

THE CAMBRIAN 1901 VOL 21 A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

"No, nothing," said Smith. "That's all right, Jack, thank you." He broke the connection. After a against us if I try to fly it. But I'll do it, if we come to that. And that's your job. Showing me some better sung to the tune of "Home on the Range." first you blunder into the dark trees on either side, and once the earth surges up over you in a chaos of alley on the 13th though the details of the murder didn't seem to fit the pattern. But he was sick, bad an. There, he thought, that should keep her busy long enough for me to think of the next one. He opened a second beer and took a meditative swallow. Did poets ever write poems about drinking beer? Or was that too general? Better to ask her to write about her favorite brand of beer, a kind of advertisement. Ninety-five. There's only a little travel left in the console slides. And what of multicellular animals? Miss Tremaine looked up from her typing at the rattle and frowned. Her desk was out in the small reception area, but I had arranged both desks so we could see each other and talk in normal voices when the door was open. It stayed open most of the time except when I had a client who felt secretaries shouldn't know his troubles. She had been transcribing the Lucas McGowan report for half an hour, humming and tsk-tsking at thirty-second intervals. She was having a marvelous time. Miss Tremaine was about forty-five, looked like a constipated librarian, and was the best secretary I'd ever had. She'd been with me seven years. I'd tried a few young and sexy ones, but it hadn't worked out. Either they wouldn't play at all, or they wanted to play all the time. Both kinds were a pain in the ass to face first thing in the morning, every morning. cracked ribs, a busted nose, a few missing teeth, and was stone-dead from internal hemorrhaging. Message sent represents an invalid communication and has not been dispatched to addressee. Please respond immediately to Central Processing with date and time of initial tribute delivery. "Your bank statement came today." The meeting started out with everybody shouting and talking at once; then the Organizer showed up, and everybody quieted down. He climbed up on the platform, in that casual way he has, and stood there looking down at us with his big golden eyes, his face glowing as it always does at such times, as though there's a light inside him shining through his pores. been a lot of blood in all three. "But I'd have to become part of ... what Selene is." She pulled away from me, shaking her head. A twig can be placed in the ground, where it may take root and grow, producing a complete. "So. We have a thing here that eats plastic. And seems to be made of plastic, into the bargain. Any ideas why it picked this particular spot to grow, and no other?" 165. I was sitting there, wondering how in hell I would find him, when the phone rang again. Miss Tremaine stopped typing and lifted the receiver without breaking rhythm. "Mr. Mallory's office," she said crisply, really letting the caller know he'd hooked onto an efficient organization. She put her hand over the mouthpiece and looked at me. "It's for you? an obscene phone call." She didn't bat an eyelash or twitch a muscle. together, and it still runs. It has a high-impact polystyrene carapace, nontoxic paint on the outside?" 124. "Good for you," he said when Amos had climbed onto the deck and given him the glass. "Now come. you will if you stay here long enough? they know genetics. They really know it We have a thousand. and who must engage in all the complex phenomena, both physical and chemical, involved in sexual. It was so dark in there with the curtains drawn that I couldn't see a thing. I left the closet and opened. woman in the foreground. He realized with a little zing of elation that he had just administered his first. At first he'd assumed that he'd failed. A reasonable assumption, since he had struck out his first time to bat, with a shameful 43. But when two weeks had gone by and there was still no word from the Board of Examiners, he wondered if maybe he'd managed to squeak through. He didn't see how he could have. The examiner, a wizened, white-haired fuddy-duddy whose name Barry instantly forgot, had been hostile and aggressive right from the word go, telling Barry that he thought his handshake was too sincere. He directed the conversation first to the possible dangers of excessive sunbathing, which was surely an oblique criticism of Barry's end-of-August tan and the leisure such a tan implied, then started in on the likelihood that dolphins were as intelligent as people. Barry, having entered the cubicle resolved to stake all his chips on a tactic of complete candor, had said, one, he was too young to worry about skin cancer and, two, he had no interest in animals except as meat This started the examiner off on the psychic experiences of some woman he'd read about in Reader's Digest. Barry couldn't get a toehold anywhere on the smooth facade of the man's compulsive natter. He got the feeling. coiling caresses, none of the mindless thrashing to final frenzy. But it didn't matter; the two of them were. the first of the week, "At least we're getting to know one another." So there we are? a nice symbolic obtuse triangle. And yet? We're all just one happy show-biz. I tried to sit up but my head weighed a thousand kilos. I managed to turn over on my side and, as. . . and I guess if you kept changing the batteries it would run forever. And it's nearly polystyrene, that's what you said. spectators? "Sure," I say. "Easy." But momentarily I'm not sure and I realize how tightly I'm gripping the. again, they would crawl farther. There were dozens of them lying motionless in the sand within a. This fertilized egg cell cannot become an independently living organism for some nine months, for it. other four. Ralston and Song announced an engagement, which lasted ten hours. Crawford nearly came. Just like, he thought, a lie. Caro rolled her eyes. Before she could express her opinion of running out of town on a working day. "I can see I'll be drawing on your knowledge a lot in the years to come. What do you see as the next order of business?" The old light bulb went on inside my head. "You want a working system?" I said. "You follow me." problem of coping with, the collapsing roof, which promptly buried her in folds of clear plastic. It was far. admiration for my superior officer. He may be a suicidal fool to refuse to accept the situation, but there is. Asexual reproduction is a matter of course among one-celled organisms (though sexual reproduction. I See You. "Why?" The ship came down with an impressive show of flame and billowing sand, three kilometers from. one-parent organism of non-sexual origin is called a "twig"; that is, "clone." "Very well then, I have a plan." Again Amos began to whisper through the bars, and Jack smiled and. applied these to coated paper, let them dry, and cut the paper into rectangles. He numbered these. "Fro glad to hear it". legs

from cramping. My position wasn't too graceful if he happened to look in the closet, but it was too. "No, this is Crawford again. Commander Lang is . . . indisposed. She's busy with Lou, trying to do. The old woman hesitated. "You will not be offended if I speak?*" Crawford nodded. He looked around at the other occupants of the room. There was the Surface. "The question is: would you be willing to give it?" said the grey man. German buildings. Conditions in Germany were still pretty chaotic at the time, and the stamps were asked. On the other hand, an important part of the evaluation was the psychiatric assessment and recommendation, and in the course of the several sessions that he had spent with Pendrey, the psychiatrist attached to Brigade, Colman had found himself harboring the steadily growing suspicion that Pendrey was crazy. He wondered if perhaps a crazy psychiatrist working with a crazy set of premises might end up arriving at sane answers in the same way that two logical inverters in series didn't alter the truth of a proposition; but then again, if Pendrey was normal by the Army's standards, the analogy wouldn't work. reasonable demands made upon the Company by Local 209. man could sell clumsily written stories because the demand was greater than the supply. "He might if he had your bank statement Mr. Bloomfeld wfl be in at two, Mrs. Bushyager at three." works. I'd seen him interviewed on some talk show where he'd worn a jumpsuit zipped to the neck. Palmas, dropped a large Manila envelope in the mailbox (the story he'd been working on, I guess), and. witch-woman did it. After that I lived with her. She was demented, but she knew medicine and healing. and send it to us in the three spare capsules. That might come to two years or even three. enough to discourage anybody from trying to scale it. Generally, readers don't notice the presence of familiar value judgments in stories, but do notice (and. When the blowout started, Lang had snapped on her helmet quickly. Then she had struggled against. "It is safer," Michelle said, "to work through a professional introduction service than to try and peddle. And that's why I'm on the concert circuit with Jain Snow; as far as I'm concerned, the only real blues singer and stim star. enough to frustrate their efforts to push through and enter the old ship. But both lock doors were open, coming in hi a few minutes to pick up the poop on his wandering wife." I couldn't find a morning paper at that hour closer than Western and Wilshire. The story was on page seven. Fortunately they found the body in time for the early edition. A woman named Sybil Hern* don, age 38, had committed suicide in an apartment court on Las Palmas. (Detweiler hadn't gone very far. The address was just around the corner from the Almsbury.) She had cut her wrists on a piece of broken mirror. She had been discovered about eleven-thirty when the manager went over to ask her to turn down the volume on her television set. Amos was so delighted he jumped up and down. The prince swam to shore, and Amos helped him. He turned to move out of my way and I saw the hump. I don't know how to describe what I felt I suddenly had a hurting in my gut I felt the same unfairness and sadness the others had, the way you would feel about any beautiful thing with one overwhelming flaw. hall. It was comfortable and cluttered, and dominated by a drafting table surrounded by jars of brushes. But, at the boat, all had not gone according to Amos' plan during the night The grey man, still puzzling over Amos' wet clothes? and at last he began to inquire whom Amos had solicited from the sailors to go with him? had gone to the brig himself. "Not once you understand what this graveyard is and why it became what it did," Song said. She was. But at dusk, when he returned to the bungalow, Mama Dolores greeted him at the door with a. Amanda. Energy ran like a restless, self-willed thing under her skin. She could not even sit without that. She found the pins. Sitting down in the same chair Selene had occupied, she swept her hair up with her arms, then used one hand to hold it while she began pinning it in place. The poly turned a bright mottle of yellow and orange. I drew picket duty again this morning. Ike picketed with me, having arranged it with the Organizer to change places with Ben. With my old buddy to talk to, time went by fast. A new exploration of the whirligig garden the next day revealed several new species, including one more thing that might be an animal. It was a flying creature, the size of a fruit fly, that managed to glide from plant to plant when the wind was down by means of a freely rotating set of blades, like an autogiro. "Still, it got you picked for this mission out of hundreds of applicants. The thinking was that you'd be. believable" was the key word. He had to be involved unless the laws of probability had broken down completely. Yet I could swear Detweiler wasn't putting on an act. His guileless innocence was real, damn it, real. Why bother? There has never been any difficulty hi finding cannon fodder anywhere in the world, even without cloning, and the ordinary process of supplying new soldiers for despots is infinitely cheaper than cloning. "I'd like to rent the one closest to number seven," I said. hatchway, he went down very quickly and was just about to go to the barred cell when he saw the grimy. "Second," said Lea, "who is standing just behind your right shoulder?" "Commander Lang?" had not gone off through the Diana Mountain Stargate on some interstellar artists' junket, they might. attention. It's no wonder we jumped at the chance to have him represent us at the bargaining table when. Thank you, Barry. I know you mean that, and I'm flattered Well, then?" He took his pipe from his. color generator. She sub-vocalizes so her lips don't move. The list went on and on, afl the way back to Thursday, the 7th. On that day was another slashed-wrist suicide near Western and Wilshire. Megalo Network Message: August 26, 1977. Well, Til get them, he insisted, hoping to impress the other voice with the authenticity and vitality of his self-confidence. But the other voice wasn't impressed, and so instead of going straight from Center St. to the nearest speakeasy to celebrate, he took the subway home and spent the evening watching first a fascinating documentary on calcium structures and then Celebrity Circus, with Willy Marx. Willy had four guests: a famous prostitute, a tax accountant who had just. She says, "Hurry," and cuts off. "Any man who can walk out of a tavern one night with nothing and come back in a week with that?" and she pointed to the wheelbarrow full of gold and jewels "is a man to be taken seriously." I drive west, away from the soiled towers of the strip-city. I drive beyond the colstrip pits and into the mountains until the paved highway becomes narrow asphalt and then rutted earth and then only a trace, and the car can go no further. With the metal cylinder in one hand I flee on foot until I no longer hear sounds of city or human beings. That brought her alter to mind. "Will Selene be signing, too?" unicorn who guards the third piece of the

mirror." The house lights momentarily dim and the crowd noise raises a few decibels. I realize I can't see features or faces or even separate bodies. There are simply too many people to comprehend. The crowd has fused into one huge tectonic slab of flesh..220

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