

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org). If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: The Yillian Way

Author: Keith Laumer

Release date: June 9, 2007 [eBook #21782]  
Most recently updated: January 2, 2021

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Robert Cicconetti, LN Yaddanapudi and the  
Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <https://www.pgdp.net>

\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE YILLIAN WAY \*\*\*

# THE YILLIAN WAY

## By KEITH LAUMER

[8]

**The ceremonious protocol of the Yills was impressive, colorful—and, in the long run, deadly!**

### I

Jame Retief, vice-consul and third secretary in the Diplomatic Corps, followed the senior members of the terrestrial mission across the tarmac and into the gloom of the reception building. The gray-skinned Yill guide who had met the arriving embassy at the foot of the ramp hurried away. The councillor, two first secretaries and the senior attaches gathered around the ambassador, their ornate uniforms bright in the vast dun-colored room.

Ten minutes passed. Retief strolled across to the nearest door and looked through the glass panel at the room beyond. Several dozen Yill lounged in deep couches, sipping lavender drinks from slender glass tubes. Black-tunicked servants moved about inconspicuously, offering trays. A party of brightly-dressed Yill moved toward the entrance doors. One of the party, a tall male, made to step before another, who raised a hand languidly, fist clenched. The first Yill stepped back and placed his hands on top of his head. Both Yill were smiling and chatting as they passed through the doors.

Retief turned away to rejoin the Terrestrial delegation waiting beside a mound of crates made of rough greenish wood stacked on the bare concrete floor.

As Retief came up, Ambassador Spradley glanced at his finger watch and spoke to the man beside him. [9]

"Ben, are you quite certain our arrival time was made clear?"

Second Secretary Magnan nodded emphatically. "I stressed the point, Mr. Ambassador. I communicated with Mr. T'Cai-Cai just before the lighter broke orbit, and I specifically——"

"I hope you didn't appear truculent, Mr. Magnan," the ambassador said sharply.

"No indeed, Mr. Ambassador. I merely——"

"You're sure there's no VIP room here?" The ambassador glanced around the cavernous room. "Curious that not even chairs have been provided."

"If you'd care to sit on one of these crates——"

"Certainly not." The ambassador looked at his watch again and cleared his throat.

"I may as well make use of these few moments to outline our approach for the more junior members of the staff; it's vital that the entire mission work in harmony in the presentation of the image. We Terrestrials are a kindly, peace-loving race." The ambassador smiled in a kindly, peace-loving way.

"We seek only a reasonable division of spheres of influence with the Yill." He spread his hands, looking reasonable.

"We are a people of high culture, ethical, sincere." The smile was replaced abruptly by pursed lips.

"We'll start by asking for the entire Sirenian System, and settle for half. We'll establish a foothold on all the choicer worlds. And, with shrewd handling, in a century we'll be in a position to assert a wider claim."

The ambassador glanced around. "If there are no questions——"

---

Retief stepped forward. "It's my understanding, Mr. Ambassador, that we hold the prior claim to the Sirenian System. Did I understand your Excellency to say that we're ready to concede half of it to the Yill without a struggle?"

Ambassador Spradley looked up at Retief, blinking. The younger man loomed over him. Beside him, Magnan cleared his throat in the silence.

"Vice-Consul Retief merely means——"

"I can interpret Mr. Retief's remark," the ambassador snapped. He assumed a fatherly expression.

"Young man, you're new to the Service. You haven't yet learned the team play, the give-and-take of diplomacy. I shall expect you to observe closely the work of the experienced negotiators of the mission. You must learn the importance of subtlety."

"Mr. Ambassador," Magnan said, "I think the reception committee is arriving." He pointed. Half a dozen tall, short-necked Yill were entering through a side door. The leading Yill hesitated as another stepped in his path. He raised a fist, and the other moved aside, touching the top of his head perfunctorily with both hands. The group started across the room toward the Terrestrials. Retief watched as a slender alien came forward and spoke passable Terran in a reedy voice.

[10]

"I am P'Toi. Come this way...." He turned, and the group moved toward the door, the ambassador leading. As he reached for the door, the interpreter darted ahead and shouldered him aside. The other Yill stopped, waiting.

The ambassador almost glared, then remembered the image. He smiled and beckoned the Yill ahead. They milled uncertainly, muttering in the native tongue, then passed through the door.

The Terran party followed.

"—— give a great deal to know what they're saying," Retief overheard as he came up.

"Our interpreter has forged to the van," the ambassador said. "I can only assume he'll appear when needed."

"A pity we have to rely on a native interpreter," someone said.

"Had I known we'd meet this rather uncouth reception," the ambassador said stiffly, "I would have audited the language personally, of course, during the voyage out."

"Oh, no criticism intended, of course, Mr. Ambassador."

"Heavens," Magnan put in. "Who would have thought——"

Retief moved up behind the ambassador.

"Mr. Ambassador," he said, "I——"

"Later, young man," the ambassador snapped. He beckoned to the first councillor, and the two moved off, heads together.

Outside, a bluish sun gleamed in a dark sky. Retief watched his breath form a frosty cloud in the chill air. A broad doughnut-wheeled vehicle was drawn up to the platform. The Yill gestured the Terran party to the gaping door at the rear, then stood back, waiting.

Retief looked curiously at the gray-painted van. The legend written on its side in alien symbols seemed to read "egg nog."

---

The ambassador entered the vehicle, the other Terrestrials following. It was as bare of seats as the Terminal building. What appeared to be a defunct electronic chassis lay in the center of the floor.

Retief glanced back. The Yill were talking excitedly. None of them entered the car. The door was closed, and the Terrans braced themselves under the low roof as the engine started up with a whine of worn turbos.

The van moved off.

[11]

It was an uncomfortable ride. Retief put out an arm as the vehicle rounded a corner, just catching the ambassador as he staggered, off-balance. The ambassador glared at him, settled his heavy tri-corner hat and stood stiffly until the car lurched again.

Retief stooped, attempting to see out through the single dusty window. They seemed to be in a wide street lined with low buildings.

They passed through a massive gate, up a ramp, and stopped. The door opened. Retief looked out at a blank gray facade, broken by tiny windows at irregular intervals. A scarlet vehicle was drawn up ahead, the Yill reception committee emerging from it. Through its wide windows Retief saw rich upholstery and caught a glimpse of glasses clamped to a tiny bar.

P'Toi, the Yill interpreter, came forward, gestured to a small door. Magnan opened it, waiting for the ambassador.

As he stepped to it, a Yill thrust himself ahead and hesitated. Ambassador Spradley drew himself up, glaring. Then he twisted his mouth into a frozen smile and stepped aside.

The Yill looked at each other then filed through the door.

Retief was the last to enter. As he stepped inside, a black-clad servant slipped past him, pulled the lid from a large box by the door and dropped in a paper tray heaped with refuse. There were alien symbols in flaking paint on the box. They seemed, Retief noticed, to spell "egg nog."

## II

The shrill pipes and whining reeds had been warming up for an hour when Retief emerged from his cubicle and descended the stairs to the banquet hall.

Standing by the open doors, he lit a slender cigar and watched through narrowed eyes as obsequious servants in black flitted along the low wide corridor, carrying laden trays into the broad room, arranging settings on a great four-sided table forming a hollow square that almost filled the room. Rich brocades were spread across the center of the side nearest the door, flanked by heavily decorated white cloths. Beyond, plain white extended to the far side, where metal dishes were arranged on the bare table top.

A richly dressed Yill approached, stepped aside to allow a servant to pass and entered the room.

Retief turned at the sound of Terran voices behind him. The ambassador came up, trailed by two diplomats. He glanced at Retief, adjusted his ruff and looked into the banquet hall.

"Apparently we're to be kept waiting again," he muttered. "After having been informed at the outset that the Yill have no intention of yielding an inch, one almost wonders...." [12]

"Mr. Ambassador," Retief said. "Have you noticed—"

"However," Ambassador Spradley said, eyeing Retief, "a seasoned diplomatist must take these little snubs in stride. In the end— Ah, there, Magnan." He turned away, talking.

Somewhere a gong clanged.

In a moment, the corridor was filled with chattering Yill who moved past the group of Terrestrials into the banquet hall. P'Toi, the Yill interpreter, came up and raised a hand.

"Waitt heere...."

More Yill filed into the dining room to take their places. A pair of helmeted guards approached, waving the Terrestrials back. An immense gray-jowled Yill waddled to the doors and passed through, followed by more guards.

"The Chief of State," Retief heard Magnan say. "The Admirable F'Kau-Kau-Kau."

"I have yet to present my credentials," Ambassador Spradley said. "One expects some latitude in the observances of protocol, but I confess...." He wagged his head.

The Yill interpreter spoke up.

"You now whill lhie on yourr intesstinss, and creep to fesstive board there." He pointed across the room.

"Intestines?" Ambassador Spradley looked about wildly.

"Mr. P'Toi means our stomachs, I wouldn't wonder," Magnan said. "He just wants us to lie down and crawl to our seats, Mr. Ambassador."

"What the devil are you grinning at, you idiot?" the ambassador snapped.

---

Magnan's face fell.

Spradley glanced down at the medals across his paunch.

"This is.... I've never...."

"Homage to godss," the interpreter said.

"Oh. Oh, religion," someone said.

"Well, if it's a matter of religious beliefs...." The ambassador looked dubiously around.

"Golly, it's only a couple of hundred feet," Magnan offered.

Retief stepped up to P'Toi.

"His Excellency the Terrestrial Ambassador will not crawl," he said clearly.

"Here, young man! I said nothing——"

"Not to crawl?" The interpreter wore an unreadable Yill expression.

"It is against our religion," Retief said.

"Againsst?"

"We are votaries of the Snake Goddess," Retief said. "It is a sacrilege to crawl." He brushed past the interpreter and marched toward the distant table.

[13]

The others followed.

Puffing, the ambassador came to Retief's side as they approached the dozen empty stools on the far side of the square opposite the brocaded position of the Admirable F'Kau-Kau-Kau.

"Mr. Retief, kindly see me after this affair," he hissed. "In the meantime, I hope you will restrain any further rash impulses. Let me remind you *I* am chief of mission here."

Magnan came up from behind.

"Let me add my congratulations, Retief," he said. "That was fast thinking——"

"Are you out of your mind, Magnan?" the ambassador barked. "I am extremely displeased!"

"Why," Magnan stuttered, "I was speaking sarcastically, of course, Mr. Ambassador. Didn't you notice the kind of shocked little gasp I gave when he did it?"

The Terrestrials took their places, Retief at the end. The table before them was of bare green wood, with an array of shallow pewter dishes.

Some of the Yill at the table were in plain gray, others in black. All eyed them silently. There was a constant stir among them as one or another rose and disappeared and others sat down. The pipes and reeds were shrilling furiously, and the susurrations of Yillian conversation from the other tables rose ever higher in competition.

A tall Yill in black was at the ambassador's side now. The nearby Yill fell silent as he began ladling a whitish soup into the largest of the bowls before the Terrestrial envoy. The interpreter hovered, watching.

"That's quite enough," Ambassador Spradley said, as the bowl overflowed. The Yill servant rolled his eyes, dribbled more of the soup into the bowl.

"Kindly serve the other members of my staff," the ambassador said. The interpreter said something in a low voice. The servant moved hesitantly to the next stool and ladled more soup.

---

Retief watched, listening to the whispers around him. The Yill at the table were craning now to watch. The soup ladler was ladling rapidly, rolling his eyes sideways. He came to Retief, reached out with the full ladle for the bowl.

"No," Retief said.

The ladler hesitated.

"None for me," Retief said.

The interpreter came up and motioned to the servant, who reached again, ladle brimming.

"I ... DON'T ... LIKE ... IT!" Retief said, his voice distinct in the sudden hush. He stared at the interpreter, who stared back, then waved the servant away.

"Mr. Retief!" a voice hissed.

[14]

Retief looked down at the table. The ambassador was leaning forward, glaring at him, his face a mottled crimson.

"I'm warning you, Mr. Retief," he said hoarsely. "I've eaten sheep's eyes in the Sudan, ka swe in Burma, hundred-year *cug* on Mars and everything else that has been placed before me in the

course of my diplomatic career. And, by the holy relics of Saint Ignatz, you'll do the same!" He snatched up a spoon-like utensil and dipped it into his bowl.

"Don't eat that, Mr. Ambassador," Retief said.

The ambassador stared, eyes wide. He opened his mouth, guided the spoon toward it—

Retief stood, gripped the table under its edge and heaved. The immense wooden slab rose and tilted, dishes sliding. It crashed to the floor with a ponderous slam.

Whitish soup splattered across the terrazzo. A couple of odd bowls rolled across the room. Cries rang out from the Yill, mingling with a strangled yell from Ambassador Spradley.

Retief walked past the wild-eyed members of the mission to the sputtering chief. "Mr. Ambassador," he said. "I'd like——"

"You'd like! I'll break you, you young hoodlum! Do you realize——"

"Pleass...." The interpreter stood at Retief's side.

"My apologies," Ambassador Spradley said, mopping his forehead. "My profound apologies."

"Be quiet," Retief said.

"Wha—what?"

"Don't apologize," Retief said. P'Toi was beckoning.

"Pleasse, arll come."

Retief turned and followed him.

The portion of the table they were ushered to was covered with an embroidered white cloth, set with thin porcelain dishes. The Yill already seated there rose, amid babbling, and moved down the table. The black-clad Yill at the end table closed ranks to fill the vacant seats. Retief sat down and found Magnan at his side.

"What's going on here?" the second secretary said angrily.

"They were giving us dog food," Retief said. "I overheard a Yill. They seated us at the bottom of the servants' table——"

"You mean you know their language?"

"I learned it on the way out. Enough, at least."

The music burst out with a clangorous fanfare, and a throng of jugglers, dancers and acrobats poured into the center of the hollow square, frantically juggling, dancing and back-flipping. Black-clad servants swarmed suddenly, heaping mounds of fragrant food on the plates of Yill and Terrestrials alike, pouring a pale purple liquor into slender glasses. Retief sampled the Yill food. It was delicious.

[15]

Conversation was impossible in the din. He watched the gaudy display and ate heartily.

### III

Retief leaned back, grateful for the lull in the music. The last of the dishes were whisked away, and more glasses filled. The exhausted entertainers stopped to pick up the thick square coins the diners threw.

Retief sighed. It had been a rare feast.

"Retief," Magnan said in the comparative quiet, "what were you saying about dog food as the music came up?"

Retief looked at him. "Haven't you noticed the pattern, Mr. Magnan? The series of deliberate affronts?"

"Deliberate affronts! Just a minute, Retief. They're uncouth, yes, crowding into doorways and that sort of thing...." He looked at Retief uncertainly.

"They herded us into a baggage warehouse at the terminal. Then they hauled us here in a garbage truck——"

"Garbage truck!"

"Only symbolic, of course. They ushered us in the tradesman's entrance, and assigned us cubicles in the servants' wing. Then we were seated with the coolie class sweepers at the bottom of the table."

"You must be.... I mean, we're the Terrestrial delegation! Surely these Yill must realize our power."

"Precisely, Mr. Magnan. But——"

With a clang of cymbals the musicians launched a renewed assault. Six tall, helmeted Yill sprang into the center of the floor and paired off in a wild performance, half dance, half combat. Magnan pulled at Retief's arm, his mouth moving.

Retief shook his head. No one could talk against a Yill orchestra in full cry. He sampled a bright red wine and watched the show.

There was a flurry of action, and two of the dancers stumbled and collapsed, their partner-opponents whirling away to pair off again, describe the elaborate pre-combat ritual, and abruptly set to, dulled sabres clashing—and two more Yill were down, stunned. It was a violent dance.

Retief watched, the drink forgotten.

The last two Yill approached and retreated, whirled, bobbed and spun, fainted and postured—and on the instant, clashed, straining chest-to-chest—then broke apart, heavy weapons chopping, parrying, as the music mounted to a frenzy.

Evenly matched, the two hacked, thrust, blow for blow, across the floor, then back, defense forgotten, slugging it out.

And then one was slipping, going down, helmet awry. The other, a giant, muscular Yill, spun away, whirled in a mad skirl of pipes as coins showered—then froze before a gaudy table, raised the sabre and slammed it down in a resounding blow across the gay cloth before a lace and bow-bedecked Yill in the same instant that the music stopped.

In utter silence the dancer-fighter stared across the table at the seated Yill.

With a shout, the Yill leaped up, raised a clenched fist. The dancer bowed his head, spread his hands on his helmet.

Retief took a deep gulp of a pale yellow liqueur and leaned forward to watch. The beribboned Yill waved a hand negligently, spilled a handful of coins across the table and sat down.

The challenger spun away in a screeching shrill of music. Retief caught his eye for an instant as he passed.

And then the dancer stood rigid before the brocaded table—and the music stopped off short as the sabre slammed down before a heavy Yill in ornate metallic coils. The challenged Yill rose and raised a fist. The other ducked his head, put his hands on his helmet. Coins rolled. The dancer moved on.

Twice more the dancer struck the table in ritualistic challenge, exchanged gestures, bent his neck and passed on. He circled the broad floor, sabre twirling, arms darting in an intricate symbolism. The orchestra blared shrilly, unmuffled now by the surf-roar of conversation. The Yill, Retief noticed suddenly, were sitting silent, watching. The dancer was closer now, and then he was before Retief, poised, towering, sabre above his head.

The music cut, and in the startling instantaneous silence, the heavy sabre whipped over and down with an explosive concussion that set dishes dancing on the table-top.



The Yill's eyes held on Retief's. In the silence, Magnan tittered drunkenly. Retief pushed back his stool.

"Steady, my boy," Ambassador Spradley called. Retief stood, the Yill topping his six foot three by an inch. In a motion almost too quick to follow, Retief reached for the sabre, twitched it from the Yill's grip, swung it in a whistling cut. The Yill ducked, sprang back, snatched up a sabre dropped by another dancer.

"Someone stop the madman!" Spradley howled.

Retief leaped across the table, sending fragile dishes spinning.

The other danced back, and only then did the orchestra spring to life with a screech and a mad tattoo of high-pitched drums.

Making no attempt to following the weaving pattern of the Yill bolero, Retief pressed the other, fending off vicious cuts with the blunt weapon, chopping back relentlessly. Left hand on hip, Retief matched blow for blow, driving the other back.

Abruptly, the Yill abandoned the double role. Dancing forgotten, he settled down in earnest, cutting, thrusting, parrying; and now the two stood toe to toe, sabres clashing in a lightning exchange. The Yill gave a step,

[17]

[18]

two, then rallied, drove Retief back, back—

And the Yill stumbled. His sabre clattered, and Retief dropped his point as the other wavered past him and crashed to the floor.

The orchestra fell silent in a descending wail of reeds. Retief drew a deep breath and wiped his forehead.

"Come back here, you young fool!" Spradley called hoarsely.

Retief hefted the sabre, turned, eyed the brocade-draped table. He started across the floor. The Yill sat as if paralyzed.

"Retief, no!" Spradley yelled.

Retief walked directly to the Admirable F'Kau-Kau-Kau, stopped, raised the sabre.

"Not the chief of state," someone in the Terrestrial mission groaned.

Retief whipped the sabre down. The dull blade split the cloth and clove the hardwood table. There was utter silence.

The Admirable F'Kau-Kau-Kau rose, seven feet of obese gray Yill. Broad face expressionless to any Terran eyes, he raised a fist like a jewel-studded ham.

Retief stood rigid for a long moment. Then, gracefully, he inclined his head, placed his finger tips on his temples.

Behind him, there was a clatter as Ambassador Spradley collapsed. Then the Admirable F'Kau-Kau-Kau cried out and reached across the table to embrace the Terrestrial, and the orchestra went mad.

Gray hands helped Retief across the table, stools were pushed aside to make room at F'Kau-Kau-Kau's side. Retief sat, took a tall flagon of coal-black brandy pressed on him by his neighbor, clashed glasses with The Admirable and drank.

## IV

Retief turned at the touch on his shoulder.

"The Ambassador wants to speak to you, Retief," Magnan said.

Retief looked across to where Ambassador Spradley sat glowering behind the plain tablecloth.

"Under the circumstances," Retief said, "you'd better ask him to come over here."

[19]

"The ambassador?" Magnan's voice cracked.

"Never mind the protocol," Retief said. "The situation is still delicate." Magnan went away.

"The feast ends," F'Kau-Kau-Kau said. "Now you and I, Retief, must straddle the Council Stool."

"I'll be honored, Admirable," Retief said. "I must inform my colleagues."

"Colleagues?" F'Kau-Kau-Kau said. "It is for chiefs to parley. Who shall speak for a king while he yet has tongue for talk?"

"The Yill way is wise," Retief said.

F'Kau-Kau-Kau emptied a squat tumbler of pink beer. "I will treat with you, Retief, as viceroy, since as you say your king is old and the space between worlds is far. But there shall be no scheming underlings privy to our dealings." He grinned a Yill grin. "Afterwards we shall carouse, Retief. The Council Stool is hard and the waiting handmaidens delectable. This makes for quick agreement."

Retief smiled. "The king is wise."

"Of course, a being prefers wenches of his own kind," F'Kau-Kau-Kau said. He belched. "The Ministry of Culture has imported several Terry—excuse me, Retief—Terrestrial joy-girls, said to be top-notch specimens. At least they have very fat watchamacallits."

"The king is most considerate," Retief said.

"Let us to it then, Retief. I may hazard a fling with one of your Terries, myself. I fancy an occasional perversion." F'Kau-Kau-Kau dug an elbow into Retief's side and bellowed with laughter.

Ambassador Spradley hurried to intercept Retief as he crossed to the door at F'Kau-Kau-Kau's side.

"Retief, kindly excuse yourself, I wish a word with you." His voice was icy. Magnan stood behind him, goggling.

"Mr. Ambassador, forgive my apparent rudeness," Retief said. "I don't have time to explain

now——"

"Rudeness!" Spradley barked. "Don't have time, eh? Let me tell you——"

"Lower your voice, Mr. Ambassador," Retief said.

Spradley quivered, mouth open, speechless.

"If you'll sit down and wait quietly," Retief said, "I think——"

"*You* think!" Spradley spluttered.

---

"Silence!" Retief said. Spradley looked up at Retief's face. He stared for a moment into Retief's gray eyes, closed his mouth and swallowed.

"The Yill seem to have gotten the impression I'm in charge," Retief said, "We'll have to keep it up."

"But—but—" Spradley stuttered. Then he straightened. "That is the last straw," he whispered hoarsely. "I am the Terrestrial Ambassador Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary. Magnan has told me that we've been studiedly insulted, repeatedly, since the moment of our arrival. Kept waiting in baggage rooms, transported in refuse lorries, herded about with servants, offered swill at table. Now I and my senior staff, are left cooling our heels, without so much as an audience while this—this multiple Kau person hobnobs with—with—" [20]

Spradley's voice broke. "I may have been a trifle hasty, Retief, in attempting to restrain you. Blaspheming the native gods and dumping the banquet table are rather extreme measures, but your resentment was perhaps partially justified. I am prepared to be lenient with you." He fixed a choleric eye on Retief.

"I am walking out of this meeting, Mr. Retief. I'll take no more of these deliberate personal ——"

"That's enough," Retief snapped. "You're keeping the king waiting. Get back to your chair and sit there until I come back."

Magnan found his voice. "What are you going to do, Retief?"

"I'm going to handle the negotiation," Retief said. He handed Magnan his empty glass. "Now go sit down and work on the Image."

---

At his desk in the VIP suite aboard the orbiting Corps vessel, Ambassador Spradley pursed his lips and looked severely at Vice-Consul Retief.

"Further," he said, "you have displayed a complete lack of understanding of Corps discipline, the respect due a senior agent, even the basic courtesies. Your aggravated displays of temper, ill-timed outbursts of violence and almost incredible arrogance in the assumption of authority make your further retention as an officer-agent of the Diplomatic Corps impossible. It will therefore be my unhappy duty to recommend your immediate——"

There was a muted buzz from the communicator. The ambassador cleared his throat.

"Well?"

"A signal from Sector HQ, Mr. Ambassador," a voice said.

"Well, read it," Spradley snapped. "Skip the preliminaries."

"Congratulations on the unprecedented success of your mission. The articles of agreement transmitted by you embody a most favorable resolution of the difficult Sirenian situation, and will form the basis of continued amicable relations between the Terrestrial States and the Yill Empire. To you and your staff, full credit is due for a job well done. Signed, Deputy Assistant Secretary ——" [21]

Spradley cut off the voice impatiently.

He shuffled papers, eyed Retief sharply.

"Superficially, of course, an uninitiated observer might leap to the conclusion that the—ah—results that were produced in spite of these ... ah ... irregularities justify the latter." The Ambassador smiled a sad, wise smile. "This is far from the case," he said. "I——"

The communicator burped softly.

"Confound it!" Spradley muttered. "Yes?"

"Mr. T'Cai-Cai has arrived," the voice said. "Shall I——"

"Send him in at once." Spradley glanced at Retief. "Only a two-syllable man, but I shall



attempt to correct these false impressions, make some amends...."

The two Terrestrials waited silently until the Yill Protocol chief tapped at the door.

"I hope," the ambassador said, "that you will resist the impulse to take advantage of your unusual position." He looked at the door. "Come in."

T'Cai-Cai stepped into the room, glanced at Spradley, turned to greet Retief in voluble Yill. He rounded the desk to the ambassador's chair, motioned him from it and sat down.

---

"I have a surprise for you, Retief," he said, in Terran. "I myself have made use of the teaching machine you so kindly lent us."

"That's fine. T'Cai-Cai," Retief said. "I'm sure Mr. Spradley will be interested in hearing what we have to say."

"Never mind," the Yill said. "I am here only socially." He looked around the room.

"So plainly you decorate your chamber. But it has a certain austere charm." He laughed a Yill laugh.

"Oh, you are a strange breed, you Terrestrials. You surprised us all. You know, one hears such outlandish stories. I tell you in confidence, we had expected you to be overpushes."

"Pushovers," Spradley said, tonelessly.

"Such restraint! What pleasure you gave to those of us, like myself of course, who appreciated your grasp of protocol. Such finesse! How subtly you appeared to ignore each overture, while neatly avoiding actual contamination. I can tell you, there were those who thought—poor fools—that you had no grasp of etiquette. How gratified we were, we professionals, who could appreciate your virtuosity—when you placed matters on a comfortable basis by spurning the cats'-meat. It was sheer pleasure then, waiting, to see what form your compliment would take."

[22]

The Yill offered orange cigars, stuffed one in his nostril.

"I confess even I had not hoped that you would honor our Admirable so signally. Oh, it is a pleasure to deal with fellow professionals, who understand the meaning of protocol!"

Ambassador Spradley made a choking sound.

"This fellow has caught a chill," T'Cai-Cai said. He eyed Spradley dubiously. "Step back, my man. I am highly susceptible.

"There is one bit of business I shall take pleasure in attending to, my dear Retief," T'Cai-Cai went on. He drew a large paper from his reticule. "The Admirable is determined than none other than yourself shall be accredited here. I have here my government's exequatur confirming you as Terrestrial consul-general to Yill. We shall look forward to your prompt return."

Retief looked at Spradley.

"I'm sure the Corps will agree," he said.

"Then I shall be going," T'Cai-Cai said. He stood up. "Hurry back to us, Retief. There is much that I would show you of Yill."

"I'll hurry," Retief said and, with a Yill wink: "Together we shall see many high and splendid things!"

**END**

Coming in the March issue of If—

THE MADMAN FROM EARTH  
by Keith Laumer

TYBALT  
by Stephen Barr

A great new cover novelette by Poul Anderson—plus short stories, Theodore Sturgeon's column, features, etc. On sale January 14th at all newsstands.

### Transcriber's Note and Errata

This e-text was produced from 'Worlds of If' January 1962. Extensive research did not uncover any evidence that the U. S. copyright on this publication was renewed.

One instance of 'tubos' on page 10 has been corrected to 'turbos'.

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE YILLIAN WAY \*\*\*

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

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

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

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at [www.gutenberg.org/license](http://www.gutenberg.org/license).

**Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works**

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

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

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

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

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

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

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org). If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

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

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or

group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

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

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

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

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

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

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

## **Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™**

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

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

## **Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation**

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

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at [www.gutenberg.org/contact](http://www.gutenberg.org/contact)

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

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

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate).

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

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

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate)

#### **Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works**

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

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

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).

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