

Page

4 EDITORIAL *The Editor*

6 THE DOOR *Eric Frank Russell*

18 A THOUSAND ANGELS CAN DANCE *H. B. Carl*

27 LET ME LIVE IN A HOUSE *Chad Oliver*

52 THE SOLUBLE SCIENTIST *T. P. Caravan*

57 THE MAN WITH THE BROKEN NOSE *Wilson O. Clough*

88 THE VOICES *Edward Wellen*

92 LORD TEDRIC *Edward E. Smith, Ph.D.*

118 THE WATCHERS *Jan Smith*

126 ALIEN INVASION *Marcia Kamien*

Universe

SCIENCE FICTION

Issue #4

EDITORS

RAY PALMER

BEA MAHAFFEY

ART DIRECTOR

ALFRED BERNARD

*Cover painting by Robert Gibson Jones, illustrating
LORD TEDRIC*

*Illustrations by Virgil Finlay, Lawrence, Michael Becker, Charles
Hornstein, Joseph R. Eberle*

Published bi-monthly by PALMER PUBLICATIONS, INC., 1144 Ashland Avenue, Evanston, Illinois. Second-class entry applied for at the Post Office, Chicago, Illinois. Additional entry applied for at Evanston, Illinois and Amherst, Wisconsin. All reasonable care will be taken but we assume no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts and artwork.



THE VOICES

By Edward Wellen

Nicholas Kane was sitting at his desk when he heard the voices. This was a departure from the usual, and he heard them only once—but that one time turned out to be once too often for Kane.

Illustrated by Joseph Eberle

WHEN he was fifteen he sat one evening over his homework studiously ignoring it for the moment. With his pencil he drummed a hollow-sounding descending and ascending scale on his cheek by opening and closing his mouth. His elbow, which was resting on the table, suddenly slid. The point of the pencil drove into the center of his left palm and broke off. He pressed a finger on the gash to stem the flow of blood and ran to the bathroom to mercurochrome and bandage the wound. He didn't think to pry out the point and the flesh healed over it. When the scab fell away there was a faint grayish speck visible under the small white scar. Through the years the currents of his body washed the speck along, at the rate of one-billionth of an inch per second.

When he was eighteen he lost an incisor on the football field by tripping and landing on his water bucket. His dentist screwed a tooth of chromium-cobalt alloy into his jawbone. As time went by, further visits to the dentist weighed him down with twenty-three fillings.

When he was twenty-one and working for his Ph. D., ploughing through acres of small print blurred his vision. His optometrist fitted him with a pair of steel-rimmed glasses.

When he was twenty-four he held a good job as a chemical engineer. He loved his work and

grudged the time he spent away from it. And so he got into the habit of nibbling a salt-sprinkled tomato for lunch every day. This caused an acid imbalance in his body. It showed in the black-greening of the steel rims of his glasses and of his face where they touched.

When he was twenty-six his glasses fogged and he misread a dial. The explosion that followed ruined his hearing. He began wearing a hearing aid.

When he was twenty-seven he married. It was a double ring ceremony and the bride firmly slipped a gold band over the trembling third finger of his left hand. He had a habit of tapping the ring against his teeth whenever he became lost in thought. It seemed to help him find his way. But his wife said, time after time, "Must you do that?" (It wore on her nerves, like so many other habits of his.) "Are you doing it only to drive me mad?" And she would angrily step up the tempo of her gum-chewing.

When he was thirty—

IT was 10 a.m. Nicholas Kane, Ph. D., sat at his desk. A problem was facing him and he absently clicked his wedding band against his teeth.

In that second the bit of graphite, which in fifteen years had marched a half inch along his palm toward his fingers, was moving one-billionth of an inch.

Dr. Kane froze. He was beginning to hear voices in his head.

The first was a woman's voice, and even through the metallic distortion Dr. Kane sensed a suggestive sleepiness furring her speech.

"Bill?"

A pause. Then the woman spoke again. She sounded wideawake now. There was anger in her voice, a trace of scorn.

"Put the clock down, you fool."

Her anger suddenly gave way to fear.

"No! Please, please, dear! I promise I'll never see him again—"

An unpleasant sound of metal striking bone. A long bubbling sigh. Silence.

And then a man saying sickly, "God. What I done?"

And that was all.

During the drama Dr. Kane had overheard, the bit of graphite had moved nine one-billionths of an inch. It was no longer operative.

Dr. Nicholas Kane looked around to see if any of his fellow workers were eyeing him strangely. They were all busy at their own tasks. Relieved, he hid behind a worksheet and frowned in puzzlement.

Curious, he thought, *this business of hearing voices. Am I going psycho? Or were those voices real? Maybe I acted as a radio receiver,*

picked up a broadcast. It's happened—to a knife-sharpener when crystals of carborundum from his grindstone deposited on the metal fillings in his teeth, and acted like the galena crystals used in the old crystal radio sets. But I haven't sharpened any knives lately. Not even metaphorically.

He gave it up for the time being, turning back to his work. But the experience had unnerved him too much. He put his papers aside and pleading a headache left for home.

The morning sun and the autumn air proved so buoyant that he was almost in a holiday mood by the time he reached his house. His wife would be surprised. Why not really surprise her by suggesting that they spend the rest of this glorious day picnicking? It was a long time since they had been on an outing. He really should make up to her for neglecting her so much of the time.

He let himself in with his key. The house was quiet. Then he smiled as he heard the dainty snoring of his beloved. He tiptoed into the bedroom. She lay on her back, one hand flung out near her pair of horn-rimmed glasses on the phone table, the other seeming to point at the clock on the dresser. Slowly his presence penetrated her sleep. Without opening her eyes she murmured, "Bill?"

