.



We were eating dinner when Mr. Harmon came. Years at sea and as a cannery superintendent here in Alaska had molded him into a wide-shouldered, big-chested man with sharp, concrete-gray eyes and a voice that could be tough and impersonal as our northern mountains. It could be gentle, too, as now. "How are things going, Norah?"

Mom said cheerfully, "We're getting along. Did you know Jane's going to work for Mr. Miller in the hardware store next week?"

"That's fine." The gray eyes turned on me with approval. "What I came for, Norah - an empty forty foot cruiser was rammed by a tug this morning and sank off the end of the city dock in sixty feet of water. We want a diver to go down and put lines around it so we can raise it. Would you care to rent George's diving suit?"

"Of course," Mom said.

Their gray eyes were on me again. "Is the suit in good shape? That - hole in the helmet been mended?"

"Yes," I said.

"Good, bring it to the end of the dock in the morning. Cal Webber will be there to help load it on a flat barge."

"Who's going to dive?" I asked.

"Cal from the cannery. He's had some experience."

After Mr. Harmon had gone, Mom smiled and said, "You'd better get the diving gear into the pickup tonight, Janey."

I went through the garage and took the canvas suit, lead shoes, metal breastplate, and lead belt from the old trunk and loaded them into the pickup. Luckily, the heavy air compressor was still in the truck. I held the helmet. My fingers found the patch where the steel bar had penetrated. An overwhelming sense of fear and emptiness claimed me. For a moment I was almost sick.

I stowed the helmet in the pickup with the rest of the gear. Then I stood there, both hands gripping the side of the truck while the past rolled over me.

Last fall, almost a year ago now, Dad had been diving for the town, removing some old pilings that were a menace to navigation. I was his tender that day, as I had been for two years. Mr. Harmon was also there. Dad was diving from a low barge that was anchored near the pilings. He was down about thirty feet, when a tug went by close, making a big bow wave. The barge tipped and rocked. A steel bar about five feet long with a needle-sharp point lay on the floor of the barge. As

the barge tipped, the bar rolled off into the sea and sank point first.

I yelled over the telephone, "Dad, look out!" I heard the bar strike the helmet. Dad made an odd little sound. Then the air began boiling up from the bottom in a long thick stream. I began screaming into the telephone.

Mr. Harmon grabbed the end of a line and, clothes and all, dived into the sea and swam down to Dad. He tied the line around him, and we pulled him up. The bar had pierced the helmet like a driven spear. I took one look and was violently ill.

Dad had made a good living diving, and I had wanted to become a diver too. Dad had taught me to dive in the quiet backwaters. In two years I made some thirty dives and had been down as deep as forty feet.

With my first dive I'd been dreaming how I'd someday dive in the South Pacific, the Gulf Stream, the Mediterranean. The day of the accident that dream died. The thought of getting into a diving suit again and entering those silent green depths terrified me.

But now I was thinking of it again. I didn't want to, but I couldn't stop. I went out along the side of the house and down the block, hoping somehow that I could walk away from my thoughts.

At the end of the block I leaned against a rock. I was still thinking about the sea and a lot of other things. Anyone who had ever dived could do this simple job. A hundred dollars for putting a couple of cables around a sunken boat. I thought what that hundred dollars could mean to us.

Until a couple of months ago, I hadn't thought about grocery bills, light, water, heat, or clothes for us. But late one night I found Mom frowning over columns of figures at the kitchen table. I asked what she was doing. "Just trying to figure out a way to make one dollar do the work of two. These are our monthly expenses. This is our year's total. That is what we have left in the bank."

I was amazed at our expenses. I could see that what I had thought was a good balance in the bank, wouldn't last many more months.

"The reason we haven't a bigger bank balance," Mom explained, "is that we've been making big house payments. Two more big payments and the house is ours. But I'm wondering how we're going to make them."

"I'll go to work too; I'll get a job on a boat. I'm old enough, and I'll graduate from high school this spring."

Losing a home or a job in a small town in Alaska is as serious a thing as can happen to a family. In a big city where there are thousands of houses we could have found another to move into. But not in Orca City. There hadn't been a vacant livable house in town for years. So we had to keep this home Dad and Mom had borrowed money to build. Now, that was up to me.

I hoped to get on with a fishing boat, but there were no openings. Mom finally came up with the hardware job. "Mr. Miller wants to talk to you about working for him, Janey," she said one day.

I wasn't interested in selling pots and pans, but I hadn't found anything else, so I went down to the hardware store and agreed to start work when Mr. Miller needed me.

That was more than a week ago. Tonight I wasn't thinking of the hardware store. I was thinking about the dive tomorrow morning. Cal Webber would get one hundred dollars for a very simple dive to put a couple of lifting cables around a boat. The whole job shouldn't take more than a few minutes on bottom, and sixty feet wasn't deep. But the very thought of going down again sent a wave of fear through me. I closed out thoughts of the dive and concentrated on the hundred dollars and how much it would mean to us. Once I had the suit on again, I told myself, I'd make it somehow. The important thing was to talk Mr. Harmon into letting me make the dive.

I went down the block and turned into the street where he lived. He was a good friend of Dad's and Mom's. But I stood a little in awe of him. I had seen how tough he could be at times.

Mr. Harmon was sitting on his porch with his feet on the railing smoking a pipe. He removed the pipe as I turned up the walk and asked, "Nothing wrong with the suit I hope, Jane?"

"No, sir," I leaned against the porch railing trying to frame the right words. "It's about the job," I said. "We - decided not to loan the suit unless I did the diving."

"I see." Mr. Harmon polished the bowl of the pipe against a hard palm. "You've done some diving, I know."

"I was Dad's tender for two years, too."

He nodded. "How many dives did you make?"

"About thirty. Dad taught me everything about diving."

"I'm sure he did." Those concrete-gray eyes bit into me. "Does your mother know about this decision?"

The lie came easily but those eyes stopped it.

"No, but I can do it. We need that hundred dollars."

"This is a job for an older person, Jane. This isn't diving for fun. You've never been in trouble on a dive. For all I know, you might panic."

"I wouldn't. Dad hammered it into me that I had to stay calm in trouble or I wouldn't get out."

"You don't know that you would. You've never been tested. This is sixty feet and in the open sea. That's a long way down if anything goes wrong."

"If I can't do the job, you don't have to pay me."

"That's fair enough. But I can't let you do it, Jane," he said. "Your father was a good friend of mine, and he wouldn't let you go down more than forty feet in still water. Neither will I."

"There was no good reason to go deeper then," I said. "Now there is."

"You're too young, Jane," he said bluntly.

I looked at him sitting there, rock solid. I was suddenly angry. "That's just an excuse."

"It could be," Mr. Harmon said mildly. "I'll give you an extra ten dollars to act as Cal's tender. Do you want it?"

I stalked off the porch without answering. I'd tried. But when I thought of that cold, deadly sea, I wasn't sorry I'd failed.

Next morning when I arrived at the dock with the suit and compressor, Cal Webber was there. Cal glanced at the diving outfit and asked, "You gonna work the telephone and tend lines, Jane?"

"Yes." A couple hundred feet away was where Dad's accident had happened. This was the first time I'd been back here.

Cal said, "They've got a small barge tied to the dock below. We can use it to dive from."

It didn't take long to load the equipment onto the barge. We had finished when the powerboat, carrying Mr. Harmon and Frank the powerboat skipper, pulled around the end of the dock. Mr. Harmon said, "Good morning, Jane. Everything ready?"

"Yes." After last night I didn't think I'd ever feel the same about Mr. Harmon.

The powerboat towed the barge out about a hundred feet from the end of the dock, and Mr. Harmon dropped anchor into the sea. "This should be about it." He tossed two big coils of cable onto the barge and said to Cal, "Work one under the stern and the other under the bow. We'll fasten both ends to the barge. That

will leave the cruiser lying in a cradle formed by the cables. We'll bring out a big barge, fasten the cables to it, and at low water take up the slack. When the tide comes in, it'll lift the cruiser off the bottom, and we can float her into shore."

Cal nodded, "Sure, Sam, sure." He looked at me. "We might as well get started."

I helped Cal into the diving suit. He said, "There oughta be a line to slide down. Tide's beginning to run. It could sweep me away."

"Don't let much air into the suit, and you'll be able to sink faster," I said.

Cal nodded, "Where's the air valve?"

I showed him.

"There oughta be a divin' ladder."

"The barge is only a foot above the water," I pointed out. "You can jump in easy."

"I guess so."

I put the helmet over his head, screwed it tight, and locked it. I asked through the open faceplate, "All ready?" At Cal's jerky nod I closed the plate and screwed the bolt tight.

I put the earphones on and said, "You're ready to dive."

I helped him down. He sat on the edge of the barge and dangled his legs in the water. Then he turned on his stomach and slipped in. Cal held himself waist high with his hands. He released his right hand and lowered himself to his chest, then to his shoulders. Finally, the helmet went under the length of his arm and air began boiling to the surface.

His right hand shot out, gripped the edge of the barge, and with a mighty heave he pulled himself from the sea.

I unscrewed the faceplate and asked, "Anything wrong?"

Cal's face was gray under his normal tan. Sweat beaded his upper lip. He said in a shaky voice, "Get this helmet off! Get it off!"

I said, "You've never been down before. You've never even had a suit on."

Mr. Harmon jumped to the barge and asked, "What's this Cal?"

"I thought I could do it, Sam." Cal shook his head and shivered. "But sixty feet. That's a long way from air. If anything goes wrong - blooey!"

"Why, you lying bum!" Mr. Harmon said savagely. "I depended on you."



"There wasn't anybody else around to try," Cal defended himself. "It looked easy. For a hundred bucks it was worth a try."

"So I lose at least a week hunting for another diver." Mr. Harmon's voice was cold. "Cal, you're fired."

"Aw, now Sam --" Cal began.

Mr. Harmon said, "Jane, you might as well take the suit home. Frank, tow the barge back to the dock."

The barge was towed back and made secure. Back at the dock Mr. Harmon said to me, "You'll get your ten dollars. Stop by the office on the way home." Then he stepped aboard the powerboat, and it disappeared around the corner of the dock.

I watched it out of sight, and a thought crawled into my mind. That aching emptiness was back in my stomach. I ran along the dock, went down a ladder, and stepped aboard Harley Martin's boat.

I asked Harley, "Can I borrow your rowboat?"

He waved at the boat tied to the stern, "Help yourself."

When I rowed around the end of the dock, to the barge, Cal was out of the canvas suit and was lacing his shoes. He asked, "What're you doin' with the rowboat?"

"We're going to tow this barge back out over the sunken cruiser. I'll make that dive."

"Are you crazy?" Cal demanded. "Harmon won't let you."

"He won't know."

"He might come back any minute."

"Then we'd better hurry," I said. "You want to be my tender for ten dollars?"

"Listen," Cal reasoned, "Harmon'll half skin you. You saw how tough he can be. He gives the orders for any dive."

"I can dive if I want to. I want that hundred dollars. Are you going to tend lines for me or do I find somebody else?"

Cal bit his lips. Finally he said, "Move over."

We rowed out easily and dropped the anchor in the same spot. Cal hurriedly helped me dress. He kept glancing about nervously. My palms were wet and I kept wiping them on my legs. I discovered my teeth were chattering and clamped my jaw tight. My heart was pounding harder than on my first dive two years ago.

I kept telling myself, "It's just another dive, a very simple one. It's only twenty feet deeper than you've been in the past. That's nothing. You know everything

about a diving suit. Do exactly as you did in all those backwater dives, and you'll be fine."

Cal had the helmet in his hands. "You ready?" he asked.

I nodded. He set it over my head, screwed it tight, and dropped the key in the lock so it couldn't come unscrewed and blow off. He closed the faceplate, and I was ready to dive.

I stood on the edge of the barge, adjusted the air, and felt it rush in at the back of my neck - cool, clean, hissing faintly. I kept thinking of that spot where Dad had drowned. For some reason I wanted to look at it. But I didn't. I quit thinking and jumped straight out into the sea. Sun, barge, and world were blotted out in the cold green gloom.

I sank swiftly, feeling the slight pull of the running tide. The upper light faded and became dull gray. The darkness thickened steadily, becoming a bodiless, fluid wall that pressed strongly against the faceplate and made itself felt throughout my body. The bottom of the barge was a shadow, then was gone. I was alone in a chill, strange world, sinking, sinking. Mr. Harmon had been right. Sixty feet is a long way down. My feet struck something solid, and a frightening shock rolled through me. My descent stopped. I was on bottom.

I stood a moment, letting my heart and breathing settle back to normal. I still felt some fear, but now I had it under control. I heard the reassuring tunk-tunk of the compressor, and life-giving air continued to pour in in a cool stream on the back of my neck. Light from the surface penetrated poorly at this depth. I could see only eight or ten cloudy gray feet ahead.

I said into the mike above my mouth, "I'm on bottom. I'm going to start looking for the boat. Give me line."

"Good girl," Cal said. Air line slithered out of the gloom. I left the steel cable hanging, and moved off, leaning forward to drive against the push of the sea. My feet stirred up some silt that drifted off with the current. I plowed forward until Cal's voice said, "Hold it, Jane. You've taken out most of the air line. Try another direction."

I followed the air line back until it rose straight up toward the surface where the steel cable was hanging. Then I did an about-face and went off in the opposite direction. Once again Cal's voice stopped me. I found nothing. I returned halfway to the hanging cable, my starting point, chose another direction halfway

between the two extremes I'd already walked and moved off once more.

This time I took only a half-dozen steps when the bow of the boat came out of the gloom ahead of me. She lay partially tilted on her side, her stern disappearing into deeper water. I said to Cal, "I've found her. I'm going to attach the bow cable first. Give me all the cable slack you can."

I carried the cable to the bow of the cruiser, knelt and began scraping the silt under the keel. About four feet from the bow I found a crevice in the rock and shoved the end of cable through it. I went around to the opposite side and pulled all the slack. Then I carried the end of the cable back to my starting point. There I let the air build up in the suit and floated to the surface.

I broke water close to the barge. I handing Cal the cable end, took the second cable, and dropped back to the bottom. There I followed the first cable to the cruiser. I went to the stern and was about to begin scraping the silt from under the keel when Cal's voice said, "Oh, oh! Here comes the cannery powerboat with Frank and old man Harmon on board."

"Never mind him," I said. "I'll be through in about two minutes."

Here at the stern, the keel was not down solid on the rock bottom. I had no trouble shoving the cable under. I went around to the opposite side and pulled the slack through. From the stern I had to loop the cable over the top of the cruiser to take it back to the surface. I took hold of an open port and started to climb the side. That moment I distinctly felt the cruiser shift slightly under me. I froze there, waiting, fearing it might move again, maybe turn completely over. Some shift of current or my climbing the side had disturbed a delicate balance. Nothing happened, and I began to climb gingerly. I was brought short by the tightened air line. It was hung up somewhere.

I backed down carefully and followed the air line around the stern, looking for the hang-up. There I found it. In going around the stern and climbing the side, I had dragged the air line along the bottom. It had slipped into the opening between the keel and bottom and had become wedged there. I got down on my kness and began digging the silt away so I could work the line out.

There was no longer an opening. The keel rested flat on the rock bottom. The movement I felt had been

the cruiser settling those few inches. The line was wedged tight, but somehow it had not been completely shut, and air still came through the helmet. I took hold of the line and pulled as hard as I dared. I leaned against the side of the cruiser and pushed, hoping that the delicate balance was still there, and I could rock the crack open. The boat was down solid. Some twenty tons of wood and steel lay on top of that air line, and I had no way of moving it. I was trapped.

"I have to keep calm," I told myself over and over. "I've got to think." I wanted to yell to Cal. But Cal couldn't help. No one could. I had to get out of this alone.

Dad had carefully taught me the principles of diving and the mechanical operation of the suit. I reviewed those rules in my mind, reaching for some thought, anything I could use. A diver stays on bottom because of the weight of forty pounds of lead shoes, ninety pounds of lead belt, and seventy-five pounds of metal helmet and breastplate.

Any kid could figure that out. Without that weight a diver would shoot upward to sunlight and life.

But now the air line pinned me down. Without the air line - but that was life itself. I wouldn't drown immediately without it. The automatic valve in the helmet would close, keeping the water out; but I'd smother to death in minutes! My mind snatched at the thought and began racing. Then I had it. The answer was so frightening that my first impulse was to push it away. But even as I tried to reject it, I knew this was my one chance to get out alive.

I knelt there, surprisingly calm now, and worked out every detail before I called Cal. Then I said, keeping my voice quiet and even, "I'm in a little trouble," and explained what happened.

Cal's voice came back high with shock and fright, "You're trapped! Jane, you're trapped! What'll you do?" Cal was too excited. I said, "You told me Mr. Harmon was coming out in the powerboat. If he's there put him on."

Mr. Harmon asked calmly, "Yes, Jane, what's wrong?"

I gave him the picture and Mr. Harmon said, "Got it. Now, what do you want us to do?"

"Nothing yet." The sound of Mr. Harmon's calm, matter-of-fact voice settled me down even more. "This is what I have to do - cut the air line loose from the keel so you can pull it up. Then I've got to take off my lead shoes and belt so I can float to the surface.

There'll be enough air in the suit to keep me alive while I do this. Take the rowboat and get over to the spot where my bubbles are coming up so you can grab me when I surface. The air in the suit will float me only a few seconds, then I'll sink. You've got to be close enough to grab me in a hurry."

"That's too dangerous," Mr. Harmon said flatly. "We've got to work out something else."

"I can't wait. My air line is pinched half shut now. I can see it. This boat can shift again any second. If it moves as much as a quarter of an inch, it can shut off all my air. I've got to get out now. I know what I'm doing. I've figured it out. This is the only way left. We've got to hurry."

"All right," Mr. Harmon said. "Don't cut the air line until we tell you. I'll have the boat over your bubbles in a minute."

Cal's voice said over the telephone, "All right, Jane. They've got the boat right alongside your bubbles. Come on up, kid. And good luck."

"Be there in a minute." I drew the knife from the scabbard, took hold of the air line close to the helmet, slashed through the tough rubber. With the second cut, the hose parted in a burst of bubbles. Immediately the hiss of fresh air into the helmet stopped. I stepped around the stern and cut the hose loose from the boat. Then I knelt and began working frantically at the buckles of my shoes. I kicked off one. Thirty seconds later gone. The other resisted all efforts. I discovered I hadn't loosened the thong from the metal loop. An instant later it was off. Then I unbuckled the lead belt. Instantly I soared smoothly upward. The murky gray light changed swiftly to clear light. I looked up. The bottom of the rowboat was rushing at me.

I broke the surface, and Mr. Harmon's big hands grabbed me and pulled me into the boat. The helmet was twisted off and Mr. Harmon said, "That was close! Too close, Jane, I ought to whale the daylights out of you."

I blinked at the wonderful sunlight and filled my lungs with fresh air. I grinned at Mr. Harmon.

He looked at me steadily. "You're getting out of that suit. We're taking no more chances. I'd rather leave that cruiser there till doomsday than go through this again."

"There are no more chances to take," I said. "The job's practically finished. The cable's under the keel. All I have to do is bring the end back to the surface. It's the simplest kind of dive. Besides, my lead shoes

and belt are down there. I want to go back and get them and finish the job."

"You were lucky just now," Mr. Harmon said. "Don't push it."

"I'm not," I answered. "The luck was that you came along when I needed you. I figured out what to do."

Mr. Harmon said nothing, nothing while Frank, the powerboat skipper, rowed us back to the barge. Mr. Harmon kept looking at me, frowning, his eyes thoughtful. Then he said, "You're giving me the straight of this? All you have to do is bring the cable back to the surface?"

"That's right. I'll pick up the end and come up."

"All right," he agreed. "Frank, get the extra belt out of the pickup."

By the time Frank returned I was ready to dive again. I jumped in, taking the end of a rope down with me. On bottom I tied it to the lead belt I had discarded and sent up the belt. I sat on bottom and put on my lead shoes. Then I returned to the sunken cruiser and went to work on the second hoisting cable.

Ten minutes later I took the cable end to the top with me. The job was finished.

Cal got me out of the suit. We loaded it and the compressor aboard the powerboat, left the barge moored to the cables, and returned to the dock.

There Mr. Harmon said, "When you get everything into the pickup, come to the cannery office, and I'll give you your check."

It took almost an hour to load the diving gear and equipment and return Harley Martin's boat.

I got into the pickup and sat there for a few minutes looking out at the bright day and thinking of those chill gray depths and waited for fear to hit me. It came, but not the unreasoning fear I'd known with Dad's death. The sharp edge was dulled by the knowledge that I had handled myself well in an emergency. I was really aware now that there is deadly danger below and that death in a hundred ways is a diver's constant companion. But I knew that the things Dad had taught me could minimize the danger. I hadn't licked fear and perhaps I never would. But I could control it. I might dread going beneath the sea, but I could dive again.

I didn't feel like the girl who'd driven to the dock this morning to deliver the diving suit to another person, or the frightened one who'd jumped into the sea a little over an hour ago. That girl would not have

talked up to Mr. Harmon. I remembered Dad once said, "Every time you lick a problem, you grow up a little more." During that time I'd been trapped on the bottom, I'd done some fast growing.

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Coombs, C. Fair-Weather Forward. In Top Flight.  
Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman, 1961.

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"You know," Coach Hillman said quietly, "I can't find a thing wrong with your ankle, Tom."

"Oh, it isn't too bad, Coach," Tom Ellis told him. "Just gives out on me once in a while."

"Does it seem to get worse when you're under pressure, Tom?"

"Yes, I guess that's ---" Tom stopped, all at once realizing the true meaning behind Coach Hillman's words. "Now, Coach, wait a minute! You're all wrong if you think - say after all who was high point man out there today? You can't blame it on me that we lost the game. You can't expect me to do all the work."

"Better go get your shower, Tom," Coach Hillman said. "And don't worry too much about your ankle."

The coach turned away. There was no further chance for Tom to talk to him.

Tom thought about it as he went downstairs. He was taking off his shoes when some of the fellows came out of the showers. A row of steel lockers hid Tom from their sight. Suddenly his fingers stopped working at the shoestrings.

"I tell you, you just can't depend on him," Tom knew Lee Palmer's voice. "He's like a fly swatter - works in spurts."

"Yes," Brick Rogers, the Grant High guard, agreed. "And just when you need him most he spurts off the court with that trick ankle of his."

"Trick ankle is right. He can make it appear or disappear as he sees fit."

Tom doubled his fist, but held back the words he wanted to yell at them.

"A very handy ankle," Andy, the tall center, said. "He's a real player until we're behind in the score. Then he becomes a worn-out spark plug. You must be proud of your neighbor, Lee."

"There's nothing wrong with Tom as a neighbor," Lee said quickly. "That is once you get used to all the things he always starts and never finishes. He buys model-plane kits, works on them, and then puts them aside. There are radio parts all over the place. Lots of things he's given up - but well, I guess that's just Tom."

Tom had listened to about as much as he could stand. He stepped out from behind the lockers. "Will someone please pull the knife out of my back?" He asked. Strangely, no one looked guilty.

"We were just saying ---" Brick began.

"I know what you were just saying," Tom told him.

"It seems that a fellow doesn't get much credit around here for scoring 18 points in less than half a game."

"That's great, Tom, but we didn't win."

"And I suppose that's my fault."

"We might have won, Tom," Andy said, "if you had stayed in a little longer after the going got tough."

"Can I help it if my ankle gives out on me?"

"No - no, I guess not, Tom."

Was there a hidden meaning in Andy's words?

Walking home with the others, Tom noticed how quiet they were. Well, he thought, if they're trying to work the old silent treatment, let them go ahead. He would play basketball when, how, and if he wished. If they didn't like it, they could ask the coach to take him off the team.

The following week the team went across town to play Oakmont High at Oakmont's gym. The game started out as a battle and stayed that way. Coach Hillman started Tom at right forward. He knew that Tom was always best at the start of a game - before the pressure got stiff.

Lee, who took turns with Tom at right forward, seemed quite content to stay on the bench. Tom just couldn't figure Lee out. Lee wanted a varsity letter more than anyone else on the squad did. Yet he never seemed sore when Tom was picked to play. School spirit, Tom supposed Lee would say. But a fellow could carry that school spirit stuff too far.

The first quarter was wild basketball. The score went back and forth. But Tom was playing his best and when the quarter ended, Grant High was ahead 15 to 11. Nine of the 15 points belonged to Tom.

Halfway through the second quarter, Tom dribbled down court. The two Oakmont guards came at him. Tom split them, but fell to the floor. As he rose angrily to his feet, both knees burned.

"Foul on number twelve!" the referee called.

One shot only, Tom thought bitterly. Tom sank the shot. But he wasn't happy with it. In fact, he wasn't happy any more during the rest of the first half.

Oakmont seemed to know that Tom wasn't playing very hard. They swarmed down the gym and sank basket after basket.

By half time Oakmont had surged into a 29 to 25 lead, and this was just a start!

Coach Hillman gave them a few tips. Then the locker room was silent during the intermission. Several times, Tom thought the guys were watching him. Well, a guy couldn't keep up at a breakneck speed all the time,

could he? He had made 14 of those 25 points.

"Three minutes!" came the call. The guys got up slowly.

"Same lineup starting the second half," Coach Hillman said. "But shift to man-to-man defense. Just one other thing. Maybe you haven't thought of it. If we lose this game, Grant is out of the pennant race. Most of you are playing your last season. It's been a long time since we won a court pennant. I've never had a squad that stood a better chance. It's up to you."

Tom hadn't thought of how important this game was to Grant High. Not that it really made much difference. He played his best in every game.

Or did he?

Oakmont got the ball from the tipoff. In a weaving display, they worked the ball down the court. Then the Oakmont center sent a pass to one of his forwards, turned toward the basket, took a return pass, and made a basket. Tom had been caught flat-footed when it came to sticking to his man.

Oakmont was rolling.

"Come on, Tom," Brick pleaded. "Pull the string and let's get going."

But Oakmont's lead increased. With five minutes of the third quarter gone, all at once Tom turned and limped off the court.

"All right, take over, Lee," Coach Hillman called from the bench. He looked up at Tom for a moment. Then he turned back to watch the game without saying a word.

Tom said nothing about the ankle. It didn't seem necessary. Everyone knew already why he had left the game.

Lee fought for the ball. Lee had all the spirit anyone could have, but the guys just weren't hitting the basket. No matter how hard they tried, they just couldn't seem to score.

At least, Tom thought, Lee was getting in some much-needed time toward his varsity letter. It meant a lot to Lee. Tom liked him.

The team was very tired as the final quarter began. The score was Oakmont, 43; Grant, 36.

Tom began to move around on the bench. He had never let a game affect him much before. But, after all, this was an important game.

"Watch that guard, Lee!" he shouted. "Shoot, Andy!"

"Better sit down, Tom," Coach Hillman said mildly, "or we'll draw a technical foul. Jumping around shouldn't help that leg any, either."

The score was 45 to 38 when, after a rather wild play, Lee came limping off the floor. Sweat streamed down his face.

Coach Hillman looked along the bench for someone to take Lee's place. His gaze stopped for a moment on Tom. Then it moved on. "Coach," Tom jumped to his feet, "let me go in! Please!"

"I'm afraid the pressure's pretty stiff in there for you, Tom."

"No, it's not, Coach. I feel like playing today."

"You also have yourself a bum ankle. Forgot about it did you? No, I'd rather not take a chance of -"

"He can do it, Coach," Lee cut in quickly. "Give him a chance."

"Well," Coach Hillman rubbed his chin, "looks as if I'm sort of out-numbered. All right, Tom, go in. And as long as your ankle seems all right now, you'd better play hard all the time. Win or lose."

Tom went out and played. He played hard. Harder than he had ever played before. He covered the floor in a burst of speed. For a couple of minutes, his teammates were startled by his sudden action. Then they fell into the spirit that fired him and went into action too.

The Grant five began to click. Tom hooked in a jump shot and followed it in a minute with another. Andy took a long chance and scored. Oakmont tried to stop them and made errors. Grant High came in like the tide and made another basket.

Before the final gun sounded, there was just time for Tom to intercept a wild Oakmont pass and score again. Final score; Grant High, 57; Oakmont, 54.

The locker room was a scene of noise and joy. Tom was right in the middle of it, seeming, for the first time to feel like one of the bunch. And he should. He knew how it felt now - knew the real thrill of working under pressure. In fact, it seemed that the more pressure there was, the better he got. This was something new for him. He liked it. The team seemed to like it.

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Tom saw how Lee's face went red at the mention of bum ankles. His own face also felt quite warm. Could it be that Lee's ankle had not really been hurt?"

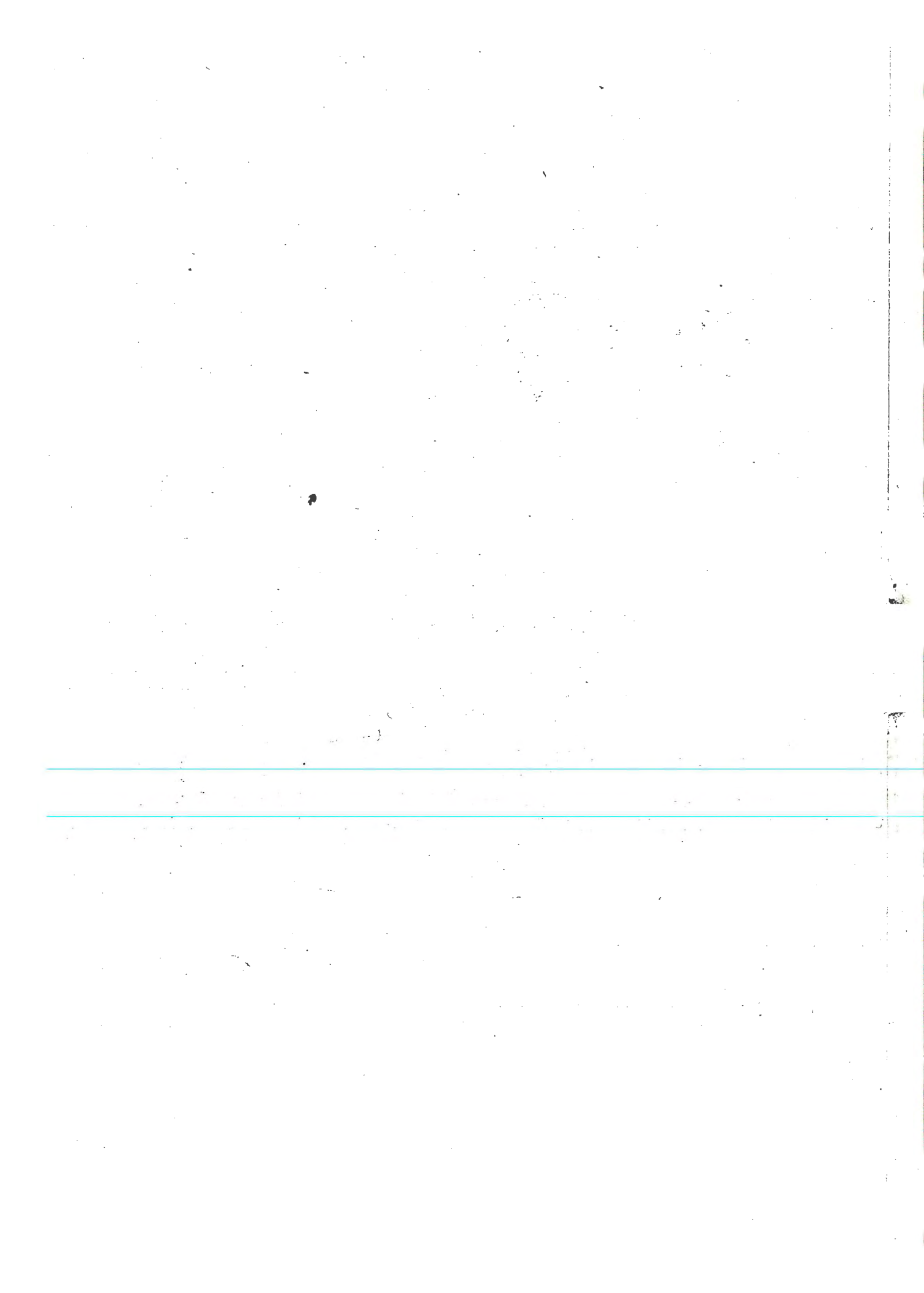
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"Better count me out today," Tom said. "Next time, though, for sure. But right now I have to get home. There are some parts I have to put in that radio I am building. They almost had me whipped. But from now on, no more halfway stuff for me."

And as Tom's teammates stared after him, Tom went whistling up the stairs and out into the twilight.



"You know," Coach Hillman said quietly, "I can't find a thing wrong with your ankle, Jill."

"Oh, it isn't too bad, Coach," Jill Ellis told her. "Just gives out on me once in a while."

"Does it seem to get worse when you're under pressure, Jill?"

"Yes, I guess that's ---" Jill stopped, all at once realizing the true meaning behind Coach Hillman's words.

"No, Coach, wait a minute! You're all wrong if you think - hey, after all who was high point scorer out there today? You can't blame me that we lost the game. You can't expect me to do all the work."

"Better go take your shower, Jill," Coach Hillman said. "And don't worry too much about that ankle."

The coach turned away. There was no further chance for Jill to talk to her.

Jill thought about it as she went downstairs. She was taking off her shoes when some of her fellow teammates came out of the showers. A row of steel lockers hid Jill from their sight. Suddenly her fingers stopped working at the shoestrings.

"I tell you, you just can't depend on her." Jill knew Lee Palmer's voice. She's just like a fly swatter - works in spurts."

"Yes," Barb Rogers, the Grant High guard, agreed. "And just when you need her most she spurts off the court with that trick ankle of hers."

"Trick ankle is right. She can make it appear or disappear as she sees fit."

Jill doubled her fists, but held back the words she wanted to yell at them.

"A very handy ankle," Andrea the tall center said. "She's a real player until we're behind in the score. Then she becomes a worn out spark plug. You must be proud of your neighbor, Lee."

"There's nothing wrong with Jill as a neighbor," Lee said. "That is once you get used to all the things she always starts and never finishes. She buys all sorts of craft kits, works on them, and then puts them aside. There are radio parts all over the place. Lots of things she's given up - but well, I guess that's just Jill."

Jill had listened to about as much as she could stand. She stepped out from behind the lockers. "Will someone please pull the knife out of my back?" she asked. Strangely no one looked guilty.

"We were just saying-" Barb began.

"I know what you were just saying," Jill told her.

"It seems that a person doesn't get much credit around here for scoring 18 points in less than half a game."

"That's great, Jill, but we didn't win."

"And I suppose that's my fault."

"We might have won, Jill," Andrea said, "if you had stayed in a little longer after the going got tough."

"Can I help it if my ankle gives out on me?"

"No, - no, I guess not, Jill."

Was there a hidden meaning in Andrea's words?

Walking home with the others, Jill noticed how quiet they were. Well, she thought, if they're trying to work the old silent treatment, let them go ahead. She would play basketball when, how, and if she wished. If they didn't like it, they could ask the coach to take her off the team.

The following week the team went across town to play Oakmont High at Oakmont's gym. The game started out as a battle and stayed that way. Coach Hillman started Jill at right forward. She knew that Jill was always best at the start of a game - before the pressure got stiff.

Lee, who took turns with Jill at right forward, seemed quite content to stay on the bench. Jill just couldn't figure Lee out. Lee wanted a varsity letter more than anyone else on the squad did. Yet she never seemed mad when Jill was picked to play. School spirit, Jill supposed Lee would say, but a person could carry that school spirit stuff too far.

The first quarter was wild basketball. The score went back and forth. But Jill was playing her best and when the quarter ended, Grant High was ahead 15 to 11. Nine of the 15 points belonged to Jill.

Halfway through the second quarter, Jill dribbled down court. The two Oakmont guards came at her. Jill split them, but fell to the floor. As she rose angrily to her feet, both knees burned.

"Foul on number twelve!" the referee called.

One shot only, Jill thought bitterly. Jill sank the shot. But she wasn't happy with it. In fact, she wasn't happy any more during the rest of the first half.

Oakmont seemed to know that Jill wasn't playing very hard. They swarmed down the gym and sank basket after basket. By half time Oakmont had surged into a 29 to 25 lead, and this was just a start!

Coach Hillman gave them a few tips. Then the locker room was silent during the intermission. Several times, Jill thought the girls were watching her. Well, she couldn't keep up at a breakneck speed all the time



could she? She had made 14 of those 25 points.

"Three minutes," came the call. The team got up slowly.

"Same line-up starting the second half," Coach Hillman said. "But shift to one-on-one defense. Just one other thing. Maybe you haven't thought of it. If we lose this game, Grant is out of the pennant race. Most of you are playing your last season. It's been a long time since we won a court pennant. I've never had a squad that stood a better chance. It's up to you."

Jill hadn't thought of how important this game was to Grant High. Not that it really made much difference. She played her best in every game.

Or did she?

Oakmont got the ball from the tipoff. In a weaving display, they worked the ball down the court. Then the Oakmont center sent a pass to one of her forwards, turned toward the basket, took a return pass, and made a basket. Jill had been caught flat-footed when it came to sticking to her person.

Oakmont was rolling.

"Come on, Jill," Barb pleaded. "Pull the string and let's get going."

But Oakmont's lead increased. With five minutes gone in the third quarter, all at once Jill turned and limped off the court.

"All right, take over, Lee," Coach Hillman called from the bench. She looked up at Jill for a moment. Then she turned back to watch the game without saying a word.

Jill said nothing about the ankle. It didn't seem necessary. Everyone knew already why she had left the game.

Lee fought for the ball. Lee had all the spirit anyone could have, but the girls just weren't hitting the basket. No matter how hard they tried, they just couldn't seem to score.

At least, Jill thought, Lee was getting in some much-needed time toward her varsity letter. It meant a lot to Lee. Jill liked her.

The team was very tired as the final quarter began. The score was Oakmont, 43; Grant, 36.

Jill began to move around on the bench. She had never let a game affect her much before. But, after all, this was an important game.

"Watch that guard, Lee!" she shouted. "Shoot, Andy!"

"Better sit down, Jill," Coach Hillman said mildly, "or we'll draw a technical foul. Jumping around shouldn't help that leg any, either."

The score was 45 to 38 when, after a rather wild play, Lee came limping off the court. Sweat streamed down her face.

Coach Hillman looked along the bench for someone to take Lee's place. Her gaze stopped for a moment on Jill. Then it moved on. "Coach," Jill jumped to her feet, "let me go in! Please!"

"I'm afraid the pressure's getting pretty stiff in there for you, Jill."

"No, it's not, Coach. I feel like playing today."

"You also have yourself a bum ankle. Forgot about it did you? No, I'd rather not take a chance of -"

"She can do it, Coach," Lee cut in quickly. "Give her a chance."

"Well," Coach Hillman rubbed her chin, "looks as if I'm sort of out-numbered. All right, Jill, go in. And as long as your ankle seems all right now, you'd better play hard all the time. Win or lose."

Jill went out and played. She played hard. Harder than she had ever played before. She covered the floor in a burst of speed. For a couple of minutes, her teammates were startled by her sudden action. Then they fell into the spirit that fired her and went into action too.

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Davidson, W. E. The Jaguar Sprang To Kill. In  
Perspectives. Chicago: Scott, Foresman, 1963.

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I keep reliving those long moments when I walked down the narrow jungle trail, fighting to hold my nerves in check, only just able to keep from breaking out and bolting in headlong panic. And I still sweat when I remember the flash of that long, yellowish body arching through the twilight, the small, round head with its cruel eyes and gleaming fangs - and then the shock as I went down under its smothering weight. Time can erase a lot of bad moments, but I don't think I'll ever get completely away from that one, either physically or mentally.

I say physically because I have an arm that I can no longer raise above shoulder height, and I have some red stripes running down my thighs and legs that give me fits when the weather turns damp and cold. Those tangible things the jaguar left with me. The other souvenirs you can't see, but I have them just the same. Small things, like the sight of a prowling house cat, can bring them to life in a second.

My business - or profession, if you like - is construction of the type done by American interests in South America, generally railroad or oil company work, sometimes mining. As a hobby, I dabble around in archaeology, I've always had a particular bent towards Mexico because of its treasure of magnificent ruins of the old civilizations there. Several times, between jobs, I've gone there and poked around, digging and looking.

It happened in Oaxaca in the southern part of Mexico. You pronounce it "Wah-hah'-ca": it means a place where gourds grow. The time was late summer. I had come in from the Pacific side, via the Gulf of Tehuantepec, (ta-wan'-te-pek) landing at Salina Cruz, (sa-le'na krus') where I met an old friend of mine, Gabriel Morelos. He had worked for me one year on an excavation job up near Tehuacan (ta-wa-kan') and I wanted him to act as guide, interpreter, and general liaison man in this area, where the natives reputedly weren't too cordial to outsiders. For what I had in mind, I knew I would need a good man and I could think of none better than Gabe.

Somewhere in the back country of Oaxaca, there were some temple ruins that dated back several centuries before

the arrival of that historical plunderer Hernado Cortez. If they could be located and worked up they could shed a little more light on the ancient Zapotec Indians and might lead to some understanding of the fantastic symbols, known as "frozen lace", found on the tombs of the tribe's chieftains and priests. I had only three weeks before I had to report in Havanna for a two-year session with some reclamation projects, so I was in a hurry to get started.

Gabe is a big man as Mexicans go. He stands about six feet, will tip the beam at close to two hundred pounds, and is strong as an ox. He is dark, showing definitely his Indian ancestry. My first impression of him, standing there that morning on the dock, was an oblong of white teeth buried in a broad face as he grinned a welcome.

"Long time, eh, compadre?"

"Too long, my friend," I answered, shaking his hand. "Are we ready to take off?"

"Take off?" he echoed, looking at me in amazement. "I have made reservations for you at the hotel and also have arranged a party in your honor!" It was a temptation, but I really had no time. I shook my head.

"Some other time," I said. "How about the horses and pack mules? They ready to go?"

Gabe dropped his arms and shrugged, expressing a thousand words in the gesture. But he helped me collect my bags, and near the middle of the afternoon we pulled out, following the river upstream. We covered a fair distance before dark and spent the night in a small village, the last of any size we could see.

We were up and off early next morning, still keeping fairly close to the Tehuantepec River. The shrubs and growth had become thicker and more tropical, and our traveling pace slowed down considerably, but we camped in a small clearing, well away from the water because of animals. Near the close of the next day, after we had crossed a small stream junctioning at right angles, Gabe said, "Here is where we begin to hunt the temples. They say somewhere in there they can be found." He pointed toward the dense depths of the jungle. "It will be hard work."

There was no doubt of that. The area was a maze of tangled, interlocking vines, trees, shrubs, and vivid flowers. It was everything you expect a tropical jungle to be, complete with creeping, crawling, flying wildlife that you had to try to ignore for the sake of your nerves, while staying fully aware of it for the sake of your neck.

Later, around the fire in the sultry night, we talked about how we'd handle the digging if we found anything to

dig. If we found ruins not too badly deteriorated, Gabe and I would do it alone. But if we found some thickly covered and badly overgrown, I would send him back to the nearest village to recruit workmen.

At daybreak, we broke camp and started the search. Like participants in a rabbit drive, we moved slowly out, a hundred yards or so apart. Every yard was work, for we had to hack our path through the dense growth of parasitic vines, banana and papaya trees, and palms and wild berries. Birds skittered away through the brush and small animals crashed away in alarm. The sticky heat laid down a close, oppressive blanket.

Near noon, quite unexpectedly, we broke into a small clearing. I pulled up short and from the corner of my eye I saw Gabe do likewise. A scatter of thatched huts stood in the center of the clearing and as we paused, a dozen men came from a single larger structure and advanced to meet us. Gabe stepped back into the screen of jungle and, leaving his horse and mule, circled around and came in alongside me. We awaited the delegation, not knowing whether to be nervous or nonchalant; you can never be quite sure what to expect when you come across one of these interior villages.

"There is no anger," Gabe observed in a whisper.

The men halted before us. They were all old, all dressed in shirts and drawers of light cloth. They looked us up and down and then, one, apparently the village headman, started to speak. It was a quick, heavy dialect, one I couldn't understand. Gabe was listening with a deep frown.

When the speech was over, Gabe stood silent, pondering. There are a great many varieties of language spoken in Mexico and it is not uncommon for a native of one area to have a very hard time understanding the speech of some different section. This is particularly true where interior villages are concerned.

"Can you figure out what he's talking about?" I asked.

Gabe nodded. "I think I understand. He says we are welcome friends, otherwise we must leave. The village people do not like strange hunters in who kill the animals and cause the villagers to go hungry."

Turning to the spokesman, Gabe said carefully, "We are friends. We bring no harm to you."

The natives, watching him, understood. Several began to smile and the chief at once started to speak. I looked on, not trying to interpret the words, following the old man's gestures and inflections. He was an im-

pressive old man in spite of his ragged dress. The thin, white whisp of hair on his head and fringe of beard around his face gave him a majestic air that commanded respect.

"He says," Gabe translated when the old man had concluded, "That if we are friends we can help them. Last night one of the villagers surprised a jaguar in his goat pen. He jabbed the cat with a pitchfork, wounding it, but he got away. Later it attacked one of the children and bit the child so badly it may die. They are afraid to leave the village and they want us to take our guns and kill the jaguar for them."

I glanced at the dark, expectant faces patiently waiting while Gabe told me the story. I could see the fear and hope written there.

A dangerous, half-crazed beast lurking around the fringe of the village can well-nigh throttle its existence. I thought too of my own problem, my shortness of time. Jaguars are cunning animals, brutes, hard to find at best, harder to find in a jungle as dense as this. But of course only one answer was possible. I nodded to Gabe. "Tell them we'll help."

Gabe's lip cracked in a grin, and at that the others began to smile too. He rattled off what I had said and then went on to tell them what we were there for - to find the old temples and villages of their ancestors. Everybody began talking at once when he had finished, but the chief stopped them. He turned to me, smiled and ducked his head, and then said a few words to Gabe. After that they all turned and walked back to their huts.

Before I could ask Gabe what it was all about he told me. "If we kill the jaguar for them," he said, "they will take us to an old village they know of. I don't know if it is one of those you look for, but they say it is very old and has a great temple."

What a stroke of luck that was! This could save us an enormous amount of time. I could, for that matter, lead us straight to something we might never find on our own. And the mention of the large temple was fairly good indication that this was one ruin we sought.

"Let's leave our mules and equipment here," I said to Gabe, "and take a look around for that cat now. We can set up a camp when we get back."

He cast a glance at the sun. "Be dark before very long. Maybe better we wait and set out bait for him tonight. He's dangerous out there in the jungle after the sun goes down."



I looked out beyond the clearing and spotted a low hill half-mile or so in the distance. "Let's do both. We'll hunt to that hill and back, which we can do before dark. If we haven't jumped the cat we can stake out bait tonight and try to get him that way. I'd like to settle this so we can start for the ruins first thing in the morning."

Gabe shrugged. Taking our rifles, we mounted our horses and started for the hill, following along one of the many paths made by the natives. At the first split in the trail we separated, Gabe going to the left, I to the right.

"Vaya con Dios," he said, extending the usual farewell of the Mexican people. "We will meet at the hill." He couldn't have been more wrong.

I saw the other faint trails as I moved slowly along. At times I would swing off and take up a different one, alert for any sound or sight that would reveal the presence of the jaguar. We were working on sheer chance, of course, but with luck one of us might jump the wounded cat.

The jungle thickened as the village dropped behind. Within that green world of vividly beautiful flowers and steamy, close heat, nature went about its relentless business of life and death, survival and defeat. I watched some sort of falcon drop from the sky in a screaming, breathless dive, disappear momentarily below the horizon, then rise again with a writhing rabbit in its talons. Somewhere off to my left a monkey chattered, and once, from under my horse's hoofs, a red crested pheasant rocketed off through the brush, twisting and turning as it dodged obstructions. For a short time I could hear Gabe's horse as it bucked its way along, and then I heard it no more. Apparently we were working farther apart. But that made no difference; we would meet eventually at the hill.

Probably a full hour later, I had veered off on a fairly wide game trail and my tired mount was finding the going easier. I had just seen another rabbit, this one scurrying off ahead of us to swinging left and then, as if changing its mind, cutting abruptly aback to the right. It's a trait of rabbits to do that when pursued. It made me think of hunting back in Missouri, where cottontails are a delight to any gunner.

Suddenly my horse stopped dead. I rocked forward in the saddle, half unseated. In the same instant a great orange-and-black shadow launched itself from the

edge of the trail. I had a glimpse of bared, wicked fangs, wild, hate-filled eyes, and a bloody smear that covered the animal's haunch - and then my horse was walking backwards on his hind legs. I tried frantically to kick clear of the stirrups and get out of the saddle, but my horse staggered into a tree and I was pinned to his back.

The jaguar missed his lunge, growling wildly. The horse fought clear of the tree and, rearing, continued to fall back. He kept lashing out with his front teeth, snorting and trembling with fear. He was going over backwards any second. I fought to get free, to keep from being crushed under him, but I couldn't make it. We reached an opening in the wall of brush and toppled together. I had no time to jump clear, and the next thing I knew we were on the ground and I was scrambling to avoid the horse's thrashing hoofs. I didn't feel any pain, didn't even think of it; but my leg was pinned under the animal and I could not get away. It seemed minutes before the horse got back to his feet.

Beyond him I could see the jaguar crouching for another leap. I searched desperately for my rifle and then felt my heart give way. The weapon lay a half-dozen feet off, splintered and smashed by the iron shoes of the horse. I glanced to my belt and felt some relief at seeing my hunting knife still in its scabbard. I yanked it free. A four inch blade isn't much defense against a two hundred-odd-pound jungle killer, but it was better than nothing. I lay quietly watching the cat, waiting for the telltale gathering of his shoulder muscles that would telegraph the spring. The horse broke the tension. Seeing the cat again, he reared and squealed and, wheeling, took off into the forest. The jaguar, forgetting me, screamed in rage and followed after him.

Shakily I got to my feet. The leg that had been caught under the horse hurt. It wasn't broken though, and for that I was sincerely thankful. I picked up my shattered rifle, once a very nice little .300 but now no more than a scramble of useless metal and wood. I stood there letting my nerves calm down, considering my next move. I tried calling Gabe, but the jungle closed in on my voice and I knew I was not reaching him. It seemed foolhardy to follow my horse, which probably was no longer alive anyway, but I could see nothing to do but hike it. If Gabe reached our appointed meeting place ahead of me, he would eventually realize something was wrong when I didn't show up, and would come searching.

I started back down the trail. The pain in my leg was getting worse. The fracas had quieted the jungle and there were no sounds other than from my own movements. Every now and then I would pause and shout, but always there was just that complete stillness for answer. I had covered possibly a mile when it suddenly came to me that something was wrong - that there should be sounds, that I should be hearing the usual noises of the jungle. The encounter with the cat had taken place some time ago, some distance back. I should be hearing the monkeys, the chatter of other small animals, and the singing of birds. There was nothing, not even the noisy clack of insects.

Fear began to claw at the back of my neck. Not a single tangible, definite fear of a certain thing, but a fear of not knowing what was happening. Something unseen and unheard by me, but of which all the jungle creatures were aware, was striking them to silence. They were waiting, as the wild folk do, until the attack and battle were over, before they would resume their normal ways.

I tried not to quicken my pace, but to remain calm and keep my judgement cool. I stayed to the middle of the trail - no wider than three feet where I walked - and held my knife ready in my right hand. Then I heard it, a stealthy rustle through the brush a little behind me and to my right. I had an almost uncontrollable urge to run, but I fought it down, clenching the knife hard. I could not outrun him even if both my legs were good. And if I should trip or let myself get out of breath and then be jumped, I'd have no chance at all.

The sound changed. He was closer - the faintest scrape, and then a muted growl. It could be nothing else but a jaguar - the jaguar. I was sure. He had turned back from the horse for me.

Every step seemed like an eternity. Each could be my last, each could be the one that would bring the big cat leaping out from the shadows onto my back. Every part of my body was tingling. My throat was dry, my lungs felt as if they could not get enough air, my heart was a thumping, throbbing drum.

There was no doubt whatever about the sounds now. They were plain and distinct, the swishing of brush and shrubbery, the faint cracking of twigs, an occasional long drawn breath. If only Gabe would show up! Or a native - or anybody or anything to shatter the terrible tension. I looked ahead. There was only the empty trail.

and a widening where a small clearing lay.

When I reached that clearing I knew I could stand it no longer. Human nerves have a limit and I had come to mine. I walked out into the center of the opening and wheeled around, determined to have it over with. At first there was only the empty trail down which I had just come, the deadly quiet of the hot, motionless jungle, and myself, alone in the clearing. And then there was the jaguar coming at frightening speed!

He was upon me almost before I could move. Six feet or so away he left the ground in a leap and I had a vivid duplication of that picture minutes earlier; the bared, yellow fangs, the round head with its ears plastered tight to the skull, the blood-matted hip where the native's pitchfork had gouged.

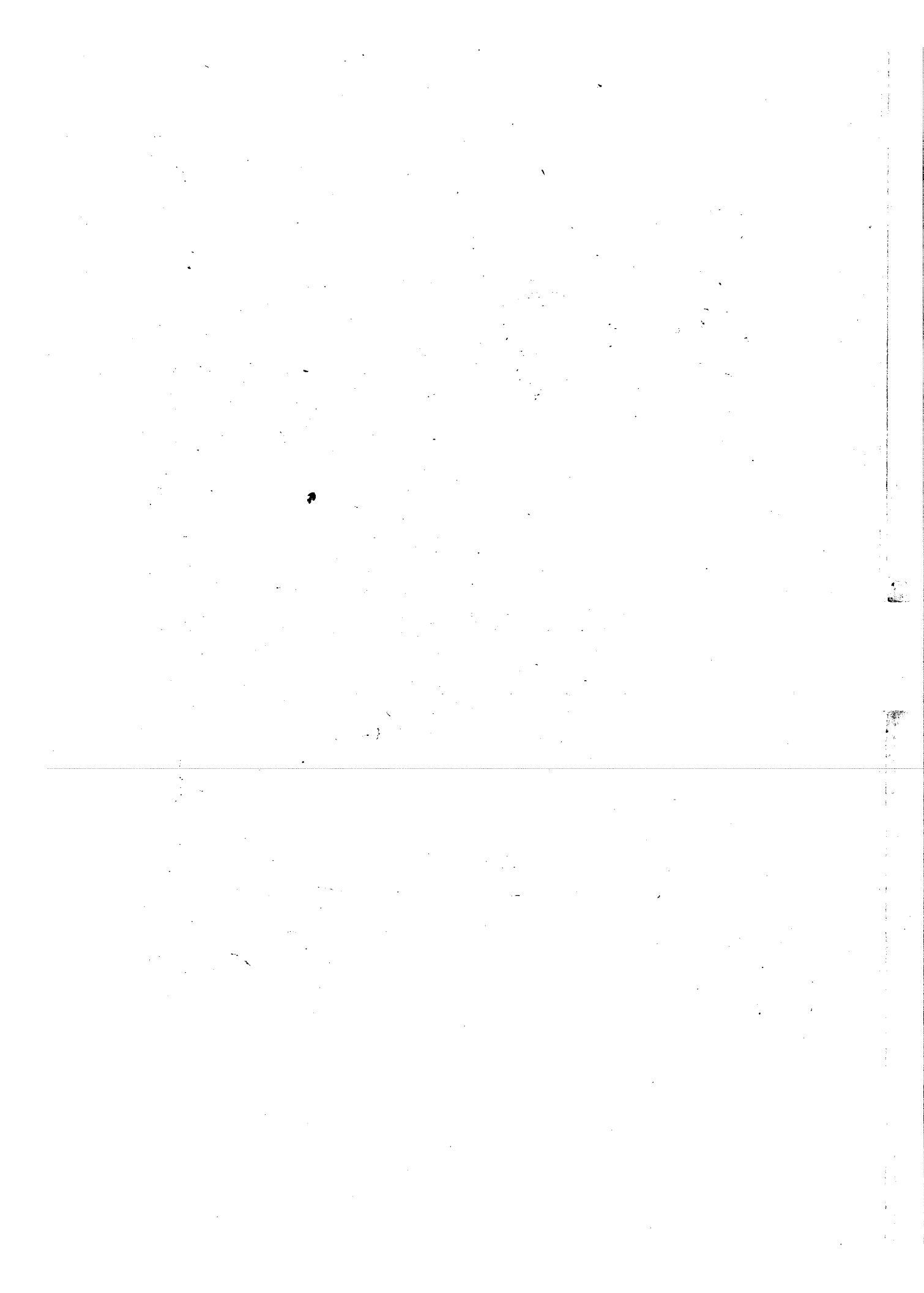
Instinctively I threw up my arms to protect my face and neck. I felt the shock of impact as the beast collided with me and I staggered back, struggling to keep my feet. The cat's teeth closed on the fleshy part of my arm and I remember yelling an oath as I struck back with my knife, jabbing at the body that was pressing me backward. I went down. I could feel the cat's teeth tearing at my arm, could hear a horrible clacking as they met and ground and tore my flesh. Sharp claws were raking my thighs and legs, searching for my belly. I tried to squirm clear.

I wasn't conscious of any terrible pain, for my nerves were anesthetized during those moments. Warm stickiness enveloped my legs, and my left arm was in a state of paralysis, but with my other arm I methodically, automatically kept thrusting with my knife. Plunge it into the writhing fur, pull it out, plunge again, over and over. Like a machine. I have no idea how many times.

It seemed the jungle was growing dark. I remember thinking it must be nearing sunset, for the shadows were growing longer. I felt no pain, only a vast weariness from the weight of the jaguar, pressing me down. I became aware that I was still stabbing with the knife but that the raking along my legs had stopped, that the awful mangling of my arm had ceased. I struggled to be free of the smothering animal. It fell away, rolling off to the side. I lay there panting, looking down at myself, covered solidly with blood. I thought, what a mess! The cat was dead. Some time during the many thrusts with my knife I must have struck its juglar vein.

After that there was nothing. I awakened in the

Tehuantepec hospital. Morelos and the men of the village had found me, doctored me, and eventually got me back to civilization. I was in the hospital for almost two months, spent another month in a rest home in California, and then had to take it easy for another six. I missed out on the Havana job. I did get back to Oaxaca about a year later, though, and Gabe and I checked the ruins we had been searching for. But that time I wasn't in too much of a hurry to enjoy Gabe's welcoming party. And that time we did no jaguar hunting.



My name is Susan Taylor.

Can you imagine what it's like to be stalked by a wounded jaguar? Have you ever wondered how a person feels when she knows a wounded, angry killer is padding along in the shadows just off her trail, waiting for the right moment to spring?

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I keep reliving those long moments when I walked down the narrow jungle trail, fighting to hold my nerves in check, only just able to keep from breaking out and bolting in headlong panic. And I still sweat when I remember the flash of that long, yellowish body arching through the twilight, the small, round head with its cruel eyes and gleaming fangs - and then the shock as I went down under its smothering weight. Time can erase a lot of bad moments, but I don't think I'll ever get completely away from that one, either physically or mentally.

I say physically because I have an arm that I can no longer raise above shoulder height, and I have some red stripes running down my thighs and legs that give me fits when the weather turns damp and cold. Those tangible things the jaguar left with me. The other souvenirs you can't see, but I have them just the same. Small things, like the sight of a prowling house cat, can bring them to life in a second.

My business - or profession, if you like - is engineering of the type done by American interests in South America, generally railroad or oil company work, sometimes mining. As a hobby, I dabble around in archaeology. I've always had a particular bent towards Mexico because of its treasure of magnificent ruins of the old civilizations there. Several times, between jobs, I've gone there and poked around, digging and looking.

It happened in Oaxaca in the southern part of Mexico. You pronounce it "Wah-hah-ca": it means a place where the gourds grow. The time was late summer. I had come in from the Pacific side, via the Gulf of Tehuantepec, (Ta-wan'-te-pek) landing at Salina Cruz, (sa-le'-na kruz) where I met an old friend of mine, Gabriel Moreles. He had worked for me one year on an excavation job up near (Te-wa-kan') Tehuacan and I wanted him to act as guide, interpreter, and general liaison man in this area, where the natives reputedly weren't too cordial to outsiders. For what I had in mind, I knew I would need a good person and I could

think of none better than Gabe.

Somewhere in the back country of Oaxaca, there were some temple ruins that dated back several centuries before the arrival of that historical plunderer Hernando Cortez. If they could be located and worked up they could shed a little more light on the ancient Zapotec Indians and might lead to some understanding of the fantastic symbols, known as "frozen lace", found on the tombs of the tribe's chieftains and priests. I had only three weeks before I had to report in Havana for a two-year session with some reclamation projects, so I was in a hurry to get started.

Gabe is a big man as Mexicans go. He stands about six feet, will tip the beam at close to two hundred pounds, and is strong as an ox. He is dark, showing definitely his Indian ancestry. My first impression of him, standing there that morning on the dock, was an oblong of white teeth buried in a broad face as he grinned a welcome.

"Long time, eh, compadre?"

"Too long, my friend," I answered, shaking his hand. "Are we ready to take off?"

"Take off?" he echoed, looking at me in amazement. "I have made reservations for you at the hotel and also have arranged a party in your honor!" It was a temptation, but I really had no time. I shook my head.

"Some other time," I said. "How about the horses and pack mules? They ready to go?"

Gabe dropped his arms and shrugged, expressing a thousand words in the gesture. But he helped me collect my bags, and near the middle of the afternoon we pulled out, following the river upstream. We covered a fair distance before dark and spent the night in a small village, the last of any size we would see.

We were up and off early next morning, still keeping fairly close to the Tehuantepec River. The shrubs and growth had become thicker and more tropical, and our traveling pace slowed down considerably, but we camped in a small clearing, well away from the water because of animals. Near the close of the next day, after we had crossed a small stream junctioning at right angles, Gabe said, "Here is where we begin to hunt the temples. They say somewhere in there they can be found." He pointed toward the dense depths of the jungle. "It will be hard work."

There was no doubt of that. The area was a maze of tangled, interlocking vines, trees, shrubs, and vivid flowers. It was everything you expect a tropical



jungle to be, complete with creeping, crawling, flying wildlife that you had to try to ignore for the sake of your nerves, while staying fully aware of it for the sake of your neck.

Later, around the fire in the sultry night, we talked about how we'd handle the digging if we found anything to dig. If we found ruins not too badly deteriorated, Gabe and I would do it alone. But if we found some thickly covered and badly overgrown, I would send him back to the nearest village to recruit workmen.

At daybreak, we broke camp and started the search. Like participants in a rabbit drive, we moved slowly out, a hundred yards or so apart. Every yard was work, for we had to hack our path through the dense growth of berries. Birds skittered away through the brush and small animals crashed away in alarm. The sticky heat laid down a close, oppressive blanket.

Near noon, quite unexpectedly, we broke into a small clearing. I pulled up short and from the corner of my eye I saw Gabe do likewise. A scatter of thatched huts stood in the center of the clearing and as we paused, a dozen men came from a single larger structure and advanced to meet us. Gabe stepped back into the screen of the jungle and, leaving his horse and mule, circled around and came in alongside me. We awaited the delegation, not knowing whether to be nervous or nonchalant; you can never be quite sure what to expect when you come across one of these interior villages.

"There is no anger," Gabe observed in a whisper.

The men halted before us. They were all old, all dressed in shirts and drawers of light cloth. They looked us up and down and then, one, apparently the village headman, started to speak. It was a quick, heavy dialect, one I couldn't understand. Gabe was listening with a deep frown.

When the speech was over, Gabe stood silent, pondering. There are a great many varieties of language spoken in Mexico and it is not uncommon for a native of one area to have a very hard time understanding the speech of some different section. This is particularly true where interior villages are concerned.

"Can you figure out what he's talking about?" I asked.

Gabe nodded. "I think I understand. He says we are welcome friends, otherwise we must leave. The village people do not like strange hunters in who kill the animals and cause the villagers to go hungry."

Turning to the spokesman, Gabe said carefully, "We are friends. We bring no harm to you."

The natives, watching him, understood. Several began to smile and the chief at once started to speak. I looked on, not trying to interpret the words, following the old man's gestures and inflections. He was an impressive old man in spite of his ragged dress. The thin, white whisp of hair on his head and fringe of beard around his face gave him a majestic air that commanded respect.

"He says," Gabe translated when the old man had concluded, "That if we are friends we can help them. Last night one of the villagers surprised a jaguar in his goat pen. He jabbed the cat with a pitchfork, wounding it, but he got away. Later it attacked one of the children and bit the child so badly it may die. They are afraid to leave the village and they want us to take our guns and kill the jaguar for them."

I glanced at the dark, expectant faces patiently waiting while Gabe tole me the story. I could see the fear and hope written there.

A dangerous, half-crazed beast lurking around the fringe of the village can well-nigh throttle its existence. I thought too of my own problem, my shortness of time. Jaguars are cunning animals, brutes, hard to find at best, harder to find in a jungle as dense as this. But of course only one answer was possible. I nodded to Gabe. "Tell them we'll help."

Gabe's lip cracked in a grin, and at that the others began to smile too. He rattled off what I had said and then went on to tell them what we were there for - to find the old temples and villages of their ancestors. Everybody began talking at once when he had finished, but the chief stopped them. He turned to me, smiled and ducked his head, and then said a few words to Gabe. After that they all turned and walked back to their huts.

Before I could ask Gabe what it wal all about he told me. "If we kill the jaguar for them," he said, "they will take us to an old village they know of. I don't know if it is one of those you look for, but they say it is very old and has a great temple."

What a stroke of luck that was! This could save us an enormous amount of time. It could, for that matter, lead us straight to something we might never find on our own. And the mention of the large temples was fairly good indication that this was one ruin we sought.

"Let's leave our mules and equipment here," I said to Gabe, and take a look around for that cat now. We

can set up a camp when we get back."

He cast a glance at the sun. "Be dark before very long. Maybe better we wait and set out bait for him tonight. He's dangerous out there in the jungle after the sun goes down."

I looked out beyond the clearing and spotted a low hill half-mile or so in the distance. "Let's do both. We'll hunt to that hill and back, which we can do before dark. If we haven't jumped the cat we can stake out bait tonight and try to get him that way. I'd like to settle this so we can start for the ruins first thing in the morning."

Gabe shrugged. Taking our rifles, we mounted our horses and started for the hill, following along one of the many paths made by the natives. At the first split in the trail we separated, Gabe going to the left, I to the right.

"Vaya con Dios," he said, extending the usual farewell of the Mexican people. "We will meet at the hill." He couldn't have been more wrong.

I saw the other faint trails as I moved slowly along. At times I would swing off and take up a different one, alert for any sound or sight that would reveal the presence of the jaguar. We were working on sheer chance, of course, but with luck one of us might jump the wounded cat.

The jungle thickened as the village dropped behind. Within that green world of vividly beautiful flowers and steamy, close heat, nature went about its relentless business of life and death, survival and defeat. I watched some sort of falcon drop from the sky in a screaming, breathless dive, disappear momentarily below the horizon, then rise again with a writhing rabbit in its talons. Somewhere off to my left a monkey chattered, and once, from under my horse's hoofs, a red crested pheasant rocketed off through the brush, twisting and turning as it dodged obstructions. For a short time I could hear Gabe's horse as it bucked its way along, and then I heard it no more. Apparently we were working farther apart. But that made no difference; we would meet eventually at the hill.

Probably a full hour later, I had veered off on a fairly wide game trail and my tired mount was finding the going easier. I had just seen another rabbit, this one scurrying off ahead of us to swinging left and then, as if changing its mind, cutting abruptly aback to the right. It's a trait of rabbits to do that when pursued. It made me think of hunting back in Missouri, where

cottontails are a delight to any gunner.

Suddenly my horse stopped dead. I rocked forward in the saddle, half unseated. In the same instant a great orange-and-black shadow launched itself from the edge of the trail. I had a glimpse of bared, wicked fangs, wild, hate-filled eyes, and a bloody smear that covered the animal's haunch - and then my horse was walking backwards on his hind legs. I tried frantically to kick clear of the stirrups and get out of the saddle, but my horse staggered into a tree and I was pinned to his back.

The jaguar missed his lunge, growling wildly. The horse fought clear of the tree and, rearing, continued to fall back. He kept lashing out with his front teeth, snorting and trembling with fear. He was going over backwards any second. I fought to get free, to keep from being crushed under him, but I couldn't make it. We reached an opening in the wall of brush and toppled together. I had no time to jump clear, and the next thing I knew we were on the ground and I was scrambling to avoid the horse's thrashing hoofs. I didn't feel any pain, didn't even think of it; but my leg was pinned under the animal and I could not get away. I seemed minutes before the horse got back to his feet.

Beyond him I could see the jaguar crouching for another leap. I searched desperately for my rifle and then felt my heart give way. The weapon lay a half-dozen feet off, splintered and smashed by the iron shoes of the horse. I glanced to my belt and felt some relief at seeing my hunting knife still in its scabbard. I yanked it free. A four inch blade isn't much defense against a two hundred-odd-pound jungle killer, but it was better than nothing. I lay quietly watching the cat, waiting for the telltale gathering of his shoulder muscles that would telegraph the spring. The horse broke the tension. Seeing the cat again, he reared and squealed and, wheeling, took off into the forest. The jaguar, forgetting me, screamed in rage and followed after him.

Shakily I got to my feet. The leg that had been caught under the horse hurt. It wasn't broken though, and for that I was sincerely thankful. I picked up my shattered rifle, once a very nice little .300 but now no more than a scramble of useless metal and wood. I stood there letting my nerves calm down, considering my next move. I tried calling Gabe, but the jungle closed in on my voice and I knew I was not reaching him. It seemed foolhardy to follow my horse, which probably was no longer alive anyway, but I could see nothing to do

but hike it. If Gabe reached our appointed meeting place ahead of me, he would eventually realize something was wrong when I didn't show up, and would come searching.

I started back down the trail. The pain in my leg was getting worse. The fracas had quieted the jungle and there were no sounds other than from my own movements. Every now and then I would pause and shout, but always there was just that complete stillness for answer. I had covered possibly a mile when it suddenly came to me that something was wrong - that there should be sounds, that I should be hearing the usual noises of the jungle. The encounter with the cat had taken place some time ago, some distance back. I should be hearing the monkeys, the chatter of other small animals, and the singing of birds. There was nothing, not even the noisy clack of insects.

Fear began to claw at the back of my neck. Not a single tangible, definite fear of a certain thing, but a fear of not knowing what was happening. Something unseen and unheard by me, but of which all the jungle creatures were aware, was striking them to silence. They were waiting, as the wild folk do, until the attack and battle were over, before they would resume their normal ways.

I tried not to quicken my pace, but to remain calm and keep my judgement cool. I stayed to the middle of the trail - no wider than three feet where I walked - and held my knife ready in my right hand. Then I heard it, a stealthy rustle through the brush a little behind me and to my right. I had an almost uncontrollable urge to run, but I fought it down, clenching the knife hard. I could not outrun him even if both my legs were good. And if I should trip or let myself get out of breath and then be jumped, I'd have no chance at all.

The sound changed. He was closer - the faintest scrape, and then a muted growl. It could be nothing else but a jaguar--the jaguar. I was sure. He had turned back from the horse for me.

Every step seemed like an eternity. Each could be my last, each could be the one that would bring the big cat leaping out from the shadows onto my back. Every part of my body was tingling. My throat was dry, my lungs felt as if they could not get enough air, my heart was a thumping, throbbing drum.

There was no doubt whatever about the sounds now. They were plain and distinct, the swishing of brush and shrubbery, the faint cracking of twigs, an occasional

long drawn breath. If only Gabe would show up! Or a native - or anybody or anything to shatter the terrible tension. I looked ahead. There was only the empty trail and a widening where a small clearing lay.

When I reach that clearing I knew I could stand it no longer. Human nerves have a limit and I had come to mine. I walked out into the center of the opening and wheeled around, determined to have it over with. At first there was only the empty trail down which I had just come, the deadly quiet of the hot, motionless jungle, and myself, alone in the clearing. And then there was the jaguar coming at frightening speed!

He was upon me almost before I could move. Six feet or so away he left the ground in a leap and I had a vivid duplication of that picture minutes earlier; the bared, yellow fangs, the round head with its ears plastered tight to the skull, the blood-matted hip where the native's pitchfork had gouged.

Instinctively I threw up my arms to protect my face and neck. I felt the shock of impact as the beast collided with me and I staggered back, struggling to keep my feet. The cat's teeth closed on the fleshy part of my arm and I remember yelling an oath as I struck back with my knife, jabbing at the body that was pressing me backward. I went down. I could feel the cat's teeth tearing at my arm, could hear a horrible clacking as they met and ground and tore my flesh. Sharp claws were raking my thighs and legs, searching for my belly. I tried to squirm clear.

I wasn't conscious of any terrible pain, for my nerves were anesthetized during those moments. Warm stickiness enveloped my legs, and my left arm was in a state of paralysis, but with my other arm I methodically, automatically kept thrusting with my knife. Plunge it into the writhing fur, pull it out, plunge again, over and over. Like a machine. I have no idea how many times.

It seemed the jungle was growing dark. I remember thinking it must be nearing sunset, for the shadows were growing longer. I felt no pain, only a vast weariness from the weight of the jaguar, pressing down on me. I became aware that I was still stabbing with the knife but that the raking along my legs had stopped, that the awful mangling of my arm had ceased. I struggled to be free of the smothering animal. It fell away, rolling off to the side. I lay there panting, looking down at myself, covered solidly with blood. I thought, what a mess! The cat was dead. Some time during the many thrusts with my knife I must have struck its juglar vein.

After that there was nothing. I awakened in the Tehuantepec hospital. Morelos and the men of the village had found me, doctored me, and eventually got me back to civilization. I was in the hospital for almost two months, spent another month in a rest home in California, and then had to take it easy for another six. I missed out on the Havana job. I did get back to Oaxaca about a year later, and Gabe and I checked the ruins we had been searching for. But that time I wasn't in too much of a hurry to enjoy Gabe's welcoming party. And that time we did no jaguar hunting.

Appendix D

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## Saddle Shy

Charles Coombs

Vocabulary Preview:

grama grass

pinion pines

mesquite

flustered

vent

mincing

vengeance

sashaying

Comprehension Check:\*

1. Why wasn't (Chick/Cheryl) excited about Bradford's visit?
2. Why was Bradford afraid of horses?
3. What was (Chick's/Cheryl's) horse's name?
4. Why was (Chick/Cheryl) painting the cookhouse?

\* For both the original and rewritten versions of the story, the comprehension questions were similar. However, names and pronouns were changed for groups according to the version read. For expediency both versions have been incorporated into one question in this appendix.

5. List a clue that made you think that the stranger was cousin Bradford.
  6. (Chick/Cheryl) lived on a \_\_\_\_\_.
  7. What had (Chick/Cheryl) been counting on to help (his/her) father with?
  8. Why did Bradford ride to town?
  9. How did (Chick/Cheryl) show (his/her) western hospitality?
  10. In the following sentence, "There's a short cut right up there beyond that second giant Joshua." "Joshua" means \_\_\_\_\_?
-

## The Samaritan

Richard Harper

Vocabulary Preview:

starboard

aft

suspended animation

port

hull

unintelligible

irony

transparent

meager

countered

linguist

Comprehension Check:

1. What was (Max/Maxine Landin's) mood at the beginning of the story?
2. What was responsible for the change in the original mood?
3. Who was responsible for making the decision to land the spacecraft?
4. In one or two words describe (Max/Maxine Landin's) feelings just before (he/she) left the spacecraft.

5. Describe briefly the physical appearance of the aliens.
  6. Why were the aliens on the asteroid?
  7. After discovering the death of their comrade, what did the aliens do that absolutely astounded (Max/Maxine Landin)?
  8. What sacrifice did (Max/Maxine Landin) make?
  9. List a word that would describe (Max/Maxine Landin's) character.
  10. How does the title of the story apply to (Max/Maxine Landin)?
-

## The Midnight Visitor

Robert Arthur

Vocabulary Preview:

Monsieur  
gendarmes  
espionage  
prosaic  
disillusioned  
countenance

Comprehension Check:

1. What was Fowler's profession?
2. What was Ausable's ethnic (foreign) background?
3. As used in the following sentence, what does "prosaic" mean? "... instead of having messages slipped into (his hand by dark-eyed beauties, / her hand by dark-eyed handsome men,) gets only a prosaic telephone call making an appointment in his room."
4. What happened to Max?
5. Over what article did the conflict in the story deal with?
6. In what country does the story take place?
7. Max was probably a native of what country?

8. Briefly describe Ausable's appearance.
  9. Who was at the door?
  10. What did the person at the door want?
-

## Deep Trouble

Walt Morey

Vocabulary Preview:

stalked

impersonal

compressor

faceplate

stern

keel

tender

Comprehension Check:

1. List one thing that a tender does.
2. Why was (Joe/Jane) so interested in making a dive?
3. What was (Joe's/Jane's) initial emotion when (he/she) first thought about making the dive?
4. List one piece of gear that a diver wears.
5. Why is lead important to a diver?
6. List a character trait that could describe Mr. Harmon.
7. In what location does the story take place?
8. What was (Joe's/Jane's) mother's major economic fear?

9. What is the major dangerous difference between still water and actual deep sea diving?
  10. What does impersonal mean?
-



## Fair-Weather Forward

Charles Coombs

Vocabulary Preview:

dribble

man-to-man defense

technical foul

intercept

Comprehension Check:

1. Was (Tom/Jill) a skilled basketball player?
2. What type of a person was Lee?
3. Why was Coach Hillman not really concerned about (Tom's/Jill's) ankle?
4. What proof can you list that (Tom/Jill) was consistently starting things and not finishing them?
5. Did Lee hurt (his/her) ankle?
6. Who won the pennant?
7. Why was this the last season for (Tom/Jill) to play basketball?
8. Write a sentence using the word intercept.
9. Why is it easier to play a game when you are winning?
10. What was Lee's final opinion about (Tom/Jill)?

## The Jaguar Sprang To Kill

W. E. Davidson

### Vocabulary Preview:

tangible

gourds

liaison

reputedly

plunder

Hernando Cortez

reclamation

compadre

junctioning

sultry

parasitic

inflection

Vaya con Dios

talons

anesthetized

narrator

archaeology

### Comprehension Check:

1. What tangible souvenir did the jaguar leave?
2. What was the narrator's profession?

3. What was the narrator's hobby?
4. Why was the narrator in the jungle?
5. What bargain had the narrator and (his/her) guide made with the villagers?
6. Why was Gabe hesitant to begin the search for the jaguar?
7. Why didn't the narrator shoot the jaguar?
8. Why was stillness in the jungle a cause for alarm?
9. How did the narrator kill the jaguar?
10. In what country is the story set?

Appendix E

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## Raw Scores on Pretest &amp; Posttest Cue

	Pre	3rd	Post	Pre	6th	Post
1.	7		4	8		4
2.	6		2	7		2
3.	6		2	6		4
4.	5		6	6		2
5.	5		0	6		2
6.	4		7	4		2
7.	4		4	4		0
8.	4		2	4		2
9.	4		7	4		0
10.	4		4	4		0
11.	4		2	4		2
12.	4		0	4		5
13.	2		0	4		3
14.	2		6	4		0
15.	2		2	2		0
16.	2		2	2		0
17.	2		2	2		2
18.	2		4	2		2
19.	0		2	2		0
20.	0		0	0		6
21.	0		2	0		0
22.	2		0	0		0
23.	-		-	0		2

Appendix F

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Critical Difference at .05 Level of Significance  
For Means in Pretest Scores

	$E_2$	C
$E_1$	.54	2.7
$E_2$	-	3.24

$d = .739$

Appendix G

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## Differences Between the Groups in Posttest Results

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	$E_1$ stereotyped	$E_2$ non-stereotyped	C no treatment
Mean	3.8	2.0	2.0
S.D.	2.35	1.41	1.7

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Appendix H

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Critical Difference at .05 Level of Significance  
For Differences Between Pretest & Posttest  
Scores of Experimental & Control groups

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	E <sub>2</sub>	C
E <sub>1</sub>	2.34	0.9
E <sub>2</sub>	-	3.24

---

d=1.062