

RNC

IMAGINATION

STORIES OF SCIENCE AND FANTASY

JANUARY, 1953

35c



Deepfreeze

by Robert Donald Locke

The Project Gutenberg EBook of Mr. Spaceship, by Philip K. Dick

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

Title: Mr. Spaceship

Author: Philip K. Dick

Release Date: May 25, 2010 [EBook #32522]
[Last updated: May 4, 2011]

Language: English

*** START OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK MR. SPACESHIP ***

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

This etext was produced from *Imagination Stories of Science and Fantasy*, January 1953. Extensive research did not uncover any evidence that the U.S. copyright on this publication was renewed.

A human brain-controlled spacecraft would mean mechanical perfection. This was accomplished, and something unforeseen: a strange entity called—

Mr. Spaceship

By

Philip K. Dick

A brain in liquid with a trail coming out of it leading to a spaceship.

L
Ri

KRAMER leaned back. “You can see the situation. How can we deal with a factor like this? The perfect variable.”

“Perfect? Prediction should still be possible. A living thing still acts from necessity, the same as inanimate material. But the cause-effect chain is more subtle; there are more factors to be considered. The difference is quantitative, I think. The reaction of the living organism parallels natural causation, but with greater complexity.”

Gross and Kramer looked up at the board plates, suspended on the wall, still dripping, the images hardening into place. Kramer traced a line with his pencil.

“See that? It’s a pseudopodium. They’re alive, and so far, a weapon we can’t beat. No mechanical system can compete with that, simple or intricate. We’ll have to scrap the Johnson Control and find something else.”

“Meanwhile the war continues as it is. Stalemate. Checkmate. They can’t get to us, and we can’t get through their living minefield.”

Kramer nodded. “It’s a perfect defense, for them. But there still might be one answer.”

“What’s that?”

“Wait a minute.” Kramer turned to his rocket expert, sitting with the charts and files. “The heavy cruiser that returned this week. It didn’t actually touch, did it? It came close but there was no contact.”

“Correct.” The expert nodded. “The mine was twenty miles off. The cruiser

was in space-drive, moving directly toward Proxima, line-straight, using the Johnson Control, of course. It had deflected a quarter of an hour earlier for reasons unknown. Later it resumed its course. That was when they got it.”

“It shifted,” Kramer said. “But not enough. The mine was coming along after it, trailing it. It’s the same old story, but I wonder about the contact.”

“Here’s our theory,” the expert said. “We keep looking for contact, a trigger in the pseudopodium. But more likely we’re witnessing a psychological phenomena, a decision without any physical correlative. We’re watching for something that isn’t there. The mine *decides* to blow up. It sees our ship, approaches, and then decides.”

“Thanks.” Kramer turned to Gross. “Well, that confirms what I’m saying. How can a ship guided by automatic relays escape a mine that decides to explode? The whole theory of mine penetration is that you must avoid tripping the trigger. But here the trigger is a state of mind in a complicated, developed life-form.”

“The belt is fifty thousand miles deep,” Gross added. “It solves another problem for them, repair and maintenance. The damn things reproduce, fill up the spaces by spawning into them. I wonder what they feed on?”

“Probably the remains of our first-line. The big cruisers must be a delicacy. It’s a game of wits, between a living creature and a ship piloted by automatic relays. The ship always loses.” Kramer opened a folder. “I’ll tell you what I suggest.”

“Go on,” Gross said. “I’ve already heard ten solutions today. What’s yours?”

“Mine is very simple. These creatures are superior to any mechanical system, but only because they’re alive. Almost any other life-form could compete with them, any higher life-form. If the yuks can put out living mines to protect their planets, we ought to be able to harness some of our own life-forms in a similar way. Let’s make use of the same weapon ourselves.”

“Which life-form do you propose to use?”

“I think the human brain is the most agile of known living forms. Do you know of any better?”

“But no human being can withstand outspace travel. A human pilot would be dead of heart failure long before the ship got anywhere near Proxima.”

“But we don’t need the whole body,” Kramer said. “We need only the brain.”

“What?”

“The problem is to find a person of high intelligence who would contribute, in the same manner that eyes and arms are volunteered.”

“But a brain....”

“Technically, it could be done. Brains have been transferred several times,

when body destruction made it necessary. Of course, to a spaceship, to a heavy outspace cruiser, instead of an artificial body, that's new."

The room was silent.

"It's quite an idea," Gross said slowly. His heavy square face twisted. "But even supposing it might work, the big question is *whose* brain?"

IT was all very confusing, the reasons for the war, the nature of the enemy. The Yucconae had been contacted on one of the outlying planets of Proxima Centauri. At the approach of the Terran ship, a host of dark slim pencils had lifted abruptly and shot off into the distance. The first real encounter came between three of the yuk pencils and a single exploration ship from Terra. No Terrans survived. After that it was all out war, with no holds barred.

Both sides feverishly constructed defense rings around their systems. Of the two, the Yucconae belt was the better. The ring around Proxima was a living ring, superior to anything Terra could throw against it. The standard equipment by which Terran ships were guided in outspace, the Johnson Control, was not adequate. Something more was needed. Automatic relays were not good enough.

—Not good at all, Kramer thought to himself, as he stood looking down the hillside at the work going on below him. A warm wind blew along the hill, rustling the weeds and grass. At the bottom, in the valley, the mechanics had almost finished; the last elements of the reflex system had been removed from the ship and crated up.

All that was needed now was the new core, the new central key that would take the place of the mechanical system. A human brain, the brain of an intelligent, wary human being. But would the human being part with it? That was the problem.

Kramer turned. Two people were approaching him along the road, a man and a woman. The man was Gross, expressionless, heavy-set, walking with dignity. The woman was—He stared in surprise and growing annoyance. It was Dolores, his wife. Since they'd separated he had seen little of her....

"Kramer," Gross said. "Look who I ran into. Come back down with us. We're going into town."

"Hello, Phil," Dolores said. "Well, aren't you glad to see me?"

He nodded. "How have you been? You're looking fine." She was still pretty and slender in her uniform, the blue-grey of Internal Security, Gross' organization.

"Thanks." She smiled. "You seem to be doing all right, too. Commander

Gross tells me that you're responsible for this project, Operation Head, as they call it. Whose head have you decided on?"

"That's the problem." Kramer lit a cigarette. "This ship is to be equipped with a human brain instead of the Johnson system. We've constructed special draining baths for the brain, electronic relays to catch the impulses and magnify them, a continual feeding duct that supplies the living cells with everything they need. But—"

"But we still haven't got the brain itself," Gross finished. They began to walk back toward the car. "If we can get that we'll be ready for the tests."

"Will the brain remain alive?" Dolores asked. "Is it actually going to live as part of the ship?"

"It will be alive, but not conscious. Very little life is actually conscious. Animals, trees, insects are quick in their responses, but they aren't conscious. In this process of ours the individual personality, the ego, will cease. We only need the response ability, nothing more."

Dolores shuddered. "How terrible!"

"In time of war everything must be tried," Kramer said absently. "If one life sacrificed will end the war it's worth it. This ship might get through. A couple more like it and there wouldn't be any more war."

THEY got into the car. As they drove down the road, Gross said, "Have you thought of anyone yet?"

Kramer shook his head. "That's out of my line."

"What do you mean?"

"I'm an engineer. It's not in my department."

"But all this was your idea."

"My work ends there."

Gross was staring at him oddly. Kramer shifted uneasily.

"Then who is supposed to do it?" Gross said. "I can have my organization prepare examinations of various kinds, to determine fitness, that kind of thing —"

"Listen, Phil," Dolores said suddenly.

"What?"

She turned toward him. "I have an idea. Do you remember that professor we had in college. Michael Thomas?"

Kramer nodded.

"I wonder if he's still alive." Dolores frowned. "If he is he must be awfully

old.”

“Why, Dolores?” Gross asked.

“Perhaps an old person who didn’t have much time left, but whose mind was still clear and sharp—”

“Professor Thomas.” Kramer rubbed his jaw. “He certainly was a wise old duck. But could he still be alive? He must have been seventy, then.”

“We could find that out,” Gross said. “I could make a routine check.”

“What do you think?” Dolores said. “If any human mind could outwit those creatures—”

“I don’t like the idea,” Kramer said. In his mind an image had appeared, the image of an old man sitting behind a desk, his bright gentle eyes moving about the classroom. The old man leaning forward, a thin hand raised—

“Keep him out of this,” Kramer said.

“What’s wrong?” Gross looked at him curiously.

“It’s because *I* suggested it,” Dolores said.

“No.” Kramer shook his head. “It’s not that. I didn’t expect anything like this, somebody I knew, a man I studied under. I remember him very clearly. He was a very distinct personality.”

“Good,” Gross said. “He sounds fine.”

“We can’t do it. We’re asking his death!”

“This is war,” Gross said, “and war doesn’t wait on the needs of the individual. You said that yourself. Surely he’ll volunteer; we can keep it on that basis.”

“He may already be dead,” Dolores murmured.

“We’ll find that out,” Gross said speeding up the car. They drove the rest of the way in silence.

FOR a long time the two of them stood studying the small wood house, overgrown with ivy, set back on the lot behind an enormous oak. The little town was silent and sleepy; once in awhile a car moved slowly along the distant highway, but that was all.

“This is the place,” Gross said to Kramer. He folded his arms. “Quite a quaint little house.”

Kramer said nothing. The two Security Agents behind them were expressionless.

Gross started toward the gate. “Let’s go. According to the check he’s still alive, but very sick. His mind is agile, however. That seems to be certain. It’s

said he doesn't leave the house. A woman takes care of his needs. He's very frail."

They went down the stone walk and up onto the porch. Gross rang the bell. They waited. After a time they heard slow footsteps. The door opened. An elderly woman in a shapeless wrapper studied them impassively.

"Security," Gross said, showing his card. "We wish to see Professor Thomas."

"Why?"

"Government business." He glanced at Kramer.

Kramer stepped forward. "I was a pupil of the Professor's," he said. "I'm sure he won't mind seeing us."

The woman hesitated uncertainly. Gross stepped into the doorway. "All right, mother. This is war time. We can't stand out here."

The two Security agents followed him, and Kramer came reluctantly behind, closing the door. Gross stalked down the hall until he came to an open door. He stopped, looking in. Kramer could see the white corner of a bed, a wooden post and the edge of a dresser.

He joined Gross.

In the dark room a withered old man lay, propped up on endless pillows. At first it seemed as if he were asleep; there was no motion or sign of life. But after a time Kramer saw with a faint shock that the old man was watching them intently, his eyes fixed on them, unmoving, unwinking.

"Professor Thomas?" Gross said. "I'm Commander Gross of Security. This man with me is perhaps known to you—"

The faded eyes fixed on Kramer.

"I know him. Philip Kramer.... You've grown heavier, boy." The voice was feeble, the rustle of dry ashes. "Is it true you're married now?"

"Yes. I married Dolores French. You remember her." Kramer came toward the bed. "But we're separated. It didn't work out very well. Our careers—"

"What we came here about, Professor," Gross began, but Kramer cut him off with an impatient wave.

"Let me talk. Can't you and your men get out of here long enough to let me talk to him?"

Gross swallowed. "All right, Kramer." He nodded to the two men. The three of them left the room, going out into the hall and closing the door after them.

The old man in the bed watched Kramer silently. "I don't think much of him," he said at last. "I've seen his type before. What's he want?"

"Nothing. He just came along. Can I sit down?" Kramer found a stiff upright chair beside the bed. "If I'm bothering you—"

"No. I'm glad to see you again, Philip. After so long. I'm sorry your marriage

didn't work out."

"How have you been?"

"I've been very ill. I'm afraid that my moment on the world's stage has almost ended." The ancient eyes studied the younger man reflectively. "You look as if you have been doing well. Like everyone else I thought highly of. You've gone to the top in this society."

Kramer smiled. Then he became serious. "Professor, there's a project we're working on that I want to talk to you about. It's the first ray of hope we've had in this whole war. If it works, we may be able to crack the yuk defenses, get some ships into their system. If we can do that the war might be brought to an end."

"Go on. Tell me about it, if you wish."

"It's a long shot, this project. It may not work at all, but we have to give it a try."

"It's obvious that you came here because of it," Professor Thomas murmured. "I'm becoming curious. Go on."

AFTER Kramer finished the old man lay back in the bed without speaking. At last he sighed.

"I understand. A human mind, taken out of a human body." He sat up a little, looking at Kramer. "I suppose you're thinking of me."

Kramer said nothing.

"Before I make my decision I want to see the papers on this, the theory and outline of construction. I'm not sure I like it.—For reasons of my own, I mean. But I want to look at the material. If you'll do that—"

"Certainly." Kramer stood up and went to the door. Gross and the two Security Agents were standing outside, waiting tensely. "Gross, come inside."

They filed into the room.

"Give the Professor the papers," Kramer said. "He wants to study them before deciding."

Gross brought the file out of his coat pocket, a manila envelope. He handed it to the old man on the bed. "Here it is, Professor. You're welcome to examine it. Will you give us your answer as soon as possible? We're very anxious to begin, of course."

"I'll give you my answer when I've decided." He took the envelope with a thin, trembling hand. "My decision depends on what I find out from these papers. If I don't like what I find, then I will not become involved with this work in any shape or form." He opened the envelope with shaking hands. "I'm

looking for one thing.”

“What is it?” Gross said.

“That’s my affair. Leave me a number by which I can reach you when I’ve decided.”

Silently, Gross put his card down on the dresser. As they went out Professor Thomas was already reading the first of the papers, the outline of the theory.

KRAMER sat across from Dale Winter, his second in line. “What then?” Winter said.

“He’s going to contact us.” Kramer scratched with a drawing pen on some paper. “I don’t know what to think.”

“What do you mean?” Winter’s good-natured face was puzzled.

“Look.” Kramer stood up, pacing back and forth, his hands in his uniform pockets. “He was my teacher in college. I respected him as a man, as well as a teacher. He was more than a voice, a talking book. He was a person, a calm, kindly person I could look up to. I always wanted to be like him, someday. Now look at me.”

“So?”

“Look at what I’m asking. I’m asking for his life, as if he were some kind of laboratory animal kept around in a cage, not a man, a teacher at all.”

“Do you think he’ll do it?”

“I don’t know.” Kramer went to the window. He stood looking out. “In a way, I hope not.”

“But if he doesn’t—”

“Then we’ll have to find somebody else. I know. There would be somebody else. Why did Dolores have to—”

The vidphone rang. Kramer pressed the button.

“This is Gross.” The heavy features formed. “The old man called me. Professor Thomas.”

“What did he say?” He knew; he could tell already, by the sound of Gross’ voice.

“He said he’d do it. I was a little surprised myself, but apparently he means it. We’ve already made arrangements for his admission to the hospital. His lawyer is drawing up the statement of liability.”

Kramer only half heard. He nodded wearily. “All right. I’m glad. I suppose we can go ahead, then.”

“You don’t sound very glad.”

“I wonder why he decided to go ahead with it.”

“He was very certain about it.” Gross sounded pleased. “He called me quite early. I was still in bed. You know, this calls for a celebration.”

“Sure,” Kramer said. “It sure does.”

TOWARD the middle of August the project neared completion. They stood outside in the hot autumn heat, looking up at the sleek metal sides of the ship.

Gross thumped the metal with his hand. “Well, it won’t be long. We can begin the test any time.”

“Tell us more about this,” an officer in gold braid said. “It’s such an unusual concept.”

“Is there really a human brain inside the ship?” a dignitary asked, a small man in a rumpled suit. “And the brain is actually alive?”

“Gentlemen, this ship is guided by a living brain instead of the usual Johnson relay-control system. But the brain is not conscious. It will function by reflex only. The practical difference between it and the Johnson system is this: a human brain is far more intricate than any man-made structure, and its ability to adapt itself to a situation, to respond to danger, is far beyond anything that could be artificially built.”

Gross paused, cocking his ear. The turbines of the ship were beginning to rumble, shaking the ground under them with a deep vibration. Kramer was standing a short distance away from the others, his arms folded, watching silently. At the sound of the turbines he walked quickly around the ship to the other side. A few workmen were clearing away the last of the waste, the scraps of wiring and scaffolding. They glanced up at him and went on hurriedly with their work. Kramer mounted the ramp and entered the control cabin of the ship. Winter was sitting at the controls with a Pilot from Space-transport.

“How’s it look?” Kramer asked.

“All right.” Winter got up. “He tells me that it would be best to take off manually. The robot controls—” Winter hesitated. “I mean, the built-in controls, can take over later on in space.”

“That’s right,” the Pilot said. “It’s customary with the Johnson system, and so in this case we should—”

“Can you tell anything yet?” Kramer asked.

“No,” the Pilot said slowly. “I don’t think so. I’ve been going over everything. It seems to be in good order. There’s only one thing I wanted to ask you about.” He put his hand on the control board. “There are some changes here I don’t

understand.”

“Changes?”

“Alterations from the original design. I wonder what the purpose is.”

Kramer took a set of the plans from his coat. “Let me look.” He turned the pages over. The Pilot watched carefully over his shoulder.

“The changes aren’t indicated on your copy,” the Pilot said. “I wonder—” He stopped. Commander Gross had entered the control cabin.

“Gross, who authorized alterations?” Kramer said. “Some of the wiring has been changed.”

“Why, your old friend.” Gross signaled to the field tower through the window.

“My old friend?”

“The Professor. He took quite an active interest.” Gross turned to the Pilot. “Let’s get going. We have to take this out past gravity for the test they tell me. Well, perhaps it’s for the best. Are you ready?”

“Sure.” The Pilot sat down and moved some of the controls around. “Anytime.”

“Go ahead, then,” Gross said.

“The Professor—” Kramer began, but at that moment there was a tremendous roar and the ship leaped under him. He grasped one of the wall holds and hung on as best he could. The cabin was filling with a steady throbbing, the raging of the jet turbines underneath them.

The ship leaped. Kramer closed his eyes and held his breath. They were moving out into space, gaining speed each moment.

“WELL, what do you think?” Winter said nervously. “Is it time yet?”

“A little longer,” Kramer said. He was sitting on the floor of the cabin, down by the control wiring. He had removed the metal covering-plate, exposing the complicated maze of relay wiring. He was studying it, comparing it to the wiring diagrams.

“What’s the matter?” Gross said.

“These changes. I can’t figure out what they’re for. The only pattern I can make out is that for some reason—”

“Let me look,” the Pilot said. He squatted down beside Kramer. “You were saying?”

“See this lead here? Originally it was switch controlled. It closed and opened automatically, according to temperature change. Now it’s wired so that the central control system operates it. The same with the others. A lot of this was

still mechanical, worked by pressure, temperature, stress. Now it's under the central master."

"The brain?" Gross said. "You mean it's been altered so that the brain manipulates it?"

Kramer nodded. "Maybe Professor Thomas felt that no mechanical relays could be trusted. Maybe he thought that things would be happening too fast. But some of these could close in a split second. The brake rockets could go on as quickly as—"

"Hey," Winter said from the control seat. "We're getting near the moon stations. What'll I do?"

They looked out the port. The corroded surface of the moon gleamed up at them, a corrupt and sickening sight. They were moving swiftly toward it.

"I'll take it," the Pilot said. He eased Winter out of the way and strapped himself in place. The ship began to move away from the moon as he manipulated the controls. Down below them they could see the observation stations dotting the surface, and the tiny squares that were the openings of the underground factories and hangars. A red blinker winked up at them and the Pilot's fingers moved on the board in answer.

"We're past the moon," the Pilot said, after a time. The moon had fallen behind them; the ship was heading into outer space. "Well, we can go ahead with it."

Kramer did not answer.

"Mr. Kramer, we can go ahead any time."

Kramer started. "Sorry. I was thinking. All right, thanks." He frowned, deep in thought.

"What is it?" Gross asked.

"The wiring changes. Did you understand the reason for them when you gave the okay to the workmen?"

Gross flushed. "You know I know nothing about technical material. I'm in Security."

"Then you should have consulted me."

"What does it matter?" Gross grinned wryly. "We're going to have to start putting our faith in the old man sooner or later."

The Pilot stepped back from the board. His face was pale and set. "Well, it's done," he said. "That's it."

"What's done?" Kramer said.

"We're on automatic. The brain. I turned the board over to it—to him, I mean. The Old Man." The Pilot lit a cigarette and puffed nervously. "Let's keep our fingers crossed."

THE ship was coasting evenly, in the hands of its invisible pilot. Far down inside the ship, carefully armoured and protected, a soft human brain lay in a tank of liquid, a thousand minute electric charges playing over its surface. As the charges rose they were picked up and amplified, fed into relay systems, advanced, carried on through the entire ship—

Gross wiped his forehead nervously. “So *he* is running it, now. I hope he knows what he’s doing.”

Kramer nodded enigmatically. “I think he does.”

“What do you mean?”

“Nothing.” Kramer walked to the port. “I see we’re still moving in a straight line.” He picked up the microphone. “We can instruct the brain orally, through this.” He blew against the microphone experimentally.

“Go on,” Winter said.

“Bring the ship around half-right,” Kramer said. “Decrease speed.”

They waited. Time passed. Gross looked at Kramer. “No change. Nothing.”

“Wait.”

Slowly, the ship was beginning to turn. The turbines missed, reducing their steady beat. The ship was taking up its new course, adjusting itself. Nearby some space debris rushed past, incinerating in the blasts of the turbine jets.

“So far so good,” Gross said.

They began to breathe more easily. The invisible pilot had taken control smoothly, calmly. The ship was in good hands. Kramer spoke a few more words into the microphone, and they swung again. Now they were moving back the way they had come, toward the moon.

“Let’s see what he does when we enter the moon’s pull,” Kramer said. “He was a good mathematician, the old man. He could handle any kind of problem.”

The ship veered, turning away from the moon. The great eaten-away globe fell behind them.

Gross breathed a sigh of relief. “That’s that.”

“One more thing.” Kramer picked up the microphone. “Return to the moon and land the ship at the first space field,” he said into it.

“Good Lord,” Winter murmured. “Why are you—”

“Be quiet.” Kramer stood, listening. The turbines gasped and roared as the ship swung full around, gaining speed. They were moving back, back toward the moon again. The ship dipped down, heading toward the great globe below.

“We’re going a little fast,” the Pilot said. “I don’t see how he can put down at this velocity.”

THE port filled up, as the globe swelled rapidly. The Pilot hurried toward the board, reaching for the controls. All at once the ship jerked. The nose lifted and the ship shot out into space, away from the moon, turning at an oblique angle. The men were thrown to the floor by the sudden change in course. They got to their feet again, speechless, staring at each other.

The Pilot gazed down at the board. "It wasn't me! I didn't touch a thing. I didn't even get to it."

The ship was gaining speed each moment. Kramer hesitated. "Maybe you better switch it back to manual."

The Pilot closed the switch. He took hold of the steering controls and moved them experimentally. "Nothing." He turned around. "Nothing. It doesn't respond."

No one spoke.

"You can see what has happened," Kramer said calmly. "The old man won't let go of it, now that he has it. I was afraid of this when I saw the wiring changes. Everything in this ship is centrally controlled, even the cooling system, the hatches, the garbage release. We're helpless."

"Nonsense." Gross strode to the board. He took hold of the wheel and turned it. The ship continued on its course, moving away from the moon, leaving it behind.

"Release!" Kramer said into the microphone. "Let go of the controls! We'll take it back. Release."

"No good," the Pilot said. "Nothing." He spun the useless wheel. "It's dead, completely dead."

"And we're still heading out," Winter said, grinning foolishly. "We'll be going through the first-line defense belt in a few minutes. If they don't shoot us down —"

"We better radio back." The Pilot clicked the radio to *send*. "I'll contact the main bases, one of the observation stations."

"Better get the defense belt, at the speed we're going. We'll be into it in a minute."

"And after that," Kramer said, "we'll be in outer space. He's moving us toward outspace velocity. Is this ship equipped with baths?"

"Baths?" Gross said.

"The sleep tanks. For space-drive. We may need them if we go much faster."

"But good God, where are we going?" Gross said. "Where—where's he taking us?"

THE Pilot obtained contact. "This is Dwight, on ship," he said. "We're entering the defense zone at high velocity. Don't fire on us."

"Turn back," the impersonal voice came through the speaker. "You're not allowed in the defense zone."

"We can't. We've lost control."

"Lost control?"

"This is an experimental ship."

Gross took the radio. "This is Commander Gross, Security. We're being carried into outer space. There's nothing we can do. Is there any way that we can be removed from this ship?"

A hesitation. "We have some fast pursuit ships that could pick you up if you wanted to jump. The chances are good they'd find you. Do you have space flares?"

"We do," the Pilot said. "Let's try it."

"Abandon ship?" Kramer said. "If we leave now we'll never see it again."

"What else can we do? We're gaining speed all the time. Do you propose that we stay here?"

"No." Kramer shook his head. "Damn it, there ought to be a better solution."

"Could you contact *him*?" Winter asked. "The Old Man? Try to reason with him?"

"It's worth a chance," Gross said. "Try it."

"All right." Kramer took the microphone. He paused a moment. "Listen! Can you hear me? This is Phil Kramer. Can you hear me, Professor. Can you hear me? I want you to release the controls."

There was silence.

"This is Kramer, Professor. Can you hear me? Do you remember who I am? Do you understand who this is?"

Above the control panel the wall speaker made a sound, a sputtering static. They looked up.

"Can you hear me, Professor. This is Philip Kramer. I want you to give the ship back to us. If you can hear me, release the controls! Let go, Professor. Let go!"

Static. A rushing sound, like the wind. They gazed at each other. There was silence for a moment.

"It's a waste of time," Gross said.

"No—listen!"

The sputter came again. Then, mixed with the sputter, almost lost in it, a voice came, toneless, without inflection, a mechanical, lifeless voice from the metal

speaker in the wall, above their heads.

“... Is it you, Philip? I can’t make you out. Darkness.... Who’s there? With you....”

“It’s me, Kramer.” His fingers tightened against the microphone handle. “You must release the controls, Professor. We have to get back to Terra. You must.”

Silence. Then the faint, faltering voice came again, a little stronger than before. “Kramer. Everything so strange. I was right, though. Consciousness result of thinking. Necessary result. Cognito ergo sum. Retain conceptual ability. Can you hear me?”

“Yes, Professor—”

“I altered the wiring. Control. I was fairly certain.... I wonder if I can do it. Try....”

Suddenly the air-conditioning snapped into operation. It snapped abruptly off again. Down the corridor a door slammed. Something thudded. The men stood listening. Sounds came from all sides of them, switches shutting, opening. The lights blinked off; they were in darkness. The lights came back on, and at the same time the heating coils dimmed and faded.

“Good God!” Winter said.

Water poured down on them, the emergency fire-fighting system. There was a screaming rush of air. One of the escape hatches had slid back, and the air was roaring frantically out into space.

The hatch banged closed. The ship subsided into silence. The heating coils glowed into life. As suddenly as it had begun the weird exhibition ceased.

“I can do—everything,” the dry, toneless voice came from the wall speaker. “It is all controlled. Kramer, I wish to talk to you. I’ve been—been thinking. I haven’t seen you in many years. A lot to discuss. You’ve changed, boy. We have much to discuss. Your wife—”

The Pilot grabbed Kramer’s arm. “There’s a ship standing off our bow. Look.”

THEY ran to the port. A slender pale craft was moving along with them, keeping pace with them. It was signal-blinking.

“A Terran pursuit ship,” the Pilot said. “Let’s jump. They’ll pick us up. Suits —”

He ran to a supply cupboard and turned the handle. The door opened and he pulled the suits out onto the floor.

“Hurry,” Gross said. A panic seized them. They dressed frantically, pulling the heavy garments over them. Winter staggered to the escape hatch and stood by it,

waiting for the others. They joined him, one by one.

“Let’s go!” Gross said. “Open the hatch.”

Winter tugged at the hatch. “Help me.”

They grabbed hold, tugging together. Nothing happened. The hatch refused to budge.

“Get a crowbar,” the Pilot said.

“Hasn’t anyone got a blaster?” Gross looked frantically around. “Damn it, blast it open!”

“Pull,” Kramer grated. “Pull together.”

“Are you at the hatch?” the toneless voice came, drifting and eddying through the corridors of the ship. They looked up, staring around them. “I sense something nearby, outside. A ship? You are leaving, all of you? Kramer, you are leaving, too? Very unfortunate. I had hoped we could talk. Perhaps at some other time you might be induced to remain.”

“Open the hatch!” Kramer said, staring up at the impersonal walls of the ship. “For God’s sake, open it!”

There was silence, an endless pause. Then, very slowly, the hatch slid back. The air screamed out, rushing past them into space.

One by one they leaped, one after the other, propelled away by the repulsive material of the suits. A few minutes later they were being hauled aboard the pursuit ship. As the last one of them was lifted through the port, their own ship pointed itself suddenly upward and shot off at tremendous speed. It disappeared.

Kramer removed his helmet, gasping. Two sailors held onto him and began to wrap him in blankets. Gross sipped a mug of coffee, shivering.

“It’s gone,” Kramer murmured.

“I’ll have an alarm sent out,” Gross said.

“What’s happened to your ship?” a sailor asked curiously. “It sure took off in a hurry. Who’s on it?”

“We’ll have to have it destroyed,” Gross went on, his face grim. “It’s got to be destroyed. There’s no telling what it—what *he* has in mind.” Gross sat down weakly on a metal bench. “What a close call for us. We were so damn trusting.”

“What could he be planning,” Kramer said, half to himself. “It doesn’t make sense. I don’t get it.”

AS the ship sped back toward the moon base they sat around the table in the dining room, sipping hot coffee and thinking, not saying very much.

“Look here,” Gross said at last. “What kind of man was Professor Thomas?”

What do you remember about him?”

Kramer put his coffee mug down. “It was ten years ago. I don’t remember much. It’s vague.”

He let his mind run back over the years. He and Dolores had been at Hunt College together, in physics and the life sciences. The College was small and set back away from the momentum of modern life. He had gone there because it was his home town, and his father had gone there before him.

Professor Thomas had been at the College a long time, as long as anyone could remember. He was a strange old man, keeping to himself most of the time. There were many things that he disapproved of, but he seldom said what they were.

“Do you recall anything that might help us?” Gross asked. “Anything that would give us a clue as to what he might have in mind?”

Kramer nodded slowly. “I remember one thing....”

One day he and the Professor had been sitting together in the school chapel, talking leisurely.

“Well, you’ll be out of school, soon,” the Professor had said. “What are you going to do?”

“Do? Work at one of the Government Research Projects, I suppose.”

“And eventually? What’s your ultimate goal?”

Kramer had smiled. “The question is unscientific. It presupposes such things as ultimate ends.”

“Suppose instead along these lines, then: What if there were no war and no Government Research Projects? What would you do, then?”

“I don’t know. But how can I imagine a hypothetical situation like that? There’s been war as long as I can remember. We’re geared for war. I don’t know what I’d do. I suppose I’d adjust, get used to it.”

The Professor had stared at him. “Oh, you do think you’d get accustomed to it, eh? Well, I’m glad of that. And you think you could find something to do?”

Gross listened intently. “What do you infer from this, Kramer?”

“Not much. Except that he was against war.”

“We’re all against war,” Gross pointed out.

“True. But he was withdrawn, set apart. He lived very simply, cooking his own meals. His wife died many years ago. He was born in Europe, in Italy. He changed his name when he came to the United States. He used to read Dante and Milton. He even had a Bible.”

“Very anachronistic, don’t you think?”

“Yes, he lived quite a lot in the past. He found an old phonograph and records, and he listened to the old music. You saw his house, how old-fashioned it was.”

“Did he have a file?” Winter asked Gross.

“With Security? No, none at all. As far as we could tell he never engaged in political work, never joined anything or even seemed to have strong political convictions.”

“No,” Kramer, agreed. “About all he ever did was walk through the hills. He liked nature.”

“Nature can be of great use to a scientist,” Gross said. “There wouldn’t be any science without it.”

“Kramer, what do you think his plan is, taking control of the ship and disappearing?” Winter said.

“Maybe the transfer made him insane,” the Pilot said. “Maybe there’s no plan, nothing rational at all.”

“But he had the ship rewired, and he had made sure that he would retain consciousness and memory before he even agreed to the operation. He must have had something planned from the start. But what?”

“Perhaps he just wanted to stay alive longer,” Kramer said. “He was old and about to die. Or—”

“Or what?”

“Nothing.” Kramer stood up. “I think as soon as we get to the moon base I’ll make a vidcall to earth. I want to talk to somebody about this.”

“Who’s that?” Gross asked.

“Dolores. Maybe she remembers something.”

“That’s a good idea,” Gross said.

“**WHERE** are you calling from?” Dolores asked, when he succeeded in reaching her.

“From the moon base.”

“All kinds of rumors are running around. Why didn’t the ship come back? What happened?”

“I’m afraid he ran off with it.”

“He?”

“The Old Man. Professor Thomas.” Kramer explained what had happened.

Dolores listened intently. “How strange. And you think he planned it all in advance, from the start?”

“I’m certain. He asked for the plans of construction and the theoretical diagrams at once.”

“But why? What for?”

"I don't know. Look, Dolores. What do you remember about him? Is there anything that might give a clue to all this?"

"Like what?"

"I don't know. That's the trouble."

On the vidscreen Dolores knitted her brow. "I remember he raised chickens in his back yard, and once he had a goat." She smiled. "Do you remember the day the goat got loose and wandered down the main street of town? Nobody could figure out where it came from."

"Anything else?"

"No." He watched her struggling, trying to remember. "He wanted to have a farm, sometime, I know."

"All right. Thanks." Kramer touched the switch. "When I get back to Terra maybe I'll stop and see you."

"Let me know how it works out."

He cut the line and the picture dimmed and faded. He walked slowly back to where Gross and some officers of the Military were sitting at a chart table, talking.

"Any luck?" Gross said, looking up.

"No. All she remembers is that he kept a goat."

"Come over and look at this detail chart." Gross motioned him around to his side. "Watch!"

Kramer saw the record tabs moving furiously, the little white dots racing back and forth.

"What's happening?" he asked.

"A squadron outside the defense zone has finally managed to contact the ship. They're maneuvering now, for position. Watch."

The white counters were forming a barrel formation around a black dot that was moving steadily across the board, away from the central position. As they watched, the white dots constricted around it.

"They're ready to open fire," a technician at the board said. "Commander, what shall we tell them to do?"

Gross hesitated. "I hate to be the one who makes the decision. When it comes right down to it—"

"It's not just a ship," Kramer said. "It's a man, a living person. A human being is up there, moving through space. I wish we knew what—"

"But the order has to be given. We can't take any chances. Suppose he went over to them, to the yuks."

Kramer's jaw dropped. "My God, he wouldn't do that."

"Are you sure? Do you know what he'll do?"

“He wouldn’t do that.”

Gross turned to the technician. “Tell them to go ahead.”

“I’m sorry, sir, but now the ship has gotten away. Look down at the board.”

GROSS stared down, Kramer over his shoulder. The black dot had slipped through the white dots and had moved off at an abrupt angle. The white dots were broken up, dispersing in confusion.

“He’s an unusual strategist,” one of the officers said. He traced the line. “It’s an ancient maneuver, an old Prussian device, but it worked.”

The white dots were turning back. “Too many yuk ships out that far,” Gross said. “Well, that’s what you get when you don’t act quickly.” He looked up coldly at Kramer. “We should have done it when we had him. Look at him go!” He jabbed a finger at the rapidly moving black dot. The dot came to the edge of the board and stopped. It had reached the limit of the chartered area. “See?”

—Now what? Kramer thought, watching. So the Old Man had escaped the cruisers and gotten away. He was alert, all right; there was nothing wrong with his mind. Or with his ability to control his new body.

Body—The ship was a new body for him. He had traded in the old dying body, withered and frail, for this hulking frame of metal and plastic, turbines and rocket jets. He was strong, now. Strong and big. The new body was more powerful than a thousand human bodies. But how long would it last him? The average life of a cruiser was only ten years. With careful handling he might get twenty out of it, before some essential part failed and there was no way to replace it.

And then, what then? What would he do, when something failed and there was no one to fix it for him? That would be the end. Someplace, far out in the cold darkness of space, the ship would slow down, silent and lifeless, to exhaust its last heat into the eternal timelessness of outer space. Or perhaps it would crash on some barren asteroid, burst into a million fragments.

It was only a question of time.

“Your wife didn’t remember anything?” Gross said.

“I told you. Only that he kept a goat, once.”

“A hell of a lot of help that is.”

Kramer shrugged. “It’s not my fault.”

“I wonder if we’ll ever see him again.” Gross stared down at the indicator dot, still hanging at the edge of the board. “I wonder if he’ll ever move back this way.”

“I wonder, too,” Kramer said.

THAT night Kramer lay in bed, tossing from side to side, unable to sleep. The moon gravity, even artificially increased, was unfamiliar to him and it made him uncomfortable. A thousand thoughts wandered loose in his head as he lay, fully awake.

What did it all mean? What was the Professor’s plan? Maybe they would never know. Maybe the ship was gone for good; the Old Man had left forever, shooting into outer space. They might never find out why he had done it, what purpose—if any—had been in his mind.

Kramer sat up in bed. He turned on the light and lit a cigarette. His quarters were small, a metal-lined bunk room, part of the moon station base.

The Old Man had wanted to talk to him. He had wanted to discuss things, hold a conversation, but in the hysteria and confusion all they had been able to think of was getting away. The ship was rushing off with them, carrying them into outer space. Kramer set his jaw. Could they be blamed for jumping? They had no idea where they were being taken, or why. They were helpless, caught in their own ship, and the pursuit ship standing by waiting to pick them up was their only chance. Another half hour and it would have been too late.

But what had the Old Man wanted to say? What had he intended to tell him, in those first confusing moments when the ship around them had come alive, each metal strut and wire suddenly animate, the body of a living creature, a vast metal organism?

It was weird, unnerving. He could not forget it, even now. He looked around the small room uneasily. What did it signify, the coming to life of metal and plastic? All at once they had found themselves inside a *living* creature, in its stomach, like Jonah inside the whale.

It had been alive, and it had talked to them, talked calmly and rationally, as it rushed them off, faster and faster into outer space. The wall speaker and circuit had become the vocal cords and mouth, the wiring the spinal cord and nerves, the hatches and relays and circuit breakers the muscles.

They had been helpless, completely helpless. The ship had, in a brief second, stolen their power away from them and left them defenseless, practically at its mercy. It was not right; it made him uneasy. All his life he had controlled machines, bent nature and the forces of nature to man and man’s needs. The human race had slowly evolved until it was in a position to operate things, run them as it saw fit. Now all at once it had been plunged back down the ladder

again, prostrate before a Power against which they were children.

Kramer got out of bed. He put on his bathrobe and began to search for a cigarette. While he was searching, the vidphone rang.

He snapped the vidphone on.

“Yes?”

The face of the immediate monitor appeared. “A call from Terra, Mr. Kramer. An emergency call.”

“Emergency call? For me? Put it through.” Kramer came awake, brushing his hair back out of his eyes. Alarm plucked at him.

From the speaker a strange voice came. “Philip Kramer? Is this Kramer?”

“Yes. Go on.”

“This is General Hospital, New York City, Terra. Mr. Kramer, your wife is here. She has been critically injured in an accident. Your name was given to us to call. Is it possible for you to—”

“How badly?” Kramer gripped the vidphone stand. “Is it serious?”

“Yes, it’s serious, Mr. Kramer. Are you able to come here? The quicker you can come the better.”

“Yes.” Kramer nodded. “I’ll come. Thanks.”

THE screen died as the connection was broken. Kramer waited a moment. Then he tapped the button. The screen relit again. “Yes, sir,” the monitor said.

“Can I get a ship to Terra at once? It’s an emergency. My wife—”

“There’s no ship leaving the moon for eight hours. You’ll have to wait until the next period.”

“Isn’t there anything I can do?”

“We can broadcast a general request to all ships passing through this area. Sometimes cruisers pass by here returning to Terra for repairs.”

“Will you broadcast that for me? I’ll come down to the field.”

“Yes sir. But there may be no ship in the area for awhile. It’s a gamble.” The screen died.

Kramer dressed quickly. He put on his coat and hurried to the lift. A moment later he was running across the general receiving lobby, past the rows of vacant desks and conference tables. At the door the sentries stepped aside and he went outside, onto the great concrete steps.

The face of the moon was in shadow. Below him the field stretched out in total darkness, a black void, endless, without form. He made his way carefully down the steps and along the ramp along the side of the field, to the control

tower. A faint row of red lights showed him the way.

Two soldiers challenged him at the foot of the tower, standing in the shadows, their guns ready.

“Kramer?”

“Yes.” A light was flashed in his face.

“Your call has been sent out already.”

“Any luck?” Kramer asked.

“There’s a cruiser nearby that has made contact with us. It has an injured jet and is moving slowly back toward Terra, away from the line.”

“Good.” Kramer nodded, a flood of relief rushing through him. He lit a cigarette and gave one to each of the soldiers. The soldiers lit up.

“Sir,” one of them asked, “is it true about the experimental ship?”

“What do you mean?”

“It came to life and ran off?”

“No, not exactly,” Kramer said. “It had a new type of control system instead of the Johnson units. It wasn’t properly tested.”

“But sir, one of the cruisers that was there got up close to it, and a buddy of mine says this ship acted funny. He never saw anything like it. It was like when he was fishing once on Terra, in Washington State, fishing for bass. The fish were smart, going this way and that—”

“Here’s your cruiser,” the other soldier said. “Look!”

An enormous vague shape was setting slowly down onto the field. They could make nothing out but its row of tiny green blinkers. Kramer stared at the shape.

“Better hurry, sir,” the soldiers said. “They don’t stick around here very long.”

“Thanks.” Kramer loped across the field, toward the black shape that rose up above him, extended across the width of the field. The ramp was down from the side of the cruiser and he caught hold of it. The ramp rose, and a moment later Kramer was inside the hold of the ship. The hatch slid shut behind him.

As he made his way up the stairs to the main deck the turbines roared up from the moon, out into space.

Kramer opened the door to the main deck. He stopped suddenly, staring around him in surprise. There was nobody in sight. The ship was deserted.

“Good God,” he said. Realization swept over him, numbing him. He sat down on a bench, his head swimming. “Good God.”

The ship roared out into space leaving the moon and Terra farther behind each moment.

And there was nothing he could do.

“SO it was you who put the call through,” he said at last. “It was you who called me on the vidphone, not any hospital on Terra. It was all part of the plan.” He looked up and around him. “And Dolores is really—”

“Your wife is fine,” the wall speaker above him said tonelessly. “It was a fraud. I am sorry to trick you that way, Philip, but it was all I could think of. Another day and you would have been back on Terra. I don’t want to remain in this area any longer than necessary. They have been so certain of finding me out in deep space that I have been able to stay here without too much danger. But even the purloined letter was found eventually.”

Kramer smoked his cigarette nervously. “What are you going to do? Where are we going?”

“First, I want to talk to you. I have many things to discuss. I was very disappointed when you left me, along with the others. I had hoped that you would remain.” The dry voice chuckled. “Remember how we used to talk in the old days, you and I? That was a long time ago.”

The ship was gaining speed. It plunged through space at tremendous speed, rushing through the last of the defense zone and out beyond. A rush of nausea made Kramer bend over for a moment.

When he straightened up the voice from the wall went on, “I’m sorry to step it up so quickly, but we are still in danger. Another few moments and we’ll be free.”

“How about yuk ships? Aren’t they out here?”

“I’ve already slipped away from several of them. They’re quite curious about me.”

“Curious?”

“They sense that I’m different, more like their own organic mines. They don’t like it. I believe they will begin to withdraw from this area, soon. Apparently they don’t want to get involved with me. They’re an odd race, Philip. I would have liked to study them closely, try to learn something about them. I’m of the opinion that they use no inert material. All their equipment and instruments are alive, in some form or other. They don’t construct or build at all. The idea of *making* is foreign to them. They utilize existing forms. Even their ships—”

“Where are we going?” Kramer said. “I want to know where you are taking me.”

“Frankly, I’m not certain.”

“You’re not certain?”

“I haven’t worked some details out. There are a few vague spots in my program, still. But I think that in a short while I’ll have them ironed out.”

“What is your program?” Kramer said.

“It’s really very simple. But don’t you want to come into the control room and sit? The seats are much more comfortable than that metal bench.”

Kramer went into the control room and sat down at the control board. Looking at the useless apparatus made him feel strange.

“What’s the matter?” the speaker above the board rasped.

KRAMER gestured helplessly. “I’m—powerless. I can’t do anything. And I don’t like it. Do you blame me?”

“No. No, I don’t blame you. But you’ll get your control back, soon. Don’t worry. This is only a temporary expedient, taking you off this way. It was something I didn’t contemplate. I forgot that orders would be given out to shoot me on sight.”

“It was Gross’ idea.”

“I don’t doubt that. My conception, my plan, came to me as soon as you began to describe your project, that day at my house. I saw at once that you were wrong; you people have no understanding of the mind at all. I realized that the transfer of a human brain from an organic body to a complex artificial space ship would not involve the loss of the intellectualization faculty of the mind. When a man thinks, he *is*.

“When I realized that, I saw the possibility of an age-old dream becoming real. I was quite elderly when I first met you, Philip. Even then my life-span had come pretty much to its end. I could look ahead to nothing but death, and with it the extinction of all my ideas. I had made no mark on the world, none at all. My students, one by one, passed from me into the world, to take up jobs in the great Research Project, the search for better and bigger weapons of war.

“The world has been fighting for a long time, first with itself, then with the Martians, then with these beings from Proxima Centauri, whom we know nothing about. The human society has evolved war as a cultural institution, like the science of astronomy, or mathematics. War is a part of our lives, a career, a respected vocation. Bright, alert young men and women move into it, putting their shoulders to the wheel as they did in the time of Nebuchadnezzar. It has always been so.

“But is it innate in mankind? I don’t think so. No social custom is innate. There were many human groups that did not go to war; the Eskimos never grasped the idea at all, and the American Indians never took to it well.

“But these dissenters were wiped out, and a cultural pattern was established

that became the standard for the whole planet. Now it has become ingrained in us.

“But if someplace along the line some other way of settling problems had arisen and taken hold, something different than the massing of men and material to—”

“What’s your plan?” Kramer said. “I know the theory. It was part of one of your lectures.”

“Yes, buried in a lecture on plant selection, as I recall. When you came to me with this proposition I realized that perhaps my conception could be brought to life, after all. If my theory were right that war is only a habit, not an instinct, a society built up apart from Terra with a minimum of cultural roots might develop differently. If it failed to absorb our outlook, if it could start out on another foot, it might not arrive at the same point to which we have come: a dead end, with nothing but greater and greater wars in sight, until nothing is left but ruin and destruction everywhere.

“Of course, there would have to be a Watcher to guide the experiment, at first. A crisis would undoubtedly come very quickly, probably in the second generation. Cain would arise almost at once.

“You see, Kramer, I estimate that if I remain at rest most of the time, on some small planet or moon, I may be able to keep functioning for almost a hundred years. That would be time enough, sufficient to see the direction of the new colony. After that—Well, after that it would be up to the colony itself.

“Which is just as well, of course. Man must take control eventually, on his own. One hundred years, and after that they will have control of their own destiny. Perhaps I am wrong, perhaps war is more than a habit. Perhaps it is a law of the universe, that things can only survive as groups by group violence.

“But I’m going ahead and taking the chance that it is only a habit, that I’m right, that war is something we’re so accustomed to that we don’t realize it is a very unnatural thing. Now as to the place! I’m still a little vague about that. We must find the place, still.

“That’s what we’re doing now. You and I are going to inspect a few systems off the beaten path, planets where the trading prospects are low enough to keep Terran ships away. I know of one planet that might be a good place. It was reported by the Fairchild Expedition in their original manual. We may look into that, for a start.”

The ship was silent.

KRAMER sat for a time, staring down at the metal floor under him. The floor throbbed dully with the motion of the turbines. At last he looked up.

“You might be right. Maybe our outlook is only a habit.” Kramer got to his feet. “But I wonder if something has occurred to you?”

“What is that?”

“If it’s such a deeply ingrained habit, going back thousands of years, how are you going to get your colonists to make the break, leave Terra and Terran customs? How about *this* generation, the first ones, the people who found the colony? I think you’re right that the next generation would be free of all this, if there were an—” He grinned. “—An Old Man Above to teach them something else instead.”

Kramer looked up at the wall speaker. “How are you going to get the people to leave Terra and come with you, if by your own theory, this generation can’t be saved, it all has to start with the next?”

The wall speaker was silent. Then it made a sound, the faint dry chuckle.

“I’m surprised at you, Philip. Settlers can be found. We won’t need many, just a few.” The speaker chuckled again. “I’ll acquaint you with my solution.”

At the far end of the corridor a door slid open. There was sound, a hesitant sound. Kramer turned.

“Dolores!”

Dolores Kramer stood uncertainly, looking into the control room. She blinked in amazement. “Phil! What are you doing here? What’s going on?”

They stared at each other.

“What’s happening?” Dolores said. “I received a vidcall that you had been hurt in a lunar explosion—”

The wall speaker rasped into life. “You see, Philip, that problem is already solved. We don’t really need so many people; even a single couple might do.”

Kramer nodded slowly. “I see,” he murmured thickly. “Just one couple. One man and woman.”

“They might make it all right, if there were someone to watch and see that things went as they should. There will be quite a few things I can help you with, Philip. Quite a few. We’ll get along very well, I think.”

Kramer grinned wryly. “You could even help us name the animals,” he said. “I understand that’s the first step.”

“I’ll be glad to,” the toneless, impersonal voice said. “As I recall, my part will be to bring them to you, one by one. Then you can do the actual naming.”

“I don’t understand,” Dolores faltered. “What does he mean, Phil? Naming animals. What kind of animals? Where are we going?”

Kramer walked slowly over to the port and stood staring silently out, his arms folded. Beyond the ship a myriad fragments of light gleamed, countless coals glowing in the dark void. Stars, suns, systems. Endless, without number. A universe of worlds. An infinity of planets, waiting for them, gleaming and winking from the darkness.

He turned back, away from the port. “Where are we going?” He smiled at his wife, standing nervous and frightened, her large eyes full of alarm. “I don’t know where we are going,” he said. “But somehow that doesn’t seem too important right now.... I’m beginning to see the Professor’s point, it’s the result that counts.”

And for the first time in many months he put his arm around Dolores. At first she stiffened, the fright and nervousness still in her eyes. But then suddenly she relaxed against him and there were tears wetting her cheeks.

“Phil ... do you really think we can start over again—you and I?”

He kissed her tenderly, then passionately.

And the spaceship shot swiftly through the endless, trackless eternity of the void....

End of the Project Gutenberg EBook of Mr. Spaceship, by Philip K. Dick

*** END OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK MR. SPACESHIP ***

***** This file should be named 32522-h.htm or 32522-h.zip *****
This and all associated files of various formats will be found in:
<http://www.gutenberg.org/3/2/5/2/32522/>

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

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

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

*** START: FULL LICENSE ***

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work is derived from the public domain (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase "Project Gutenberg" associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional

terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg-tm License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

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

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

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

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

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

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg-tm works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, "Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation."
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg-tm License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg-tm works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg-tm

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

1.F.

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

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

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

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

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works,

harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg-tm work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg-tm work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

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

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

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

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

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

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

For additional contact information:

Dr. Gregory B. Newby
Chief Executive and Director
gbnewby@pglaaf.org

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

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

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<http://www.gutenberg.net>

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

linked image
[back](#)

linked image
[back](#)