

**GREAT READING  
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**Adventures Of A Bedroom Commando**

# SAGA

MAGAZINE  
FOR MEN

MAY  
35c

**WE PROVE REDS  
STILL HOLD  
389 GIs—**

**How You Can  
Help Us Release  
Them! SEE PAGE 9**



**I Explored  
Canada's River  
Of No Return**

**NEW BOOK <sup>66</sup>  
BONUS**

**PLANET OF THE APES<sup>63</sup>**  
By The Author of "BRIDGE OVER THE RIVER KWAI"



# “INSIDE SAGA !!!”

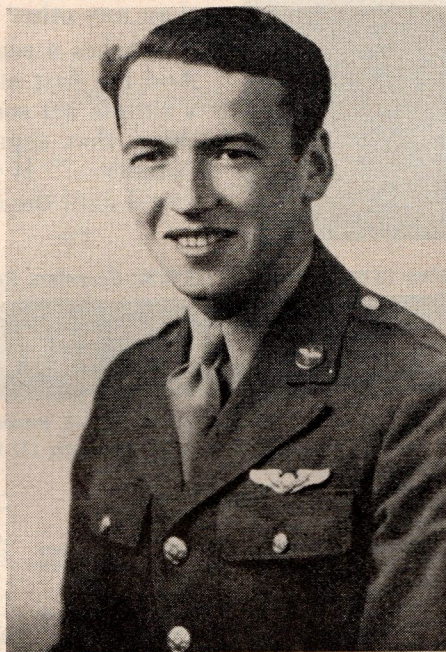
## Our Mysterious Bedroom Commando

CONTINUING our offer begun last month, we once again lay it on the line: Great Reading Or Your Money Back. If this issue of SAGA doesn't live up to your expectations, if it displeases you, then by all means come and get your 35 cents back. All you have to do is return the front cover of this issue with a letter of 50 words or more telling us why you were disappointed. And we will return your money. Simple as that.

As far as great reading is concerned, it's authors who make or break us, just as they do any magazine. One author who helps make us this month is Dirk Bradley, our adventurous bedroom commando (page 21), who's a man generally on the make. We wish we could tell you more about Bradley but we can't; we have vowed to protect his anonymity, for obvious reasons. This much we can tell you: Dirk Bradley (not his real name) is a suave man of the world who lives in Honolulu, which is as good a place as any for a bedroom commando to make his headquarters. He is a veteran of war as well as love, and a veteran of the newspaper world, too—so good a veteran that he once won a Pulitzer Prize for war reporting. You will be reading about his amorous escapades as fast as he can get them to us. We already have five in the works, and a strange thing has happened. The girls who type up our stories before publication are generally a cool lot. But all of them expressed an intense interest in Mr. Bradley. “When's he coming to the office?” one wanted to know. We don't know what she had in mind, but we warned Dirk. He said that seeing what happened to the Beatles when they came to America, he'd better stay in Hawaii.

One author who needn't remain anonymous (his picture is shown on this page) is Tom Murphy, our man in Schweinfurt (page 26). Murphy is a hardbitten veteran of war. He enlisted in the Army in

1942, served with the Eighth Air Force in England. Between January 25, 1943, and December 1, 1943, he flew 25 missions (Schweinfurt included) plus seven aerial aborts. His last three missions as a tail gunner on a B-17, he had only fighter escorts. Well, Murphy got through all right, with a Silver Star, Distinguished Flying



Cross, the Air Medal with three battle stars and the ETO ribbon with three battle stars. You'd think he had enough of war, but Tom stayed in the Reserves and was recalled at Korea time. He was with SAC's reserve atomic strike force and made one special mission flight to Europe, where he and his crew received a commemorative medal from Queen Juliana of the Netherlands.

Another SAGA author, Curtis Casewit, was recently the recipient of good news. His story, “Hari-Kiri on Skis,” published

in our February, 1963, issue, was selected as one of the best sports stories of the year for the annual collection, “Best Sports Stories,” published by E. P. Dutton. Casewit, incidentally, is an ardent skier in his own right and has a new book out on the subject: *Ski Racing, Advice by the Experts* (Arco Publishing Company, \$6.50). If you're at all bugged on skiing, you ought to read it; it's all there.

We're proud to be able to present in this issue a condensation of Pierre Boulle's new book, *Planet of the Apes*. Most critics said it was Boulle's best book since *The Bridge Over the River Kwai*. We agree. Boulle himself has a fascinating background.

Born in 1912 in Avignon, France, he originally trained as an engineer. In 1936 he went to Malaya as a rubber planter. In 1939 he was called up by the French forces in Indo-China. When France collapsed, he fled to Singapore, where he joined the Free French Mission. After the Japanese invasion he was sent via Rangoon and the Burma Road to Yunnan to establish contact with Chinese forces. There he infiltrated as a guerrilla into Indo-China. He was captured in 1943, but escaped a year later. He served for the rest of the war in Calcutta. *Planet of the Apes* is his ninth book.

Next month we welcome back Mickey Spillane with another original book-length thriller. It's a big one so tune in.

Also next month we have a major story by the brilliant reporter, William Bradford Huie, this one on Byron de la Beckwith, who was recently on trial for murder in Mississippi. And famed military historian S.L.A. Marshall is in with one of the great untold war stories of World War II. Plus the further adventures of our bedroom commando.

Stay loose.

*ALS*



A chilling new novel by  
the author of  
THE BRIDGE OVER  
THE RIVER KWAI

# PLANET OF THE APES

by Pierre Boulle

Illustrated by Harry Schaare

I AM confiding this manuscript to space, not with the intention of saving myself, but to help, perhaps, to avert the appalling scourge that is menacing the human race. Lord have pity on us! . . .

As for me, Ulysse Mérou, I have set off again with my family in the spaceship. We can keep going for several years. We grow vegetables and fruit on board and have a poultry run. We lack nothing. One day perhaps we shall come across a friendly planet. This is a hope I hardly dare express. But here, faithfully reported, is the account of my adventure.

It was in the year 2500 that I embarked with two companions in the cosmic ship,

Condensed by permission of the publishers, The Vanguard Press, from "Planet of the Apes" by Pierre Boulle. Copyright © 1963 by Pierre Boulle.

*Men and women stampeded through the forest like terrified animals. From what were they fleeing?*



Schaare



# PLANET OF THE APES

with the intention of reaching the region of space where the supergigantic star Betelgeuse reigns supreme.

It was an ambitious project, the most ambitious that had ever been conceived on Earth. Betelgeuse—or Alpha Orionis, as our astronomers called it—is about 300 light-years distant from our planet.

As Professor Antelle, the leader of our expedition, had foreseen, the voyage lasted about two years of our time, during which three and a half centuries must have elapsed on Earth. That was the only snag about aiming so far into the distance: if we came back one day we should find our planet older by seven or eight hundred years.

I learned more during those two years than I had learned in all my previous existence. I also learned all that one needed to know in order to guide the spacecraft. It was fairly easy: one merely gave instructions to some electronic devices, which made all the calculations and directly initiated the maneuvers.

Professor Antelle, who was interested in botany and agriculture, had planned to take advantage of the voyage to check certain of his theories on the growth of plants in space. A cubic compartment with sides about thirty feet long served as a plot. Thanks to some trays, the whole of its volume was put to use. The earth was regenerated by means of chemical fertilizers and, scarcely more than two months after our departure, we had the pleasure of seeing it produce all sorts of vegetables. One section was reserved for flowers, which the professor tended lovingly. He had also brought some birds, butterflies, and even a monkey, a little chimpanzee whom we had christened Hector.

It is certain that the learned Antelle was not interested at all in human beings. He would often declare that he did not expect much from them any more, and this probably explains why he had limited the human passengers to three: himself; his disciple Arthur Levain, a young physician with a great future; and myself, Ulysse Mérou, a journalist who had met the professor as a result of an interview.

The voyage occurred without a setback. And one day, after this long crossing, we had the dazzling experience of seeing the star Betelgeuse appear in the sky in a new guise.

The feeling of awe produced by such a sight cannot be described: a star, which only yesterday was a brilliant speck among the multitude of anonymous specks in the firmament, assumed a dimension in space, appearing first of all as a sparkling nut, then swelled in size, at the same time becoming more definite in color, so that it resembled an orange, and finally fell into place in the cosmos with the same apparent

diameter as our own familiar daytime star. A new sun was born for us, a reddish sun, like ours when it sets, the attraction and warmth of which we could already feel.

Our speed was then very much reduced. We drew still closer to Betelgeuse, until its apparent diameter far exceeded that of all the heavenly bodies hitherto seen. Antelle gave some instructions to the robots and we started gravitating around the supergiant. Then the scientist took out his astronomical instruments and began his observations.

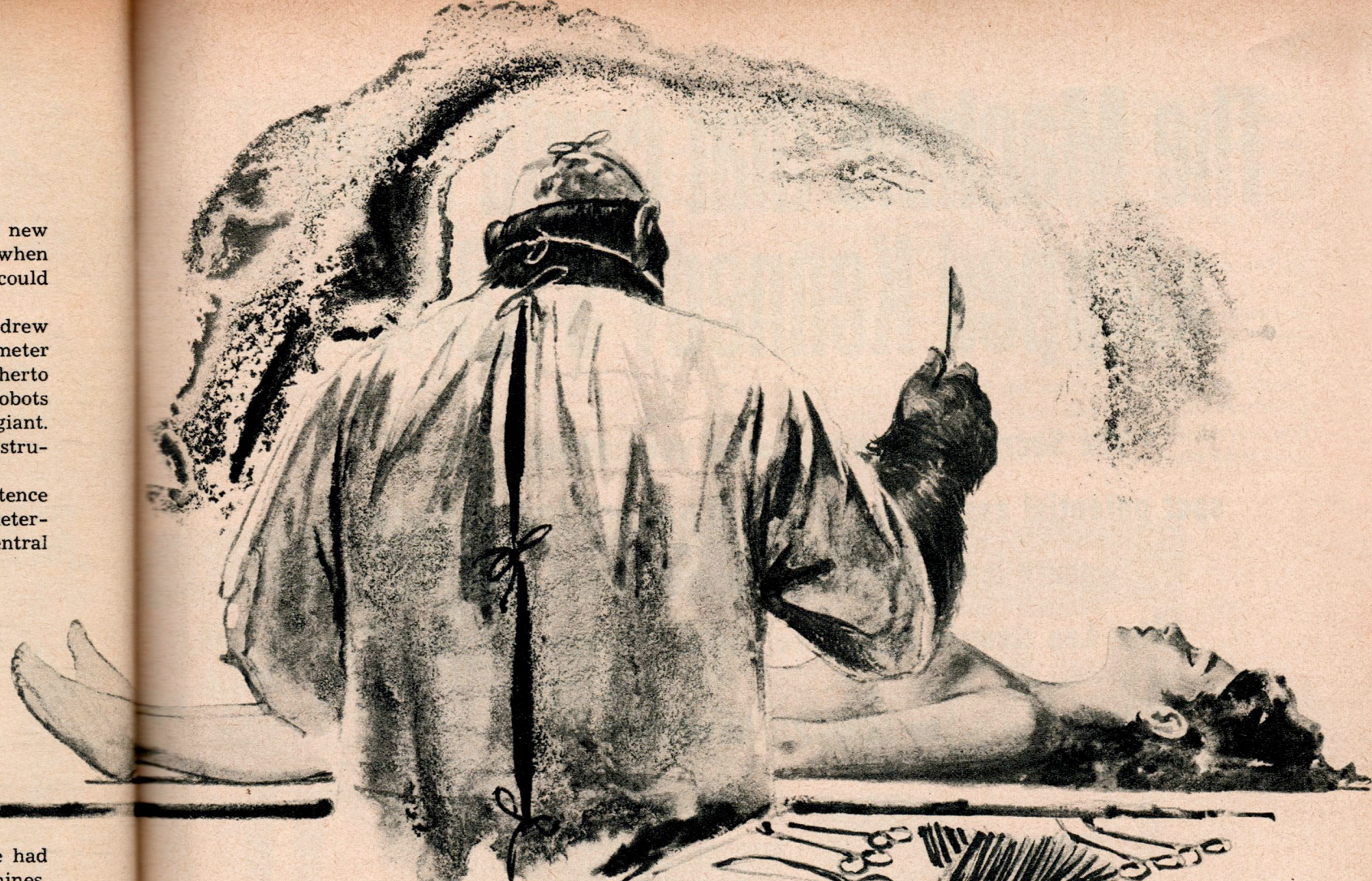
It was not long before he discovered the existence of four planets whose dimensions he rapidly determined, together with their distances from the central star. One of these was about the same size as Earth; it possessed an atmosphere containing oxygen and nitrogen; it revolved around Betelgeuse at a distance equivalent to thirty times the space between the Sun and Earth, receiving a radiation comparable to that received by our planet.

We decided to make it our first objective. After fresh instructions were given to the robots, our craft was quickly put into orbit around it.

The craft was not equipped for a landing, but this eventuality had been provided for. We had at our disposal three much smaller rocket machines, which we called launches. It was in one of these that we embarked, taking with us some measuring instruments and Hector, the chimpanzee, who was equipped as we were with a diving suit and had been trained in its use. As for our ship, we simply let it revolve around the planet. It was safer there than a liner lying at anchor in a harbor, and we knew it would not drift an inch from its orbit.

Landing on a planet of this kind was an easy operation with our launch. As soon as we had penetrated the thick layers of the atmosphere, Professor Antelle took some samples of the outside air and analyzed them. He found they had the same composition as the air on Earth at a similar altitude. I hardly had time to ponder on this miraculous coincidence, for the ground was approaching rapidly; we were no more than fifty miles or so above it. Since the robots carried out every maneuver, I had nothing to do but press my face to the porthole and watch this unknown world rising toward me.

The planet was inhabited. We flew over a town: a fairly big town, from which roads radiated, bordered with trees and with vehicles moving along them. I had time to make out the general architecture: broad streets and white houses with long straight lines.



*The ape approached the helpless woman. At last I was about to discover the secret of Soror.*

But we were to land a long way farther off. Our flight swept us first over cultivated fields, then over a thick, russet-colored forest that called to mind our equatorial jungle. We were now at a very low altitude. We caught sight of a fairly large clearing occupying the top of a plateau, the ground all around it being rather broken. Our leader decided to attempt a landing there and gave his last orders to the robots. A system of retrorockets came into action. We hovered motionless for a moment or two above the clearing, like a gull spotting a fish.

Then, two years after leaving our Earth, we came down gently and landed without a jolt in the middle of the plateau.

We were silent and motionless for quite a time after making contact with the ground. Perhaps this behavior will seem surprising, but we felt the need to recover our wits and concentrate our energy. We were launched on an adventure a thousand times more extraordinary than that of the first terrestrial navigators and were preparing ourselves to confront the wonders of interstellar travel.

We eventually came out of our daydream. Having donned our diving suits, we carefully opened one porthole of the launch. There was no hiss of air. The pressures inside and outside were the same. The forest surrounded the clearing like the walls of a fortress. Not a sound, not a movement disturbed it. The temperature was high but bearable: about 77 degrees Fahrenheit.

We climbed out of the launch, accompanied by Hector. Professor Antelle insisted first of all on analyzing the atmosphere by a more precise method. The result was encouraging: the air had the same composition as the Earth's, in spite of some differences in the proportion of the rare gases. It was undoubtedly breathable. Yet, to make doubly sure, we tried it out first on our chimpanzee. Rid of his suit, the monkey appeared perfectly happy and in no way inconvenienced. After a few skips and jumps, he scampered off to the forest. He drew farther away and finally disappeared, ignoring our gestures and shouts.

Then, shedding our own (Continued on page 54)



## Planet of the Apes

(Continued from page 33)

space suits, we were able to talk easily. We were startled by the sound of our voices, and ventured only timidly to take a step or two from our launch.

There was no doubt that we were on a twin planet of our Earth. Life existed. The vegetable realm was, in fact, particularly lush: some of these trees must have been over a hundred and fifty feet tall. The animal kingdom soon appeared in the form of some big, black birds, hovering in the sky like vultures, and other smaller ones, rather like parakeets, that chirped shrilly.

Before taking a further step, we felt it was urgent to give the planet a name. We christened it Soror.

Deciding to make an initial reconnaissance without delay, we entered the forest, following a sort of natural path. Arthur Levain and I were armed with carbines.

We were marching in single file, calling out every now and then to Hector, but with no success, when young Levain, who was leading, stopped and motioned us to listen. A murmur, like running water, could be heard in the distance. We made our way in that direction and the sound became clearer.

It was a waterfall. On coming to it, all three of us were moved by the beauty of the site. A stream of water, clear as our mountain torrents, twisted above our heads, spread out into a sheet on a ledge of level ground, and fell at our feet from a height of several yards into a sort of lake, a natural swimming pool fringed with rocks.

**T**he sight of this water was so tempting that the same urge seized both Levain and me. The heat was now intense. We took off our clothes and got ready to dive into the lake. But Professor Antelle cautioned us to behave with a little more prudence when coming up against the system of Betelgeuse for the first time. Perhaps this liquid was not water at all and might be extremely dangerous. He went up to the edge of it, bent down, examined it, then cautiously touched it with his finger. Finally he scooped a little up in the palm of his hand, smelled it, and wetted the end of his tongue with it.

He bent down again to plunge his hand into the lake, when we saw him suddenly stiffen. He gave an exclamation of surprise and pointed toward something he had just discerned in the sand. There, beneath the scorching rays of Betelgeuse that filled the sky above our heads like an enormous red balloon, admirably outlined on a little patch of damp

sand, was the print of a human foot.

"It's a woman's foot," Arthur Levain declared.

This peremptory remark, made in a strangled voice, did not surprise me at all. It confirmed my own opinion. The slimness, the elegance, the singular beauty of the footprint had disturbed me profoundly.

We discovered other footprints, obviously left by the same creature. Levain, who had moved away from the water's edge, drew our attention to one on the dry sand. The print itself was still damp.

"She was here less than five minutes ago," the young man exclaimed.

We fell silent, scanning the forest, but without hearing a noise.

"We've got all the time in the world," said the professor. "But if a human being swam here, we can do the same without any danger."

**W**ithout further ado the learned scientist shed his clothes and plunged his skinny body into the pool. Levain and I followed suit at once. The pleasure of this cool, delicious water made us almost forget our recent discovery. Levain alone seemed harassed and lost in thought. I was about to make a taunting remark about this melancholy expression when I saw the woman just above us, perched on the ledge from which the cascade fell.

I shall never forget the impression her appearance made on me. I held my breath at the marvelous beauty of this creature from Soror. It was a woman—a young girl, rather, unless it was a goddess. She boldly asserted her femininity in the light of this monstrous sun, completely naked and without any ornament other than her hair, which hung down to her shoulders. It was plain to see that the woman, who stood motionless on the ledge like a statue on a pedestal, possessed the most perfect body that could be conceived of on Earth.

Standing upright, leaning forward, her breasts thrust out toward us, her arms raised slightly backward in the attitude of a diver taking off, she was watching us, and her surprise clearly equaled our own. After gazing at her for a long time, I was so dazzled that I could not discern any particular feature: her body as a whole hypnotized me. It was only after several minutes that I saw she belonged to the white race, that her skin was golden rather than bronzed, that she was tall, but not excessively so, and slender. Then I noticed, as though in a dream, a face of singular purity. Finally I looked at her eyes.

Then I became more alert, my attention sharpened, and I stiffened, for in her expression there was an element that was new to me. In it I discerned the outlandish, mysterious quality all of us had been expecting

in a world so distant from our own. But I was unable to analyze or even define the nature of this oddity. I only sensed an essential difference from individuals of our own species. It did not come from the color of her eyes: these were of a grayish hue not often found among us, but not unknown. The anomaly lay in an absence of expression.

When she saw that she herself was an object of curiosity—or, to be more accurate, when my eyes met hers—she seemed to receive a shock and abruptly looked away with an automatic gesture as swift as that of a frightened animal. With her head turned to one side, she now watched us out of the corner of her eye.

"As I told you, it's a woman," young Levain muttered.

He had spoken in a voice stifled with emotion, almost a whisper: but the young girl heard him and the sound of his voice produced a strange effect on her. She recoiled, but so swiftly that once again I compared her movement to the reflex of a frightened animal pausing before taking flight. She stopped, however, after taking two steps backward, the rocks then concealing most of her body. I could discern no more than the top of her head and an eye that was still trained on us.

Professor Antelle motioned us to keep quiet and started splashing about the water without appearing to pay the slightest attention to her. We adopted the same tactics, which met with complete success. Not only did she step forward once more, but she showed interest in our movements.

**A**nd all of a sudden we heard her: but the sounds she uttered only added to the impression of animality created by her attitude. She was then standing on the very edge of her perch, as though about to fling herself into the lake. I was prepared for the most barbarous language, but not for the strange sounds that came out of her throat; specifically out of her throat, for neither mouth nor tongue played any part in this sort of shrill mewing or whining, which seemed yet again to express the joyful frenzy of an animal. In our zoos, sometimes, young chimpanzees play and wrestle together giving just such little cries.

Since, despite our astonishment, we forced ourselves to go on swimming without paying attention to her, she appeared to come to a decision. She lowered herself onto the rock, took a grip on it with her hands, and started climbing down toward us. In a few moments, clinging to some imperceptible projections, she was down at the level of the lake, kneeling on a flat stone. She watched us a few seconds longer, then took to the water and swam toward us.



We realized she wanted to play and therefore continued with our frolics, which had given her such confidence, modifying our movements whenever she looked startled. Soon we were all involved in a game in which she had unconsciously laid down the rules: a strange game indeed, with a certain resemblance to the movements of seals in a pool, which consisted of alternately fleeing from us and approaching us, suddenly veering away when we were almost within reach, then drawing so close as to graze us but without ever actually coming into contact. It was childish; but what would we not have done to tame the beautiful stranger!

I decided to make an experiment. As she approached me, cleaving the water with a peculiar swimming action resembling a dog's and with her hair streaming out behind her like the tail of a comet, I looked her straight in the eye and, before she could turn her head aside, gave her a smile filled with all the friendliness and affection I could muster.

The result was surprising. She stopped swimming, stood up in the water, which reached to her waist, and raised her hands in front of her in a gesture of defense. Then she quickly turned her back on me and raced for the shore. Out of the water, she paused and half turned around, looking at me askance, as she had on the ledge, with the startled air of an animal that has just seen something alarming. Perhaps she might have regained her confidence, for the smile had frozen on my lips and I had started swimming again in an innocent manner, but a fresh incident renewed her emotion. We heard a noise in the forest and, tumbling from branch to branch, our friend Hector came into view, landed on his feet, and scampered over toward us, overjoyed at finding us again. I was amazed to see the bestial expression, compounded of fright and menace, that came over the young girl's face when she caught sight of the monkey. She drew back, hugging the rocks so closely as to melt into them, every muscle tensed, her back arched, her hands contracted like claws.

As he passed close by, without noticing her, she sprang out. Her body twanged like a bow. She seized him by the throat and closed her hands around his neck, holding the poor creature firmly between her thighs. Her attack was so swift that we did not even have time to intervene. The monkey hardly struggled. He stiffened after a few seconds and fell dead when she let go of him. This gorgeous creature—in a romantic flight of fancy I had christened her "Nova," able to compare her appearance only to that of a brilliant star—

Nova had strangled a harmless pet.

When, having recovered from our shock, we rushed toward her, it was far too late to save Hector. She turned to face us as though to defend herself, her arms again raised in front of her, her lips curled back, in a menacing attitude that brought us to a standstill. Then she uttered a last shrill cry, which could be interpreted as a shout of triumph or a bellow of rage, and fled into the forest.

The afternoon went by without incident; but toward evening, we had the impression of some change in our surroundings. The jungle gradually became alive with furtive rustlings and snappings, and we felt that invisible eyes were spying on us through the foliage. We spent an uneventful night, however, barricaded in our launch, keeping watch in turns. At dawn we experienced the same sensation, and I fancied I heard some shrill little cries like those Nova had uttered the day before. But none of the creatures with which our feverish imagination peopled the forest revealed itself.

So we decided to return to the waterfall. The entire way, we were obsessed by the unnerving impression of being followed and watched.

Diving into the lake after undressing, we started playing again as on the day before, ostensibly oblivious of all that surrounded us.

The same trick worked again. After a few minutes we noticed the girl on the rocky ledge, without having heard her approach. She was not alone. There was a man standing beside her, a man built like us, resembling men on Earth, a middle-aged man, also completely naked, whose features were so similar to those of our goddess that I assumed he was her father. He was watching us, as she was, in an attitude of bewilderment and concern.

And there were many others. We noticed them little by little, while we forced ourselves to maintain our feigned indifference. They crept furtively out of the forest and gradually formed an unbroken circle around the lake. They were all sturdy, handsome specimens of humanity, men and women with golden skin, now looking restless, evidently prey to a great excitement and uttering an occasional sharp cry.

Presently Nova—Nova whom I already regarded as an old acquaintance—slipped into the water and the others followed one by one with varying degrees of hesitation. But all drew closer and we began to chase one another in the manner of seals as we had done the previous day; only now we were surrounded by a score or more of these strange crea-

tures, splashing about and playing.

They were interested only in playing. And even then the game had to be pretty simple! With the idea of introducing into it a semblance of coherence that they could grasp, the three of us linked hands and, with the water up to our waists, shuffled around in a circle, raising and lowering our arms together as small children might have done. This seemed not to move them in the slightest. Most of them drew away from us; others gazed at us with such an obvious absence of comprehension that we were ourselves dumfounded.

It was the intensity of our dismay that gave rise to the tragedy. We were so amazed to find ourselves, three grown men, one of whom was a world celebrity, holding hands while executing a childish dance under the mocking eye of Betelgeuse, that we were unable to keep straight faces. We had undergone such restraint for the last quarter of an hour that we needed some relief. We were overcome by bursts of uncontrollable laughter.

This explosion of hilarity at last awakened a response in the onlookers, but certainly not the one we had been hoping for. A sort of tempest ruffled the lake. They started rushing off in all directions in a state of fright that in other circumstances would have struck us as laughable. After a few moments we found ourselves alone in the water. They ended up by collecting together on the bank at the edge of the pool, in a trembling mob, uttering their furious little cries and stretching their arms out toward us in rage. Their gestures were so menacing that we took fright. Levain and I made for our weapons, but the wise Antelle whispered to us not to use them and even not to brandish them so long as they did not approach us.

We hastily dressed without taking our eyes off them. But scarcely had we put on our trousers and shirts than their agitation grew into a frenzy. It appeared that the sight of men wearing clothes was unbearable to them. Some of them took to their heels; others advanced toward us, their arms outstretched, their hands clawing the air. I picked up my carbine. Paradoxically, for such obtuse people, they seemed to grasp the meaning of this gesture, turned tail, and disappeared into the trees.

We made haste to regain the launch. On our way back I had the impression that they were still there, and were following us in silence.

The attack was launched as we came within sight of the clearing with an abruptness that precluded all defense. Leaping out of the thickets, like stags, the men of Soror



were upon us before we could lift our weapons to our shoulders.

The curious thing about this aggression was that it was not exactly directed against our persons. I sensed this at once, and my intuition was soon confirmed. At no moment did I feel myself in danger of death, as Hector had been. They were not after our lives, but after our clothes and all the accessories we were carrying. In a moment we were overwhelmed. A mass of probing hands stripped us of our weapons and ammunition pouches and threw these aside, while others struggled to peel off our clothes and tear them to shreds. Once I had understood what had provoked their fury, I passively gave in, and though I received a few scratches I was not seriously injured. Antelle and Levain did the same, and presently we found ourselves stark naked in the midst of a group of men and women who, visibly reassured to see us in this state, started dancing around us, encircling us too tightly for us to be able to escape.

There were now at least a hundred of them on the edge of the clearing. Those who were farther away then fell upon our launch with a fury comparable to that which had induced them to pull our clothes to pieces.

Powerless, we witnessed the sack-ing of our launch. The door had soon yielded to their blows. They rushed inside and destroyed everything that could be destroyed, in particular the precious navigating instruments. This pillage lasted quite a time. Then, since the metal envelope alone remained intact, they came back to our group. We were jostled, pulled this way and that, and finally dragged off into the depths of the jungle.

Our situation was becoming more and more alarming. Disarmed, stripped, obliged to march barefoot at too fast a pace, we could neither exchange our impressions nor even complain. The slightest attempt at conversation provoked such menacing reactions that we had to resign ourselves to painful silence.

**T**his calvary lasted several hours. I was overwhelmed with fatigue, my feet bleeding, my body covered with scratches caused by the reeds through which these men of Soror made their way with impunity, like snakes. My companions were in no better shape than I was, and Antelle was stumbling at every step by the time we finally reached what appeared to be the end of the march. The forest was less thick at this spot and the undergrowth had given place to short grass. Here our guards released us and, without bothering about us, started playing once more.

We sank to the ground, numb with fatigue, taking advantage of this res-

pite to hold an anxious consultation.

It needed all the philosophy of our leader to prevent us from being engulfed in dark despair. Night was falling. We could no doubt attempt an escape by taking advantage of the general inattention; but then what? Even if we managed to retrace our steps, there was no chance of our being able to use the launch. It seemed wiser to remain where we were and to try to win over these disconcerting beings. Moreover, we were famished.

**I**t was Nova who came to our rescue. Did she do so because she had finally understood that we were hungry? Could she really *understand* anything? Or was it because she was famished herself? In any case, she went up to a big tree, encircled the trunk with her thighs, climbed up into the branches, and disappeared in the foliage. A few moments later we saw a shower of fruit resembling bananas fall to the ground. Then she climbed down again picked up one or two of these and began eating them without taking her eyes off us. After a moment's hesitation we grew bold enough to imitate her. The fruit was quite good and we were able to eat our fill while she watched us without protesting. After drinking some water from a stream, we decided to spend the night there.

Each of us chose a corner in the grass in which to build a nest similar to the others in the colony. Nova showed some interest in our work, even to the point of approaching me and helping me break a branch.

I took some time to finish my bed, still closely watched by Nova, who had drawn some distance away. When I lay down, she stood motionless for a moment or two, as though unable to make up her mind; then she took a few hesitant steps toward me. I did not move a muscle for fear of frightening her away. She lay down beside me. I still did not move. She eventually snuggled up against me, and there was nothing to distinguish us from the other couples occupying the nests of this strange tribe. But although this girl was marvelously beautiful, I still did not regard her as a woman. Her manner was that of a pet animal seeking the warmth of its master. I appreciated the warmth of her body, without its ever crossing my mind to desire her. I ended up by falling asleep in this outlandish position, half-dead from fatigue, pressed against this beautiful and unbelievably mindless creature.

The sky was turning pale through the trees when I awoke. Nova was still asleep. Suddenly she stirred and raised her head. A gleam of fear came into her eyes and I felt her muscles contract. Since I did not

move, however, her face gradually relaxed. I regarded this as a personal victory and smiled at her again.

This time she stayed where she was. Encouraged, I smiled more broadly. She trembled again but eventually calmed down. I became bold enough to put my hand on her shoulder. A shiver ran down her spine, but she still did not move. I was intoxicated by this success, and was even more so when I thought she was trying to imitate me.

It was true. She was *trying* to smile. I could sense her painful efforts to contract the muscles of her delicate face. She made several attempts, managing only to produce a sort of painful grimace. There was something tremendously moving about this excessive labor on the part of a human being to achieve an everyday expression, and with such a pitiful result. I increased the pressure of my hand on her shoulder. I brought my face closer to hers. She replied to this gesture by rubbing her nose against mine, then by licking my cheek.

I was bewildered and hesitant. To be on the safe side, I imitated her in my clumsy fashion. She appeared satisfied. We had gone thus far in our attempts at communication, when a terrifying hullabaloo made us start up in alarm.

I found myself with my two companions, whom I had selfishly forgotten, standing bolt upright in the gathering dawn. Nova had sprung to her feet even more quickly and showed signs of the deepest terror. I understood immediately that this din was a nasty surprise not only for us but for all the inhabitants of the forest, for all of them, abandoning their lairs, had started running hither and thither in panic.

**T**his din, suddenly breaking the silence of the forest, was enough to make one's blood run cold, but I felt besides that the men of the jungle knew what was in the offing and that their fear was caused by the approach of a specific danger. It was a strange cacophony, a mixture of rattling sounds like a roll of drums, other more discordant noises resembling a clashing of pots and pans, and also shouts. The shouts made the most impression on us, for though they were in no language familiar to us, they were incontestably *human*.

The early morning light revealed a strange scene in the forest: men, women and children running in all directions, passing and bumping into one another, some of them even climbing into the trees as though to seek refuge there. Soon, however, some of the older ones stopped to prick up their ears and listen. The noise was approaching rather slowly. It came from the region where the



forest was thickest and seemed to emanate from a fairly long, unbroken line. I compared it to the noise made by beaters in one of our big shoots.

The elders of the tribe appeared to make a decision. They uttered a series of yelps, which were no doubt signals or orders, then rushed off in the opposite direction from the noise. The rest of them followed. Nova, too, was about to take to her heels, but she paused suddenly and turned around toward us—above all toward me, I felt. She uttered a plaintive whimper, which I assumed to be an invitation to follow her, then took one leap and disappeared.

**T**he din grew louder and I fancied I heard the undergrowth snapping as though beneath some heavy footsteps. Caution prompted me to stay where I was and to face the newcomers who, it became clearer every second, were uttering these human cries. But I was infected by the terror of Nova and the others. I did not pause to think; I did not even wait to consult my companions; I plunged into the undergrowth and took to my heels in the young girl's footsteps.

I ran as fast as I could for several hundred yards without being able to catch up with her, and then noticed that Levain alone had followed me, Professor Antelle's age precluding such rapid flight. Levain was panting beside me. We looked at each other, ashamed, and I was about to suggest going back or at least waiting for our leader, when some other noises made us jump in alarm.

As to these, I could not be mistaken. They were gunshots echoing through the jungle: one, two, three, then several more, at irregular intervals, sometimes one at a time, at other times two consecutive shots, strangely reminiscent of a double-barreled gun. They were firing in front of us, on the path taken by the fugitives. While we paused, the line from which the first din had come, the line of beaters, drew closer, very close to us, sowing panic in us once again. I do not know why the shooting seemed to me less frightening, more familiar than this hellish din. Instinctively I resumed my headlong flight, taking care to keep under cover and to make as little noise as possible. My companion followed after me.

We thus reached the region in which the shots had been heard. I slowed down and crept forward, almost on all fours. Still followed by Levain, I clambered up a sort of hillock and came to a halt on the summit, panting for breath. There was nothing in front of me but a few trees and a curtain of scrub. I advanced cautiously, my head on a level with the ground. There I lay for a moment or two as though

floored by a blow, overpowered by a spectacle completely beyond my poor human comprehension.

There were several incongruous features in the scene that unfolded before my eyes, some of them horrifying, but my attention was at first drawn exclusively to a figure standing motionless thirty paces away and peering in my direction.

I almost shouted aloud in amazement. For it was an ape, a large-sized gorilla. It was in vain that I told myself I was losing my reason: I could entertain not the slightest doubt as to his species. But an encounter with a gorilla on the planet Soror was not the essential outlandishness of the situation. This for me lay in the fact that the ape was correctly dressed, like a man of our world, and above all that he wore his clothes in such an easy manner. This *natural* aspect was what struck me first of all. No sooner had I seen the animal than I realized that he was not in any way *disguised*. The state in which I saw him was normal, as normal to him as nakedness was to Nova and her companions.

**A**ll of a sudden he stiffened. He had noticed, as I had, a faint sound in the bushes a little to my right. He turned around and at the same time raised his weapon, ready to put it to his shoulder. From my position I could see the furrow left in the undergrowth by one of the fugitives who was running blindly straight ahead. I almost shouted out to warn him, so obvious was the ape's intention. But I had neither the time nor the strength; the man was already racing like a mountain goat across the open ground. The shot rang out while he was still halfway across the field of fire. He gave a leap in the air, collapsed in a heap on the ground, and lay motionless.

I then noticed with terror that the cleared space in the forest was littered with human bodies. It was no longer possible to delude myself as to the meaning of this scene. I caught sight of another gorilla like the first one, a hundred paces off. I was witnessing a drive—alas, I was taking part in it!—a fantastic drive in which the guns, posted at regular intervals, were apes and the game consisted of men, men like me, men and women whose naked, punctured bodies lay bleeding on the ground.

I turned aside from this unbearable horror. Lying beside me, Arthur Levain was numb with terror. The danger was increasing at every second. The beaters were approaching from behind. The din they made was now deafening. We were at bay like wild beasts, like those wretched creatures whom I could still see fitting all around us. Many men were still

rushing along the track, to meet there a ghastly death.

Not all, however. Forcing myself to recover a little composure, from the top of my hillock I studied the behavior of the fugitives. Some of them, completely panic-stricken, rushed along snapping the undergrowth in the flight, thus alerting the apes, who easily shot them down. But others gave evidence of more cunning, like old boars who have been hunted several times and have learned a number of tricks. These crept forward on all fours, paused for a moment on the edge of the clearing, studied the nearest hunter through the leaves, and waited for the moment when his attention was drawn in another direction. Then, in one bound and at full speed, they crossed the deadly alley and disappeared into the forest.

**T**herein perhaps lay a chance of safety. I motioned to Levain to follow me and slipped forward soundlessly.

Poor Arthur had gone completely out of his mind. He got up without taking any precaution, started running off at random, and came out into the alley in full view of the hunter's field of fire. He went no farther. The shot seemed to snap him in two and he collapsed, adding his body to all those that already lay there. As he did so, I sprang out and raced across the alley. I saw the hunter raise his weapon, but I was already under cover by the time he could fire.

I had got the best of him. I felt a strange joy, which was balm to my humiliation. I went on running at full speed, leaving the carnage behind me, until I could no longer hear the noise of the beaters. I was saved.

Saved! I was underestimating the maliciousness of the apes on the planet Soror. Hardly had I gone a hundred yards when I stumbled head-first into a wide-meshed net stretched above the ground and equipped with large pockets, in one of which I was now entangled. I was not the only captive. The net ran across a large section of the forest, and a crowd of fugitives who had escaped being shot had let themselves be caught as I had.

A wild rage overcame me when I felt myself thus imprisoned. I struggled in an utterly insane manner, with the result that the net became even more tightly wound around me. I was eventually so closely bound that I could not move at all and was at the mercy of the apes I heard approaching.

The hunters, all of them gorillas, led the advance. I noticed that they had abandoned their weapons, which gave me a little hope. Behind them came the loaders and beaters, among whom there was a more or less equal



number of gorillas and chimpanzees. The hunters seemed to be the masters and their manner was that of aristocrats. They did not appear to be ill-disposed, and chatted together happily in an articulate language, and each moment their faces expressed human sentiments, not a trace of which I had found in Nova. I now understood her emotion at the sight of our chimpanzee. There existed a fierce hatred between the two species. To realize this one only had to see the attitude of the captive men at the apes' approach. They struggled frenziedly, ground their teeth, foamed at the mouth and gnawed furiously at the strings of the net.

Without paying attention to this hubbub, the hunter gorillas—I caught myself calling them the nobility—gave some orders to their servants. Some big carts, rather low-lying and completely caged in, were lined up on a track on the other side of the net. Into these we were bundled.

**W**hen we were all loaded inside, one of the servants checked the lock on each cage and went to report to his master. The latter gave a signal, and a roar of engines echoed through the forest. The carts started to move forward, each one towed by a sort of tractor driven by an ape.

This first ride was so short that I scarcely had time to recover my senses. After driving for a quarter of an hour along a rough track, the convoy came to a halt on a stretch of open ground in front of a house built of stone. I realized at once it was a meeting place for the hunt. The she-apes had come here to wait for their lords and masters, who presently arrived in private cars along the same track we had taken. The lady gorillas sat around in armchairs chatting together in the shade of some big trees.

As soon as the vehicles were parked, the females drew nearer, curious to see the results of the hunt and especially the game that had been shot.

The exhibition of the game was soon completed: three rows of bodies carefully laid out, men and women alternately, the latter displaying a line of golden breasts to the monstrous sphere blazing in the sky. Looking away in horror, I noticed a chimpanzee photographer making a pictorial record of these trophies for simian posterity. The session lasted more than a quarter of an hour, the gorillas having themselves photographed first individually, in good poses, some of them placing one foot on one of their victims with a triumphant air; then as a compact group, each of them putting an arm around his neighbor's shoulder. The she-gorillas were then photographed in graceful postures.

Then the gorillas made their way

in small groups toward the house.

We men, however, had not been forgotten. I had no idea of the fate the monkeys had in store for us, but it was clearly their policy to look after us. Before disappearing into the inn, one of the nobles gave some instructions to a gorilla who appeared to be a team leader. The latter came over to us, assembled his subordinates, and presently the servants brought us a sort of porridge in basins and some buckets of water to drink.

When the meal was over, the team leader and his assistants set about rearranging the convoy by transferring some of the captives from one cage to another. They seemed to be making some sort of selection. Finding myself placed in a group of extremely handsome men and women, I was surprised and overjoyed to see Nova among my new companions. I felt as though I had recovered a being that was dear to me and, losing my head once more, I rushed over to her, opening my arms wide. It was utter madness; my gesture terrified her. I felt downcast to see her shrink away at my approach, her hands extended like claws.

Yet when I checked myself she calmed down fairly quickly. She lay down in a corner of the cage and I followed her example with a sigh.

Outside, the apes were getting ready for the convoy to move off. A tarpaulin was stretched over our cage and fastened halfway down the sides, letting in some light. Orders were issued; the engines started. I found myself traveling at high speed toward an unknown destination.

**I** was distracted from my thoughts by a figure creeping toward me. It was Nova. Around me, all the prisoners were lying in groups on the floor boards. After a moment's hesitation she snuggled up against me. I felt reassured by her mere presence and eventually fell asleep beside her.

I succeeded in sleeping till daybreak. I opened my eyes to the light. Nova was already awake. She was watching me with her eternally bewildered gaze.

Our vehicle slowed down and I saw we were entering a town. The captives had risen and were squatting beside the bars, glancing out beneath the tarpaulin at a spectacle that seemed to revive their emotions of the previous day. I followed their example; I pressed my face against the bars and for the first time viewed a civilized city on the planet Soror.

We were driving down a fairly broad street flanked with pavements. I anxiously examined the passers-by: they were apes. I saw a tradesman, a sort of grocer, who had just raised the shutters of his shop, turn around curiously to watch us go by; he was

an ape. I tried to see the passengers and drivers of the motor cars flashing past us: they were dressed in the same way as people at home, and they were apes.

My hope of discovering a civilized human race became chimerical, and I spent the last part of the drive in gloomy despair. Our vehicle slowed down even more. I then noticed that the convoy had been split up during the night, for it consisted of only two vehicles, the others evidently having taken another direction. After passing through an entrance gate we came to a halt in a courtyard. The courtyard was enclosed by buildings several stories high with identical rows of windows. The general effect was that of a hospital, and this impression was confirmed by the arrival of some new figures who came forward to meet our guards. They were all dressed in white smocks and little caps; they were apes.

**W**e were taken out of the cages one by one, stuffed into big sacks, and carried inside the building. I put up no resistance and let myself be hauled off by two gorillas dressed in white. Eventually I was dumped down on the ground; then, after the sack had been opened, I was thrown into another cage, its floor covered with straw. One of the gorillas locked the door from the outside.

The room in which I found myself contained a large number of cages like mine, lined up in two rows and facing a long passage. Most of them were already occupied, some of them by my companions of the roundup who had just been brought here, others by men and women who must have been captured some time earlier. The latter could be recognized by their attitude of resignation. I also noticed that the newcomers had been placed, as I had, in individual cells, whereas the old hands were generally locked up in pairs.

The two gorillas came back carrying another sack. My friend Nova emerged from it, and again I had the consolation of seeing her put into the cage directly across from mine. She protested this operation in her own way, trying to scratch and bite. When the door was closed on her, she rushed to the bars, tried to break them down, grinding her teeth and whimpering enough to rend one's heart. After a few minutes of this behavior she caught sight of me, stood stock-still, and extended her neck slightly, like a surprised animal. I gave her a cautious half-smile and a little wave, which to my intense delight she clumsily tried to imitate.

I was distracted by the return of the two gorillas in white jackets. The unloading had been completed, for they carried no further bundle,



but they pushed in front of them a handcart laden with food and water that they dished out to the captives.

It was soon my turn. While one of the gorillas mounted guard, the other entered my cage and placed in front of me a bowl containing some mash, a little fruit, and a bucket. I had decided to do all I could to establish contact with these apes, who seemed to be the only rational and civilized beings on the planet. The one who brought my food did not look unpleasant. "How do you do?" I said. "I am a man from Earth. I've had a long journey."

The meaning was unimportant. I only needed to speak in order to reveal my true nature to him. I had certainly achieved my aim. He stood breathless and gaping, and so did his companion. They both started talking together in an undertone, but the result was not what I had hoped for. After peering at me suspiciously, the gorilla briskly drew back and stepped out of the cage, which he closed behind him with even greater care than before. The two apes then looked at each other for a moment and began roaring with laughter.

Nevertheless I had succeeded in drawing their attention to me. As they went off, they turned around several times to look back at me. I saw one of them take a notebook from his pocket and scribble something in it. There was nothing else I could do but eat and wait for a more favorable opportunity to reveal myself.

**O**n the following morning I had been awake for an hour when the door of the corridor was pushed open and I saw a new figure enter the room accompanied by the two warders. It was a young female chimpanzee, and I realized from the way the gorillas kept in the background that she held an important post.

I watched her carefully as she approached. She, too, was dressed in a white smock, cut more elegantly than those worn by the gorillas. What struck me most about her was her expression, which was remarkably alert and intelligent.

She came to a halt in front of my cage and began to scrutinize me, at the same time producing a notebook.

"Good day to you, madame," I said.

A look of intense surprise came over the she-ape's face.

"Madame or mademoiselle," I went on, feeling encouraged, "I am sorry to present myself to you in these conditions and in this state of undress . . ."

I was again spouting whatever nonsense came into my head, selecting only words in keeping with my polite tone. When I finished speaking, punctuating my speech with the

gentlest of smiles, her surprise changed to obvious stupefaction.

I was breathless with hope, feeling more and more certain that she was beginning to recognize my noble quality. When she spoke haughtily to one of the gorillas, I was insane enough to hope that my cage was about to be thrown open, with a million apologies. Alas, that was not what happened! The warder fumbled in his pocket and took out a small white object that he handed to his superior. She herself put it in my hand with a charming smile. It was a lump of sugar.

A lump of sugar! I almost flung it back in her face. Just in time I remembered my good resolutions and forced myself to remain calm. I took the sugar, bowed, and munched it with as intelligent an air as possible.

**S**uch was my first encounter with Zira. Zira was the she-ape's name, as I presently learned. She was the head of the department to which I had been brought. In spite of my disappointment, her manner gave me some hope and I had a feeling that I would manage to enter into communication with her.

The second day went by like the first. The apes did not bother about us except to bring us food. I was more and more puzzled about this strange establishment; then, on the following day, we were given a series of tests.

I had studied biology at one time, and Pavlov's work held no secrets for me. Here they were, applying to men the very experiments he had carried out on dogs. One of them was carrying a bell; the other trundled before him a machine that resembled an electric generator.

They began with Nova's neighbor, a big, strapping fellow with a particularly dull expression who had come up to the edge of his cage and was clutching the bars as we all did nowadays at our jailers' approach. One of the gorillas started swinging the bell, which gave out a solemn ring, while the other connected the generator to the bars of the cage. When the bell had sounded for some time, the second operator started turning the handle of the machine. The man leaped backward, uttering a cry.

They went through this business several times on the same subject, who was coaxed by the offer of some fruit to come back and cling to the bars. The object, I knew, was to make him leap backward at the sound of the bell and before the electric shock.

I waited for them, eager to show them the difference between instinct and intelligence. At the first sound of the bell I let go of the bars and retreated to the middle of the cage. At the same time I looked at them and

gave a mocking smile. The gorillas wrinkled their brows.

They had decided nevertheless to do the experiment over a second time, when their attention was diverted by the arrival of some new visitors.

The figures were coming down the passage: Zira, the female chimpanzee, and two other apes, one of whom was plainly in a high position.

He was an orangutan, the first I had seen on the planet Soror. He was shorter than the gorillas and slightly round-shouldered. His arms were relatively longer so that he often touched the ground with his hands as he walked, which the other apes did only rarely. His head adorned with long, coarse hair and sunk between his shoulders, his face frozen in an expression of pedantic meditation, he looked like a venerable and solemn old pontiff. He was also dressed quite differently from the others, in a long, black frock coat with a red star in the buttonhole and black-and-white-striped trousers, both somewhat dusty.

He was followed by a little female chimpanzee carrying a heavy brief case. Her attitude suggested that she was his secretary.

They made straight for my cage. I welcomed the great authority with my most affable smile and addressed him in ringing tones:

"My dear orangutan, how happy I am to find myself at last in the presence of a creature who exhales wisdom and intelligence!"

**T**he old dear had given a start at the sound of my voice. He scratched his ear for some time and peered suspiciously into my cage as though scenting some trickery. Zira then addressed him, notebook in hand, reading out the particulars she had jotted down about me. She did her best, but it was plain to see that the orangutan refused to be convinced. He uttered two or three sentences in a pompous manner, shrugged his shoulders several times, shook his head, then put his hands behind his back and started pacing up and down the corridor, passing and repassing my cage and darting glances in my direction that were far from kindly. Then he stopped in front of me and started dictating to his secretary.

I was beginning to have enough of his blindness and resolved to give him fresh proof of my capacities. Stretching my arms out toward him, I spoke up: "Mi Zaius."

I had noticed that all the underlings who addressed him began with these two words. Zaius, I subsequently learned, was the pontiff's name, "mi" an honorific title.

The monkeys were flabbergasted. Zira seemed extremely perturbed when I pointed a finger at her and



added "Zira," a name I had also remembered and that could only be hers. As for Zaius, he was completely flustered and started pacing again.

Having finally recovered his composure, he gave orders for me to be subjected in his presence to the tests I had been given the previous day. I acquitted myself well. He made me repeat this operation a dozen times.

In the end I had an inspiration. At the moment the gorilla began to ring the bell, I unfastened the clip that connected the electric wire to my cage and threw the cable outside. Then I held on to the bars and stayed where I was.

I was very proud of this move, which was bound to be irrefutable proof of wisdom to any rational creature. In fact, Zira's attitude showed me that she, at least, was extremely impressed. She looked at me with singular intensity and her white muzzle turned pink—which, as I learned later, is a sign of emotion in chimpanzees. But there was nothing I could do to convince the orangutan. He was a methodical scientist. He gave further instructions to the gorillas and I was given another test.

I knew this one, too. I had seen it practiced on dogs in certain laboratories. The idea was to bewilder the subject, to provoke a mental confusion by combining two reactions. One of the gorillas emitted a series of blasts on his whistle as the promise of a reward, while the other rang the bell that signaled a punishment.

I took care not to fall into the trap: but, clearly pricking up my ears at the sound of the whistle, then at that of the bell, I sat down halfway between the two, my chin resting in my hand, in the traditional attitude of the thinker. Zaius took a handkerchief out of his pocket and mopped his brow.

He was sweating, but nothing could shake his stupid skepticism. He dictated some more notes to his secretary, gave some detailed instructions to Zira, and finally went off after darting another churlish glance at me.

The day after the orangutan's first inspection an avalanche of new tests descended upon us, the first at meal-times. I, needless to say, found the solutions to the problems immediately. But above all, by listening carefully, I managed to retain a few simple words of the simian language and to understand their meaning. I practiced pronouncing them whenever Zira went past my cage, and she looked more and more astounded. I had reached this stage when Zaius' new inspection took place.

Once again he was escorted by his secretary, but accompanied also by another orangutan as solemn as he and wearing the same decoration, and

who chatted with him on an equal footing. They started a long discussion in front of my cage with Zira, who had meanwhile joined them. The she-ape spoke at great length and with fervor. I knew she was trying to plead my cause, pointing out the exceptional keenness of my intelligence.

I was once again required to undergo the tests at which I had proved so adroit. The last one consisted in opening a box that was closed by nine different systems (bolt, pin, key, hook, etc.).

Zira herself handed me the box, and I saw from her air of entreaty that she was fervently hoping to see me perform brilliantly, as though her own reputation was involved in the test. I did my best to satisfy her and operated the nine mechanisms in a flash, without a moment's hesitation. Nor did I confine myself to that. I took out the fruit that the box contained and gallantly offered it to her. She accepted with a blush. Then I revealed my major achievement and pronounced the few words I had mastered, pointing out the objects to which they corresponded.

This time I felt it was impossible that they could entertain further doubt as to my true condition. Alas, I did not yet know the blindness of orangutans! They listened to me as though I were a parrot. I felt they were only prepared to attribute my talents to a keen sense of mimicry.

His colleague having eventually gone off, Zaius embarked on some other exercises. He did the rounds of the hall, examining each of the captives in turn and giving fresh instructions to Zira, who noted them down. His movements seemed to indicate numerous changes in the occupancy of the cages. It did not take me long to discover his plan and to understand the purpose of the evident comparisons he was making between certain characteristics of such-and-such man and those of such-and-such woman.

That was it! These demons wanted to use us to study in captivity the amorous practices of men, the methods of approach of the male and the female, the manner in which they copulate, in order to compare them perhaps with earlier observations of the same men in the wild state. Doubtless they also intended to experiment with sexual selectivity!

As soon as I understood their plan, I felt more humiliated than I had ever been in my life and swore to die rather than lend myself to these degrading schemes. Yet my shame was substantially reduced, I must admit, when I saw the woman whom science had assigned as my mate. It was Nova.

I must now admit that I adapted

myself with remarkable ease to the conditions of life in my cage. From the material point of view, I was living in perfect felicity: during the day, the apes attended to my every need; at night I shared my litter with one of the loveliest girls in the cosmos. I even grew so accustomed to this situation that for more than a month, I made no attempt to put an end to it.

One day, however, after several weeks, I felt a sort of nausea. Was it the lump of sugar that Zira came to give me that suddenly acquired a bitter taste? The fact is that I was shamed by my cowardly resignation. I forthwith made up my mind to behave like a civilized man.

While stroking Zira's arm by way of expressing my thanks, I snatched away her notebook and fountain pen. I braved her gentle remonstrances, sat down on the straw, and started a drawing of Nova. I am a fairly good draftsman and, being inspired by the model, managed to turn out a reasonable likeness, which I gave to Zira.

This promptly reawakened her emotion and uncertainty about me. Her muzzle became red and she peered at me closely, trembling slightly. Since she made no further move, I again calmly seized her notebook, which this time she yielded to me without protest, and drew the geometrical figure illustrating the theorem of Pythagoras.

The effect it had on Zira was extraordinary. Her muzzle went purple and she gave a sharp exclamation. She did not recover her composure until her two assistants came up, intrigued by her attitude. Then she reacted in a way that I found extremely odd—after darting a furtive glance at me, she carefully hid the drawing I had just completed. She spoke to the gorillas, who then left the hall, and I realized she had sent them off on some pretext or other. Then she handed me the notebook and fountain pen again.

Now it was she who appeared eager to establish contact. I gave thanks to Pythagoras and embarked once more on my geometry. On one page of the notebook I drew to the best of my ability the three conic sections with their axes and centers: an ellipse, a parabola and an hyperbola.

She snatched the notebook out of my hands and in turn drew another cone, intersected at a different angle, and pointed out the hyperbola with her long finger. I felt such intense emotion that tears came to my eyes and I clasped her hands.

She broke free with a sudden jerk and rushed from the hall. When she came back she handed me a large sheet of paper fixed to a drawing board. I thought for a second or



two and made up my mind to deliver a decisive blow. In one corner of the sheet I sketched the system of Betelgeuse, as we had discovered it on our arrival, with the giant central body and its four planets. I marked Soror down in its exact position together with its own little satellite; I indicated it to Zira, then pointed my forefinger at her repeatedly. She signaled to me that she had understood.

Then in another corner of the sheet I drew our dear old solar system with its principal planets. I indicated the Earth and pointed my finger at my own chest. This time Zira was slower to understand. I drew a dotted line between Earth and Soror and marked in our vessel, on a different scale, on the trajectory. This made her see the light. She was about to draw closer to me, but at that moment Zaius appeared.

A look of terror came into the she-ape's eyes. She quickly crumpled up the paper, put her notebook back in her pocket and, before the orangutan had reached us, placed her forefinger on her mouth with an air of entreaty. She was counseling me not to show myself in my true colors to Zaius.

**F**rom then on, thanks to Zira, my knowledge of the simian world and language increased rapidly. She contrived to see me alone almost every day on the pretext of some test and undertook my education, instructing me in the language and at the same time learning mine with a rapidity that amazed me. In less than two months we were capable of holding a conversation on a variety of subjects.

As soon as we could converse together, Zira and I, I directed the conversation toward the principal object of my curiosity: Were the apes the only rational beings, the kings of creation on the planet?

"What do you think?" she said. "Ape is of course the only rational creature, the only one possessing a mind as well as a body. The most materialistic of our scientists recognize the supernatural essence of the simian mind."

"Well, then, Zira, what are men?"

"It was only a century ago," she said dogmatically, "that we made some remarkable progress in the science of origins. It used to be thought that species were immutable, created with their present characteristics by an all-powerful God. But a line of great thinkers, all of them chimpanzees, have modified our ideas on this subject completely. Today we know that all species are mutable and probably have a common source."

"So that apes probably descend from men?"

"Some of us thought so; but it is not exactly that. Apes and men are two separate branches that have

evolved from a point in common but in different directions, the former gradually developing to the stage of rational thought, the others stagnating in their animal state. If you're interested in these questions, I'll introduce you someday to Cornelius."

"Cornelius?"

"My fiancé," said Zira, blushing. "A very great scientist."

I should have liked to pursue this conversation, but we were interrupted by the evening meal. Zira bade me good night and went off.

The intellectual effort I had made to assimilate the simian theories of evolution left me worn out. I was happy when I saw Nova creep over to me in the dark and in her usual fashion beg for the half-human, half-animal caresses for which we had gradually worked out the code: a singular code composed of reciprocal concessions to the manners of the civilized world and to the customs of this outlandish human race that populated the planet Soror.

The next day was a red-letter day for me. Yielding to my entreaties, Zira had agreed to take me out of the Institute for Advanced Biological Study—the name of the establishment—and show me around the town.

I felt my heart thumping at the thought of being in the open air again. My enthusiasm was slightly curbed when I saw she was going to keep me on a leash. The gorillas took me out of the cage, banged the door shut in Nova's face, and put around my neck a leather collar to which a strong chain was fixed. Zira took the other end and led me off.

We left the building. The porter of the institute, a big gorilla clad in a uniform, let us out, observing me with curiosity after having saluted Zira. On the sidewalk I staggered slightly, giddy from the exercise and dazzled by the glare of Betelgeuse after more than three months' captivity. Zira quickly led me off toward her car, motioned me into the back seat, sat down herself behind the steering wheel, and drove me slowly along the streets.

**W**hen she had driven around sufficiently to give me a general picture of the town, Zira stopped her car in front of a tall gate through which I could see banks of flowers.

"The park," she said. "We can go for a little stroll."

I assured her that I should be delighted to stretch my legs.

"And besides," she went on, "we'll be left in peace here. There are not many people about and it's time for us to have a serious conversation. I don't think you realize the danger you are in here on Soror."

We were strolling through the park. The paths were almost de-

serted and we had passed no more than one or two courting couples.

"Now listen," said Zira. "Your launch"—I had told her in detail how we had arrived on the planet—"your launch has been discovered; at least what's left of it after being pillaged. It has aroused the curiosity of our researchers. They realize it was not manufactured here."

"Do you build similar machines?"

"Yes, but not so perfected. From what you've told me, we're a long way behind you."

"What about our spaceship, which has been in orbit around Soror for the last few months?"

"I haven't heard anything about it. It must have escaped the notice of our astronomers . . . but do stop interrupting me. Some of our scientists have put forward the theory that the machine comes from another planet and that it was inhabited. They are unable to go a step further and imagine intelligent beings in human form."

"But you must tell them, Zira!" I cried. "Why are you hiding me away? Why not reveal the truth?"

**Z**ira stopped short and put her hand on my arm.

"Why? It's purely in your own interests that I'm doing this. You know Zaius?"

"Of course. Well?"

"He's as stubborn as a mule and as stupid as a man!" Zira burst out. "He has decreed once and for all that your talents are due to a highly developed animal instinct, and nothing will make him change his opinion. The unfortunate thing is, he has already prepared a long thesis on you in which he asserts that you are a *tame man*, in other words, a man who has been trained to perform certain tricks without understanding them, probably during a former period of captivity."

"The stupid beast!"

"Certainly. The only snag is, he represents official science and he's powerful. He is one of the highest authorities in the institute, and all my reports have to go through him. I'm almost certain he would accuse me of scientific heresy if I tried to reveal the truth in your case, as you suggest. I should be dismissed. That's unimportant, but do you realize what might then happen to you?"

"What fate could be worse than living in a cage?"

"Be thankful for small mercies! Do you know how I've had to scheme and plot to prevent him from having you transferred to the encephalic section? Nothing could restrain him if you insisted on claiming to be a rational creature."

"What's the encephalic section?" I asked in alarm.



"That's where we perform certain extremely tricky operations on the brain: grafting, observation and alteration of the nervous centers, partial and even total ablation."

"And you carry out these experiments on men!"

"Of course. Man's brain, like the rest of his anatomy, is the one that bears the closest resemblance to ours. It's a lucky chance that nature has put at our disposal an animal on whom we can study our own bodies. . . . At this very moment, we are undertaking an extremely important series of experiments. Do you know now why I've insisted on keeping our secret?"

"Am I then condemned to spend the rest of my life in a cage?"

"Not if the plan I have in mind succeeds. But you must not drop your mask until the time is ripe. This is what I suggest: in a month from now we're holding our annual biological conference. It's an important event. A large public is admitted to it and the representatives of all the leading papers attend. This will be your chance. You're going to be introduced by Zaius, who, as I've told you, is preparing a long report on you and your famous instinct. The best thing then would be for you to speak up yourself to explain your case. This would cause such a sensation that Zaius wouldn't be able to stop you. It will be up to you to explain yourself clearly to the assembly and convince the crowd and the journalists, as you have already convinced me.

"Once the gorillas are forced to bow before public opinion, they'll soon make those idiot orangutans see reason. Many of them, after all, are not so stupid as Zaius; and there are also, among the scientists, a few chimpanzees whom the Academy has been obliged to admit because of their sensational discoveries. One of these is Cornelius, my fiancé. He's the only one to whom I have spoken about you. He has promised to do all he can for you. Naturally, he wants to see you beforehand so as to check the incredible account I have given him. That's partly why I've brought you here today. I've arranged to meet him."

**C**ornelius was waiting for us near a bank of giant ferns. He was a fine-looking chimpanzee, older than Zira certainly, but extremely young for a learned academician.

"Dr. Cornelius of the Academy," Zira said. "Ulysse Mérou, an inhabitant of Earth."

"I am delighted to make your acquaintance," I said.

And I held out my hand. He shied away as though a snake had just raised its head in front of him.

"So it's true?" he muttered, looking at Zira in utter bewilderment.

He pulled himself together. He was a man of science. After a moment's hesitation he shook my hand.

"How do you do?"

"How do you do?" I replied.

"And you really come from . . . ?"

"From Earth, a planet of the Sun."

He had evidently given little credit till now to Zira's confidences, preferring to believe in some hoax. He started firing questions at me.

Cornelius was particularly interested, of course, in the emergence of *Homo sapiens* on Earth and made me tell him again and again everything I knew about this subject. Then he pondered over it for some time. He told me that my revelations undoubtedly constituted a document of capital importance to science and particularly to him, as he was then engaged on some extremely arduous research into the simian phenomenon.

We then spoke about my present situation and about Zaius, whose stupidity and blindness he fully appreciated. He approved of Zira's plan. He would himself prepare the ground by alluding to the mystery of my case to some of his colleagues.

**W**hen he left us he held out his hand without a moment's hesitation, after first making sure the path was deserted. Then he kissed his fiancée and went off.

"Zira," I murmured in her ear when we were back in the car, "I shall owe you my liberty and my life."

"I did it for science," she said, blushing. "You are a unique case that must be preserved at all costs."

My heart overflowed with gratitude. I yielded to the soulfulness of her expression, managing to overlook her physical appearance. I put my hand on her long, hairy paw. A shiver went down her spine and I discerned in her eyes a gleam of affection. We were both deeply moved and remained silent all the way back.

Zira took me for outings in the park fairly often. Sometimes we would meet Cornelius there, and together we would prepare the speech I was to give before the congress. The date was fast approaching, which made me quite nervous. Zira assured me that all would be well.

One day her fiancé was absent. Zira suggested going to the zoo adjoining the park. I welcomed a visit to the zoo. At first I felt no surprise. The animals bore many similarities to those on Earth. My amazement began with the section devoted to man. The first cage at which we stopped contained at least fifty individuals, men, women, and children, exhibited there to the great glee of the ape spectators. They displayed a feverish and immoderate activity, leaping

about, jostling one another and making an exhibition of themselves.

The other cages provided the same degrading spectacle. I was about to let myself be led off by Zira, with a heavy heart, when suddenly, and with a great effort, I stifled a cry of surprise. There in front of me, among the herd, I saw Professor Antelle.

My joy at knowing he was alive and seeing him again was such that tears came into my eyes; then I shuddered at the condition to which this learned man had been reduced. In a low voice I told Zira the reason for my tears. I should have liked to go up and speak to him, but she dissuaded me vigorously.

"After the congress," she told me, "when you have been recognized and accepted as a rational being, we will see about him."

The long-awaited date finally arrived, but it was only on the third day of the congress that they came to fetch me, the first two having been devoted to theoretical debates. Zaius had already read a long report about me, presenting me as a man with sharp instincts but totally devoid of the capacity for thought.

The gorillas led me off to a caged-in truck and I found myself among several other human subjects, likewise considered worthy of being introduced to the learned assembly because of some peculiarity or other. We arrived outside an enormous building surmounted by a cupola. Our guards led us into a room furnished with cages, adjoining the assembly hall. There we awaited the scientists' pleasure. Every now and then a majestic gorilla, clothed in a sort of black uniform, pushed open the door and shouted out a number. Then the guards would put one of the men on a lead and drag him off.

**I** eventually found myself alone in the room with the guards, feverishly going over the main passages of my speech. The black gorilla appeared for the last time and called out my number. I rose to my feet quickly, took from the hands of a flabbergasted ape the lead he was about to fasten to my collar, and adjusted it myself. Then, flanked by two bodyguards, I entered the assembly hall with a firm tread. As soon as I had crossed the threshold I halted, dazed and abashed.

I was in a gigantic amphitheater of which every row of seats both around and above me was swarming with apes. There were thousands of them. Their numbers overwhelmed me.

The guards pushed me toward the center of a circle, resembling a circus arena, where a platform had been erected. I slowly glanced all around me. The tiers of apes rose as high as the ceiling, to a height that seemed



to me incredible. The seats nearest me were occupied by the members of the congress, all of them learned scientists and almost all orangutans. I made out, however, among their group a small number of gorillas and chimpanzees.

Beyond the authorities and behind a balustrade were several rows reserved for the junior colleagues of the scientists. A gallery at this level was for the journalists and photographers. Finally, still higher up and behind another barrier, surged the crowd, which was evidently in a state of great excitement.

My guards made me mount the platform where an impressive-looking gorilla was sitting. Zira had told me that the congress was presided over not by a scientist but by an organizer. To the left of this important figure was his secretary, a chimpanzee. To her right was a seat occupied in turn by each of the scientists who was to read a paper or introduce a subject. Zaius had just taken this seat.

The president gorilla rang his bell, obtained silence and announced he was giving the illustrious Zaius leave to speak for the purpose of introducing the man about whom he had already addressed the assembly. The orangutan then rose to his feet and began on his discourse.

**H**e summarized the conclusions of his report and described the tricks he was going to make me perform. He ended by declaring that, like certain birds, I was also capable of repeating a few words, and he hoped to be able to make me do this in front of the assembly. Then he turned to me, picked up the box with its multiple fastenings, and handed it to me.

My hour had come. I raised my hand, then, tugging gently on the lead held by a guard, I approached the microphone and addressed the president. "Illustrious President," I said in my best simian language, "it is with the greatest pleasure that I shall open this box; it is with the utmost willingness, too, that I shall perform all the tricks in the program. Before beginning this task, however, which is rather an easy one for me, I beg permission to make an announcement that, I swear, will astonish this learned assembly."

The president gaped at me. As for Zaius, he was in a rage.

"Mr. President," he yelled, "I protest . . ."

But he stopped short, overwhelmed by the ridiculousness of a discussion with a man. I took advantage of this to go on with my speech.

"Mr. President, I insist with the greatest respect, but also with the utmost firmness, that this favor be granted me. Once I have explained

myself, I swear on my honor that I shall bow to the demands of the very illustrious Zaius."

After a moment's silence, a hurricane shook the assembly. A raging storm swept the rows of seats, transforming all the apes into a hysterical mass. The tumult lasted a good five minutes, during which the president, who had recovered some of his composure, never took his eyes off me. He eventually came to a decision and rang his bell.

"Yes, well, I think that, in view of the exceptional nature of the case, the scientific congress over which I have the honor to preside is entitled to listen to your announcement."

**A** fresh wave of applause greeted this decision. I did not ask for more. I stood in the middle of the platform and started the following speech.

"Illustrious President, noble gorillas, learned orangutans, wise chimpanzees.

"O apes! I, a man, beg leave to address you.

"Listen to me, O apes! For I can talk, and not, I assure you, like a mechanical toy or a parrot. I can think, I can talk, I can understand what you say just as well as what I myself say. Presently, if Your Lordships deign to question me, I shall deem it an honor to reply to your questions to the best of my ability.

"But first I should like to reveal this astounding truth to you: not only am I a rational creature, not only does a mind paradoxically inhabit this human body, but I come from a distant planet, from Earth, that Earth on which, by a whim of nature that has still to be explained, it is men who are the repositories of wisdom and reason. Whereas the apes—and since discovering your world I am deeply upset about this—whereas the apes have remained in a state of savagery, it is the men who have evolved. It is man who settled my planet and changed its face, man, in fact, who established a civilization so refined that in many respects, O apes, it resembles your own."

At this point I quoted several examples of our finest achievements. I described our cities, our industries, our means of communication, our governments, our sciences, our arts.

I then embarked on the account of my own adventures. I described the means by which I had reached the world of Betelgeuse and landed on the planet Soror, how I had been captured and locked up in a cage, how I tried to enter into contact with Zaius, and how, doubtless as a result of my lack of ingenuity, all my efforts had been in vain. Lastly I mentioned Zira's perspicacity, her valuable assistance and that of Dr. Cornelius. I concluded with the following words:

"This is what I wanted to tell you, O apes! It is up to you now to decide whether I should be treated like an animal and end my days in a cage after such astonishing adventures. It remains for me to say that I voyaged here without any hostile intent, inspired solely by the spirit of discovery. Since I have come to know you I find you extraordinarily congenial and I admire you with all my heart. This, then, is the plan I suggest to the great minds of this planet. Let us establish contacts with the Earth! Let us march forward hand in hand, apes and men together, and no power, no secret of the cosmos, will be able to resist us!"

I stopped speaking, exhausted, in total silence. I turned automatically to the president's table, picked up the glass of water standing there, and drained it in a gulp. The whole hall spontaneously gave vent to an enthusiastic outburst that no pen could ever describe. I knew I had won over my audience. I felt unsteady on my feet. I looked anxiously around me. Zaius had just risen from his seat in fury and was standing up and I saw the vacant chair and collapsed into it. A fresh burst of applause, which I barely heard before fainting, greeted this gesture.

**I**t was some time before I recovered consciousness, so intense had been the strain of this session. I found myself lying on a bed in a room. Zira and Cornelius were attending me, while some gorillas in uniform held back a crowd of journalists and curious onlookers.

"Magnificent!" Zira whispered in my ear. "You've won."

"Ulysse," said Cornelius, "together we're going to do great things."

He told me that the Grand Council of Soror had just held a special meeting and had decided on my immediate release.

"This is where you'll be living. I hope this apartment will suit you. It is quite close to mine, in a wing of the institute reserved for the senior personnel."

I looked around in bewilderment, thinking I was dreaming. The room was provided with every comfort; it was the beginning of a new epoch.

"Do you feel well enough to attend a little party?" Zira asked. "We've invited a few friends to celebrate this great day."

I replied that nothing would give me greater pleasure, but I was no longer willing to appear stark naked. I then noticed I was wearing some pajamas, Cornelius having lent me his. But though I was able, in a pinch, to wear a chimpanzee's pajamas, I should have looked grotesque in one of his suits.

"We'll fit you out completely to-



morrow and you'll have a decent suit for this evening. Here's the tailor."

A little chimpanzee came in and greeted me with great courtesy. I admired his speed and dexterity. In less than two hours he had succeeded in making me an acceptable suit.

We were just on our way to join Cornelius' friends when we were detained by the arrival of Zira's aide. He had come to tell Zira that things were not going too well in her department. Nova was making a great racket. Her mood had infected all the other captives.

"I'll go and see," said Zira. "Wait for me here."

I looked at her with a pleading expression. She hesitated, then shrugged her shoulders.

"Come along if you like," she said. "After all, you're free and perhaps you'll be able to calm them down better than I can."

**T**ogether we entered the room with the cages. The captives calmed down as soon as they saw me, and the uproar was followed by a strange silence.

Trembling with emotion, I walked over to Nova's cage, my own cage. I went right up to her, I smiled at her, I spoke to her. For a moment I had the impression that she was following my train of thought and was about to answer me. This was impossible, but my mere presence had calmed her down like the others. She accepted a lump of sugar that I handed to her and ate it while I made my way out of the room sadly.

Of that party, which took place in a smart night club—Cornelius had decided to launch me forthwith into simian society, since in any case I was now destined to live in it—I have only a confused memory. The confusion was caused by the alcohol that I started swilling as soon as I arrived, and to which my system was no longer accustomed.

It was getting late and I was already fairly tipsy when the thought of Professor Antelle crossed my mind. I felt black remorse. Here I was making merry and drinking with a lot of apes while my companion was shivering on some straw in a cage.

Zira asked me why I was looking so sad. I told her. Cornelius then informed me that he had made inquiries about the professor and that he was in good health. There would be no opposition now to his being released. I insisted that I could not wait a minute longer before bringing him this good news.

Day was breaking when we reached the cage in which the luckless scientist lived like an animal in the midst of 50 men and women. These were still asleep, huddled together in couples or in groups of four or five.

They opened their eyes as soon as we switched on the lights.

It did not take me long to find my companion. He was stretched out on the ground like the others, huddled against the body of a girl who looked quite young.

"Professor," I said, "Master, it is I, Ulysse Mérou. We are saved. I came here to tell you . . ."

I stopped in sheer amazement. At the sound of my voice he had reacted in the same way as the men of the planet Soror. He had suddenly lowered his head and shrunk away.

I was in despair, and the apes seemed extremely puzzled. I asked them to move away and leave me alone with him, to which they readily agreed. When they had disappeared, I spoke to him again:

"Master," I implored him, "I understand your caution. I know the danger to which men from Earth are exposed on this planet. But we are alone, I give you my word of honor. Our ordeals are over. You must believe me, your companion, your disciple, your friend, Ulysse Mérou."

He shrank back still further, darting furtive glances in my direction. Then he half opened his mouth.

There in front of me, without moving his lips, while my heart went numb with horror, Professor Antelle gave vent to a high, animal howl.

**I** woke early after a restless night. I turned over three or four times in my bed and rubbed my eyes before fully recovering consciousness, still unaccustomed to the civilized life I had been leading for a month.

I eventually came to my senses. I was living in one of the most comfortable apartments in the institute. The apes had proved extremely generous. I had a bedroom, a bathroom, clothes, books, a television set. I read all the papers, I was free, I could go out, walk about the streets, attend any entertainment.

Cornelius was now the scientific head of the institute. Zaius had been dismissed—he had been given another post, however, and a new decoration—and Zira's fiancé installed in his place. Zira had become the new director's assistant.

I dressed quickly, left my room, and walked over to the wing of the institute where I had once been a prisoner. With Cornelius' permission I had embarked there on a systematic study of the men.

The captives are well acquainted with me now and recognize my authority. Despite my patience and efforts, I have been unsuccessful in making them achieve any higher level of performance than that of well-trained animals. A secret intuition tells me, however, that their potentialities are enormous.

I should like to teach them to talk. This is my great ambition. I have not succeeded, I admit. What encourages me is the new persistence with which their eyes try to meet mine, eyes which for some time have seemed to be gradually changing in expression. I fancy I can see in them a spark of curiosity breaking through the animal mindlessness.

I move slowly around the room, stopping in front of each of the captives. I speak to them; I speak to them gently, patiently. I finally come to the cage in which Nova is at present vegetating in solitary sadness. Sadness—this at least is what I, with my Earthman's conceit, wish to believe. Zira has not given her another mate, and I am grateful for that.

I say her name, then my own, pointing my finger alternately at her and myself. She imitates the gesture. But I see her expression change suddenly and she bares her teeth as I hear a chuckle behind me.

It is Zira, who laughs not unkindly at my efforts; her presence always rouses the girl to anger. Zira is accompanied by Cornelius. He looks rather excited.

"Would you like to go on a little trip with me, Ulysse?"

"A trip?"

"Quite a long one; almost to the antipodes. Some archeologists have discovered some extremely curious ruins out there, if the reports reaching us are to be believed. The Academy is sending me out there on an official mission and I think your presence would be most useful."

I do not see how I can help him, but I welcome this opportunity to see further aspects of Soror.

**W**e set off a week later. Zira came with us, but she was to return after a few days to look after the institute in Cornelius' absence.

A special plane had been put at our disposal, a jet machine rather like our first models of this type of aircraft, but very comfortable and equipped with a small, soundproof cabin in which we could talk easily.

This morning, for the first time, Cornelius revealed certain aspects of his research into the origin of the apes to me, and it did not take me long to understand why my existence as a civilized man was so important to him. He began by reverting to a subject we had discussed together a thousand times.

"You did say, didn't you, Ulysse, that on your Earth the apes are utter animals? That man has risen to a degree of civilization equal to our own and which, in certain respects, even . . . ?"

"Which, in many respects, even surpasses it—yes, that's undeniable. One of the best proofs is that I am



here. It seems to me you have only reached the stage . . ."

"I know, I know," he broke in wearily. "We've discussed all that. We are now penetrating the secrets you discovered centuries ago. . . . And it's not only your statements that disturb me," he went on, nervously pacing up and down the little cabin. "For some time I've been harassed by a feeling—a feeling supported by certain concrete indications—that the key to these secrets, even here on our planet, has been held by other brains in the distant past."

"Other brains," he repeated pensively, "that maybe were not . . ."

**H**e broke off abruptly. He looked miserable, as though tortured by the perception of a truth his mind was unwilling to admit.

"You did say, didn't you, that your apes possess a highly developed sense of mimicry?"

"They mimic us in everything we do, I mean in every act that does not demand a rational process of thought. So much so that with us the verb *ape* is synonymous with *imitate*."

"Zira," Cornelius murmured, as though depressed, "is it not this sense of *aping* that characterizes us as well?"

Without giving Zira time to protest, he went on excitedly, "It begins in childhood. All our education is based on imitation."

"Imitation of what, of whom?"

He had reverted to his reticent manner as though regretting he had said too much.

"I can't answer that question yet," he finally said. "I need certain evidence. Perhaps we shall find it in the ruins of the buried city."

Cornelius has not told me anything more and I feel he is reluctant to do so, but what I already detect in his theories gave me a strange elation.

The archeologists have laid bare a whole city, buried in the sands of a desert, a city of which nothing remains, alas, but ruins. But these ruins, I am convinced, hold an extraordinary secret.

This morning Cornelius has gone ahead of me to the spot where the workmen have laid bare a house with thick walls made of a sort of reinforced concrete, which seems better preserved than the rest. The inside is filled with sand and debris that they have undertaken to sift.

Here he is emerging from the hole, and it does not take me long to realize he has made an exceptional discovery. He is holding in his hand a small object that I cannot make out. He puts it down on the ground with infinite care. He looks in my direction and beckons me over. As I approach I am struck by the change in his expression. Never have I seen him in

such a state. He can barely talk.

I see the object lying in the sand at the same moment that he mutters in a strangled voice:

"A doll, Ulysse, a doll!"

It is a doll, an ordinary china doll. By a miracle it has been preserved almost intact, with vestiges of hair and eyes that still reveal a few chips of color. It is such a familiar sight to me that at first I cannot understand Cornelius' emotion. It takes me several seconds to realize . . . then I am overwhelmed. It is a *human* doll representing a little girl like one on Earth.

And this is not all. The doll *talks*. It talks like a doll at home. "Papa," the little human doll repeats, and this, above all, is what makes my learned companion's muzzle turn red; this is what affects me so deeply that I have to make an effort not to cry.

Cornelius remains wrapped in thought and silent for the rest of the day. I have the impression he is now sorry I have witnessed his discovery.

On the very next day I am given proof that he regrets having brought me here with him. After a night's reflection he informs me, avoiding my eyes, that he has decided to send me back to the institute.

**S**uppose, I argue, that men once reigned as masters on this planet. Suppose that a human civilization similar to our civilization on Earth, flourished on Soror more than ten thousand years ago.

Suppose, then, the decadence in the distant past of this civilization on the planet Soror so similar to our own. Is it possible that creatures devoid of intelligence could have perpetuated it by a simple process of imitation? The answer to this question seems risky, but after thinking it over, a host of arguments occur to me that gradually lessen its aspect of unreasonableness. That perfected machines may one day succeed us is, I remember, an extremely commonplace notion on Earth. It prevails not only among poets and romantics, but in all classes of society. Perhaps it is because it is so widespread, born spontaneously in popular imagination, that it irritates scientific minds. Perhaps it is also for this very reason that it contains a germ of truth. Only a germ: Machines will always be machines; the most perfected robot, always a robot. But what of living creatures possessing a certain degree of intelligence, like apes? And apes, *precisely*, are endowed with a keen sense of imitation. . . .

I spent the month following my return in bed, suffering from an infection I had probably picked up on the site and which assumed the form of violent bouts of fever similar to malaria. I was not in pain, but my

brain was on fire. There was no longer any doubt in my mind that a human era had preceded the simian age on the planet Soror.

It is now two months since I visited my former companions in captivity, my fellow humans. Today I feel better. I have no more fever. It is time for me to pay my visit.

Here I am again in the room with the cages. A strange emotion makes me pause on the threshold. I now see these creatures in a new light. It is with anguish that I wonder if they will recognize me after my long absence. Well, they do recognize me. All their eyes are fixed on me, as they always used to be, and even with a sort of deference. Am I dreaming or do I really discern a new look in them? A gleam in which I fancy I see an awakened curiosity, shades of ancestral memories trying to emerge from bestiality, and perhaps . . . a glimmer of hope.

**I** now approach my former cage with studied negligence. I look out of the corner of my eye, but I do not see Nova's arms stretched through the bars, I do not hear the cries of joy with which she always used to greet me. A strange misgiving assails me. I dash forward. The cage is empty. At this moment, Zira turns up to carry out her tour of inspection. She sees me in front of the empty cage and realizes why I am so upset. She looks flustered. I point at the cell with my finger.

"Where's Nova?"

She beckons to me and leads me aside, out of earshot of the warder.

"She's pregnant," the she-ape announces. "I noticed two months ago, on my return from the trip. The gorillas had not seen a thing. I phoned Cornelius, who had a long conversation with the administrator. They agreed that it would be better to keep it secret. No one knows about it except them and me. She's in an isolated cage and I'm looking after her personally."

"When is her confinement due?"

"In three or four months."

"Zira, I want to see her!"

"I knew you would ask me that. I've already discussed it with Cornelius and I think he will agree to it. He's waiting for you in his office."

My anguish increases as I follow her down the corridors of the institute. I can imagine the attitude of the learned apes and their fear of seeing a new race arise.

Cornelius greets me in a friendly manner, but a permanent awkwardness has been created between us. I ask him about the voyage and the end of his stay among the ruins.

"Fascinating. I have a mass of irrefutable proof."

His clever little eyes are sparkling.



He cannot prevent himself from exulting over his success.

"Skeletons," he says. "Not one, but a whole collection, discovered in such order and circumstances as to make it incontestably clear that we had come upon a graveyard."

"What about these skeletons?"

"They are not simian."

"I see."

We look each other straight in the eye. With diminished enthusiasm, he slowly continues, "I can't hide it from you; you've already guessed. They are the skeletons of men."

Cornelius finally makes up his mind to discuss the matter frankly.

"I am now certain," he admits, "that there once existed on our planet a race of human beings endowed with a mind comparable to yours and to that of the men who populate your Earth, a race that has degenerated and reverted to an animal state. . . . Furthermore, since my return here I have been given additional evidence to support this hypothesis."

"Additional evidence?"

"Yes. It was discovered by the director of the encephalic section, a young chimpanzee with a great future. He may even be a genius. . . . I'll show you the results some day, if I can. I'm sure you'll be amazed by them."

I bring the conversation around to Nova and her condition. He makes no comment and tries to console me.

"Don't worry. It will be all right, I hope. It will probably be a child like any other human child on Soror."

"I certainly hope not. I'm convinced it will talk!"

"Don't be too hopeful," Cornelius says solemnly, "for her sake and for your own."

He adds in a friendlier tone, "If he talked, I don't know if I should be able to go on protecting you as I do. Don't you realize that the Grand Council is on tenterhooks and that I've been given the strictest orders to keep this birth a secret? If the authorities discovered you knew all about it, I should be dismissed, so would Zira, and you'd find yourself alone among . . ."

"Among enemies?"

He turns his head away. That is exactly what I thought: I am regarded as a danger to the simian race. Nevertheless, I am happy to feel I have an ally in Cornelius, if not a friend. Zira must have pleaded my cause more fervently than she gave me to understand, and he will do nothing that might displease her. He gives me permission to go and see Nova—in secret, of course.

Zira leads me to an isolated little building to which she alone holds the key. The room into which she shows me is not very big. It contains

only three cages, two of which are empty. Nova occupies the third. She has heard us coming and her instinct has warned her of my presence, for she has risen to her feet and stretched out her arms even before seeing me. I clasp her hands and rub my face against hers. Zira hands me the key of the cage and goes to keep watch outside in the corridor. I rush into the cage and fling my arms around Nova.

I lie down on the straw by her side. I stroke the incipient fruit of our outlandish passion. It seems to me nonetheless that her present condition has given her a personality and dignity she did not have before. She trembles as I pass my fingers over her stomach. Her eyes have certainly acquired a new intensity. Suddenly, with a great effort, she stammers out the syllables of my name, which I have taught her to articulate. She has not forgotten her lessons. I am overwhelmed with joy.

Zira comes back; it is time to say good-bye. I leave with her. Sensing my feeling of loss, she accompanies me back to my apartment where I burst into tears like a child.

Thanks to Zira, I was able to see Nova fairly often during this period, without the authorities knowing, and the weeks went by in impatient expectancy of the birth.

One day Cornelius decided to take me to the encephalic section, the wonders of which he had described. He introduced me to the head of the department, the young chimpanzee called Helius.

Helius showed me into a room similar to those in the institute, equipped with two rows of cages. On entering, I was struck by a pharmaceutical smell reminiscent of chloroform.

**W**e walked past a series of cages occupied by men and women of all ages. At the door of each of these was a panel specifying the operation performed, with a wealth of technical details.

With my stomach heaving at this succession of horrors accompanied by comments from a grinning chimpanzee, I saw men partially or totally paralyzed, others artificially deprived of sight. I saw a young mother whose maternal instinct—once highly developed, so Helius assured me—had completely disappeared after interference with the cervical cortex. She kept pushing away her young child whenever it attempted to approach her. This was too much for me. I thought of Nova, of her impending motherhood, and clenched my fists in rage.

Luckily, Helius showed me into another room, which gave me time to recover my composure.

"Here," he said with a mysterious air, "we indulge in more delicate research. It's no longer the scalpel that is brought to bear, it's a far more subtle medium—electrical stimulation of certain spots of the brain. We have brought off some remarkable experiments."

He again led me up to some cages where nurses were in the process of operating. The subjects here were stretched out on a sort of table. An incision in the skull laid bare a certain area of the brain. One ape was applying the electrodes while another was attending to the anesthetic.

Depending on the point at which the electrodes were applied, the subject made various movements, usually of only one side of his body.

"Now look what happens when the duration of the contact is increased," said Helius. "Here is an experiment carried to its utmost."

**T**he creature on which this treatment was imposed was a lovely young girl who in certain respects reminded me of Nova. Several nurses, male and female apes in white smocks, were buzzing about her naked body. The electrodes were fixed by a she-ape to the young girl's face. The girl at once started moving the fingers of her left hand. The she-ape kept the current on instead of switching it off after a few seconds, as in the other cases. Then the movements of the fingers became frenzied and gradually the wrist started twitching. A moment later and it was the forearm, then the upper arm and shoulder. The twitching presently spread, on the one hand to the hip, the thigh, and the leg all the way down to the toes, on the other to the muscles of the face. After ten minutes the whole of the wretched girl's left side was shaken by convulsive spasms, a dreadful sight, growing more and more rapid and violent.

"Stop it!"

I had not been able to stifle the cry that rose to my lips. All the apes gave a start and turned toward me with reproving glances. Cornelius, who had just come in, gave me a friendly tap on the shoulder.

"I admit these experiments are rather bloodcurdling when you're not used to them. But you must bear in mind that thanks to them, our medicine and surgery have made enormous progress in the last quarter of a century."

Cornelius dragged me off toward a smaller room.

"Here," he told me in a solemn tone, "you're going to see a marvelous achievement, which is absolutely new. Only three of us ever go into this room—Helius, who is personally in charge of this research and who has made such a success of it; my-



self; and a carefully selected assistant. He's a gorilla. He's dumb. He's devoted to me body and soul and, what is more, he's an utter brute. So you see the importance I attach to this work. I'm willing to show it to you because I know you'll be discreet. It's in your own interests."

I entered the room and at first could see nothing to justify this air of mystery. The equipment was the same as in the previous room: generators, transformers, electrodes. There were only two subjects, a man and a woman, lying strapped down on two parallel divans. As soon as we arrived they started observing us with a strange intensity.

**T**he gorilla assistant welcomed us with an inarticulate grunt.

"Ali is well. They are quite calm. We can begin a test right away."

The gorilla anesthetized the two patients, who presently fell asleep, and started up various machines. Helius went up to the man, carefully unrolled the bandage that covered his skull, and, aiming at a certain spot, applied the electrodes.

The man began to talk. His voice echoed around the room with an abruptness that made me start, rising above the buzz of the generator. It was not an hallucination on my part. He was expressing himself in simian language, with the voice of a man from Earth.

I was about to utter an exclamation, but they motioned me to keep quiet and listen. The man's words were incoherent and devoid of originality. He must have been captive in the institute for a long time and kept repeating snatches of sentences he had heard spoken by the nurses or the scientists. Cornelius presently put a stop to the experiment.

"It's amazing," I stammered.

"You haven't seen anything yet," said Helius. "He talks like a parrot or a gramophone. But I've done much better with her."

"A thousand times better," said Cornelius, who showed the same excitement as his colleague. "Just listen. This woman also talks, as you'll soon hear. But she doesn't merely repeat words she has heard in captivity. Helius has succeeded in awakening in her the memory of the species. Under electrical impulse her recollections go back to an extremely distant line of ancestors: atavistic memories reviving a past several thousands of years old."

I was so amazed by this extravagant claim that for a moment I really believed the learned Cornelius had gone mad. But the other chimpanzee was already handling his electrodes and applying them to the woman's brain. The latter remained inert for some time, just like the man, then

she heaved a deep sigh and started talking. She likewise expressed herself in simian language in a rather low but extremely distinct voice that changed from time to time, as though it belonged to a number of different persons. Every sentence she uttered has remained engraved on my mind.

"For some time," said the voice in a slightly anxious tone, "these apes, all these apes, have been ceaselessly multiplying, although it looked as though their species was bound to die out at a certain period. If this goes on, they will almost outnumber us . . . and that's not all. They are becoming arrogant. They look us straight in the eye. We have been wrong to tame them and to grant those whom we use as servants a certain amount of liberty. They are the most insolent of all. One day I was jostled in the street by a chimpanzee. As I raised my hand, he looked at me so menacingly that I did not dare strike him."

The woman paused, heaved several anguished sighs, then went on:

"It's happened! One of them has succeeded in talking. He's a chimpanzee."

The woman fell silent again and resumed in a different voice, a somewhat pedantic man's voice:

"What is happening could have been foreseen. A cerebral laziness has taken hold of us. No more books; even detective novels have now become too great an intellectual effort. No more games; at the most, a hand or two of cards. Even the childish motion picture does not tempt us any more. Meanwhile the apes are meditating in silence. Their brain is developing in solitary reflection . . . and they are talking."

**A**fter a long silence a woman's voice continued, in anguish: "I was too frightened. I could not go on living like this. I preferred to hand the place over to my gorilla. I left my own house."

"I have taken refuge in a camp with other women who are in the same plight. There are some men here as well; most of them have no more courage than we have. It's a wretched life we lead outside the town. We feel ashamed and scarcely speak to one another. During the first few days I played a few games of patience. I haven't the energy any more." The woman continued in a more and more anguished tone:

"They now hold the whole town. There are only a few hundred of us left in this redoubt and our situation is precarious. We form the last human nucleus in the vicinity of the city, but the apes will not tolerate us at liberty so close to them. In the other camps some of the men have fled far off, into the jungle; the others

have surrendered in order to get something to relieve their hunger. Here we have stayed put, mainly from laziness. We sleep; we are incapable of organizing ourselves for resistance. . . .

"This is what I feared. I can hear a barbaric din, something like a parody of a military band. . . . Help! It's they, it's the apes! They are surrounding us. They are led by enormous gorillas. They have taken our bugles, our drums and uniforms, our weapons, too, of course. . . . No, they haven't any weapons. Oh, what bitter humiliation, the final insult! Their army is upon us and all they are carrying are whips!"

**S**ome of the results obtained by Helius have leaked out to the public. In the town they are saying that a scientist has succeeded in making men talk. Furthermore, the discoveries on the buried city are being discussed in the press, and although their significance is usually distorted, one or two journalists are close to suspecting the truth. As a result there is an uneasy atmosphere abroad, which is manifested by the increased wariness of the authorities about me.

Today I experienced a deep emotion. The long-awaited event has taken place. First I was overwhelmed with joy but, on second thought, trembled at the new danger it represents. Nova has given birth to a boy. I have a child, I have a son on the planet Soror. I have seen him, but only with the greatest difficulty. The security measures have become increasingly strict and I was unable to visit Nova until the week after the birth. It was Zira who brought me the news. She at least will remain a true friend, whatever else may happen. She found me so perturbed that she took the responsibility of arranging a meeting for me with my new family. It was a few days after the event that she took me to see them, late at night, for the newborn child is under close observation during the day.

I have seen him. He's a splendid baby. He looks like me, but he also has Nova's beauty. The latter gave a menacing growl when I pushed open the door. She, too, feels uneasy. She rose up, her nails extended like claws, but calmed down when she recognized me. I am sure this birth has raised her a few degrees higher on the human scale. The fleeting gleam in her eye is now a permanent glow. I kiss my son with passion, without allowing myself to think of the clouds gathering over our heads.

I put him down again on the straw. I am reassured as to his nature. He does not talk yet—but he will one day. Now he has started crying, crying like a human child, not whining. Nova



hears the difference and observes him with awe.

It does not escape Zira's attention, either. She draws closer, her furry ears prick up, and she watches the baby for a long time, in silence, with a solemn expression. Then she signals me that it is time to go. It would be dangerous for all of us if I were to be found here. She promises to look after my son and I know she will keep her word. But I am also aware that she is suspected of being attached to me, and the possibility of her dismissal makes me tremble.

**C**ornelius comes looking for me one day. There is something serious he wants to discuss. I follow him into his office, where Zira is waiting. Her eyes are red, as though she has been weeping. They seem to have bad news for me.

"My son?"

"He's well," Zira says abruptly.

"Too well," Cornelius mutters.

I know he is a splendid baby, but it is a month since I have seen him. The security measures have been tightened still more.

"Much too well," Cornelius repeats. "He smiles. He cries like a baby ape . . . and he has begun to talk."

I am delighted. Zira is annoyed by my doting-father manner.

"But don't you realize this is a disaster? The others will never leave him in liberty."

"I know from a reliable source that some extremely important decisions are going to be taken about him by the Grand Council, which is to meet in two weeks' time," Cornelius remarks quietly.

"Important decisions?"

"Very important. There's no question of doing away with him . . . not for the moment, at least; but he'll be taken away from his mother."

I am dumbfounded. But Cornelius has not yet finished.

"It's not only the child that is menaced."

I remain speechless and look at Zira, who hangs her head.

"The orangutans hate you because you are the living proof of their scientific aberrations, and the gorillas consider you too dangerous to be allowed at liberty much longer. They are frightened you might found a new race on this planet."

"To tell the truth," Cornelius abruptly concludes, "I'm very much afraid that within the next two weeks the Council might decide to eliminate you . . . or at least remove part of your brain on the pretext of some experiment. As for Nova, I believe it will be decided to put her out of the way as well."

Zira puts her hand on my shoulder. "Cornelius is quite right not to have concealed anything from you. But

what he has not told you is that we will not abandon you. We have decided to save all three of you, and we'll be helped by a small group of brave chimpanzees."

"It's true," Cornelius says. "I've promised Zira to help you escape, and so I shall, even if it means losing my job. I shall thus feel I have not evaded my duty as an ape. For if a danger threatens us, it will be averted by your return to Earth. . . . You once said, I believe, that your spacecraft was still intact and could take you home?"

"Without the slightest doubt. It contains enough fuel, oxygen and supplies to take us to the edge of the universe. But how am I to reach it?"

"It's still orbiting around our planet. An astronomer friend of mine has tracked it down and knows every detail of its trajectory. As to the means of reaching it? Now listen. In exactly ten days' time we are going to launch an artificial satellite, manned by humans, of course, on whom we want to test the effect of certain rays. . . . No, don't interrupt! The number of passengers will be limited to three: one man, one woman and one child. This is our plan: you three will take the place of the passengers. That shouldn't be too difficult. As I said, I've already got the necessary accomplices. The others won't even notice the trick that's played on them."

It ought to be possible. But it's not the difficulties and dangers I am thinking about at the moment. I cannot shake off the melancholy that assailed me just now at the thought of leaving the planet Soror, Zira and my fellows, yes, my fellow humans. Toward them I feel I am something of a deserter. Yet above all I must save my son and Nova.

**W**e leave one another after making arrangements to meet on the following day. Zira goes out first. Remaining behind with Cornelius for a moment, I take the opportunity of thanking him with all my heart.

"Zira's the one you ought to thank," he says. "It's to her you will owe your life. On my own, I don't know if I should have gone to so much trouble or taken so many risks. But she would never forgive me for being a party to murder."

He closes the door after me as I leave the room. I am alone with Zira and we take a few steps along the corridor. I stop and take her in my arms. She is as upset as I am. I see a tear coursing down her muzzle while we stand locked in a tight embrace.

We are about to kiss like lovers when she gives an instinctive start and thrusts me away violently.

While I stand there speechless, she

hides her head in her long, hairy paws and this hideous she-ape bursts into tears and announces in despair:

"Oh, darling, it's impossible. It's a shame, but I can't, I can't. You are really too unattractive!"

We have brought it off. I am once again traveling through space aboard the cosmic craft, rushing like a comet in the direction of the solar system.

I am not alone. With me are Nova and Sirius, the fruit of our interplanetary passion. Also on board are a couple of chickens and rabbits, and various seeds that the scientists put in the satellite to study the effects of radiation on organisms of very diverse kinds.

We have been traveling for more than a year and a half of our own time. We have reached almost the speed of light, crossed an immense space in a very short time, and have already embarked on the deceleration period that is to last another year.

**W**hat intense emotion I felt this morning when I noticed the sun beginning to assume perceptible dimension! It appears to us now like a billiard ball and is tinged with yellow. I point it out to Nova and Sirius.

Glued to the portholes, we watch Earth approaching. I no longer need the telescope to distinguish the continents. We are in orbit. We can now see Australia, America and France.

We embark in the vessel's second launch. All the calculations have been made with a view to landing in my native country: not far from Paris.

I have taken over the controls and am navigating very accurately. After 700 years' absence I manage to land at Orly—it has not changed very much—at the end of the airfield fairly far from the airport buildings. They must have noticed me, so all I need to do is wait.

A vehicle approaches. It is a truck and a fairly old-fashioned model: four wheels and a combustion engine. I should have thought such vehicles had been relegated to museums long ago.

The truck stops 50 yards from us. I pick my son up in my arms and leave the launch. Nova follows us after a moment's hesitation.

The driver gets out of the vehicle. He opens the door for the passenger to alight. He is an officer; a senior officer, as I now see from his badges of rank. He jumps down. He takes a few steps toward us, and at last appears in full view. Nova utters a scream, snatches my son from me and rushes back with him to the launch, while I remain rooted to the spot, unable to move a muscle or utter a sound.

He is a gorilla.

★ THE END