

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Dead World

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. 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: Dead World

Author: Jack Douglas
Illustrator: George Barr

Release date: December 26, 2008 [eBook #27631]
Most recently updated: January 4, 2021

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Greg Weeks, Stephen Blundell and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <https://www.pgdp.net>

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK DEAD WORLD ***

DEAD WORLD

By JACK DOUGLAS

Illustrated by BARR

***Out on the ice-buried planet,
Commander Red Stone led his Free
Companions to almost certain death.
They died for a dangerous dream that
had only one chance in a thousand
trillion to come true. Is there a better
reason for dying?***

... although the most recent star to die, RNAC 89778 in the distant Menelaus galaxy (common name, Menelaus XII), had eight inhabited planets, only some one thousand people of the fifth planet escaped and survived as a result of a computer error which miscalculated the exact time by two years. Due to basic psycho-philosophical maladjustments the refugees of Menelaus XII-5 are classified as anti-social-types-B-6 and must be considered unstable. All anti-social-types-B-6 are barred from responsible positions in United Galaxies by order of the Inter-Galactic Council.



—Short History of The United Galaxies

YUAN SALTARIO started it. He was serving in my Company and he was one of them. A Menelaus XII-5 "unstable," and don't ever call that damned little planet by its number if you meet one of them. They call it Nova-Maurania. But you won't meet one of them. Or maybe you will, maybe they did make it. I like to think they did.

There were a lot of them in the Companies in 3078. Restless men. The Companies were the logical place for them. We're still classified anti-social-B-6, too. Every year it's harder to get recruits, but we still have to be careful who we take in. We took Yuan Saltario. There was something about him from the very start.

"Why do you want to join a Free Company?" He was a short, humanoid type with deep black eyes and a thin, lipless mouth that never smiled.

"I'm an anti-social. I like to fight. I want to fight."

"A misfit joining the misfits? A grudge against the Council? It's not good enough, mister, we live on the Council. Try again."

Saltario's black eyes stared without a flicker. "You're Red Stone, Commander of the Red Company. You hate the Council and I hate the Council. You're the ..." Saltario stopped.

I said, "The Traitor of the Glorious War of Survival. You can say it, Saltario."

The lipless mouth was rigid. "I don't think of it that way. I think of a man with personal integrity," Saltario said.

I suppose I should have seen it then, the rock he carried deep inside him. It might have saved thirty thousand good men. But I was thinking of myself. Commander Red Stone of the Red Company, Earthmen. Only we're not all Earthmen now, every year there are fewer recruits, and it won't be long before we die out and the Council will have the last laugh. Old Red Stone, the Traitor of the War of Survival, the little finger of my left hand still missing and telling the Universe I was a very old soldier of the outlawed Free Companies hanging onto life on a rocky planet of the distant Salaman galaxy. Back at the old stand because United Galaxies still need us. In a way it's a big joke. Two years after Rajay-Ben and I had a bellyfull of the Glorious War of Survival and they chased us all the way out here, they turned right around and made the peace. A joke on me, but sometimes I like to think that our runout was the thing that made them think and make peace. When you've been a soldier for thirty-five years you like to win battles, but you like to feel you helped bring peace, too.

I said, "Personal integrity. That sounds pretty good, doesn't it? So you like personal integrity? All right, Saltario, are you sure you know what you're getting into? We're 60 million light years from Galaxy Center, 10 million from the nearest United Galaxy city. We've got no comforts, no future, nothing to do but fight. A woman in her right mind won't look at us, if they see you in uniform they'll spit on you, if they catch you out of uniform they'll kill you."

Saltario shrugged. "I like to eat. I've got nowhere to go. All I've got is myself and a big piece of ice I called home."

I nodded. "Okay. We fight small wars for good profits. It's not Earth out here, but we've got four nice suns, plenty of Lukanian whisky Rajay-Ben taught the locals to make, and we're our own masters. The United Galaxies leaves us pretty much alone unless they need us. You do your job, and your job is what I tell you to do, period. You got that straight?"

Saltario very nearly smiled. "It sounds good to me, sir."

"I hope it'll sound good in a year, Saltario, because once you're in you don't get out except feet first. Is that clear? I have life and death rights over you. You owe allegiance to the Red Company and me and to no one else. Got that? Today your best friends are the men of Rajay-Ben's Lukanian Fourth Free Patrol, and your worst enemies are the men of Mandasiva's Sirian O Company. Tomorrow Rajay-Ben's boys may be your worst enemies, and Mandasiva's troops your best friends. It all depends on the contract. A Company on the same contract is a friend, a Company against the contract is an enemy. You'll drink with a man today, and kill him tomorrow. Got it? If you kill a Free Companion without a contract you go to court-martial. If you kill a citizen of the United Galaxies except in a battle under contract I throw you to the wolves and that means you're finished. That's the way it is."

"Yes, sir." Saltario never moved a muscle. He was rigid.

"Right," I said, "get your gear, see the Adjutant and sign the agreement. I think you'll do."

Saltario left. I sat back in my chair and thought about how many non-Earthmen I was taking into the Company. Maybe I should have been thinking about this one single non-Earthman and the something he was carrying inside him, but I didn't, and it cost the Companies thirty thousand men we couldn't afford to lose. We can't afford to lose one man. There are only a hundred Companies now, twenty thousand men each, give or take a few thousand depending on how the last contract went. Life is good in the United Galaxies now that they've disarmed and outlawed all war again, and our breed is dying out faster than it did in the 500 years of peace before the War of Survival. Too many of the old Companions like me went west in the War of Survival. The Galactic Council know they need us, know that you can't change all living creatures into good Galactic citizens overnight, so they let us go on fighting for anyone in the Universe who wants to take something from someone else, or who thinks someone else wants to take something from him. And even the mighty United Galaxies needs guards for expeditions to the unexplored galaxies. But they don't like us and they don't want us. They don't cut off our little fingers anymore, but we have to wear our special black uniforms when we go into United territory under penalty of a quick death. Humane, of course, they just put us to sleep gently and for keeps. And they've got a stockpile of ionic bombs ready at all times in case we get out of hand. We don't have ionic weapons, that's part of the agreement and they watch us. They came close to using them down there in the frozen waste of Menelaus XII, but thirty thousand of us died without ionics. We killed each other. They liked that, even if they didn't like what happened.

Do you know what it means to be lost? Really lost? I'm lost, if that means I know I'll never go back to live on Earth. But I know that Earth is still there to go back to, and I can dream of going home. Yuan Saltario and the other refugees have no home to go back to. They can't even dream. They sat in that one ship that escaped and watched their planet turn into a lifeless ball of ice that would circle dead and frozen forever around its burned-out star. A giant tomb that carried under

its thick ice their homes and their fields and their loves. And they could not even hope and dream. Or I did not think they could.

Saltario had been with us a year when we got the contract to escort the survey mission to Nova-Maurania. A private Earth commercial mining firm looking for minerals under the frozen wastes of the dead planet. Rajay-Ben was in on the contract. We took two battalions, one from my Red Company, and one from Rajay-Ben's Lukanian Patrol. My Sub-Commander was Pete Colenso, old Mike Colenso's boy. It all went fine for a week or so, routine guard and patrol. The survey team wouldn't associate with us, of course, but we were used to that. We kept our eyes open and our mouths shut. That's our job, and we give value for money received. So we were alert and ready. But it wasn't the attack that nearly got us this time. It was the cold of the dead planet lost in absolute zero and absolute darkness.

Nova-Maurania was nearly 40 percent uranium, and who could resist that? A Centaurian trading unit did not resist the lure. The attack was quick and hard. A typical Lukanian Patrol attack. My Company was pinned down at the first volley from those damned smoky blasters of the Lukanians. All I could see was the same shimmering lights I had learned to know so well in the War of Survival against Lukania. Someday maybe I'll find out how to see a Lukan, Rajay-Ben has worked with me a long time to help, but when the attack came this time all I could do was eat ice and beam a help call to Rajay-Ben. That Centaurian trading unit was a cheap outfit, they had hired only one battalion of Arjay-Ben's Ninth Lukanian Free Patrol, and Rajay-Ben flanked them right off that planet. I got my boys on their feet and we chased Arjay's men half way back to Salaman with Rajay-Ben laughing like a hyena the whole way.

"Dip me in mud, Red boy, I'd give a prime contract for one gander at old Arjay-Ben's face. He's blowing a gasket!"

I said, "Nice flank job."

Rajay-Ben laughed so hard I could see his pattern of colored light shaking like a dancing rainbow. "I took two Sub-Commanders, wait'll I hit that bullet-head for ransom!"

Then we stopped laughing. We had won the battle, but Arjay-Ben was a crafty old soldier and his sabotage squad had wrecked our engines and our heating units. We were stuck on a frozen planet without heat.

Young Colenso turned white. "What do we do?"

I said, "Beam for help and pray we don't freeze first."

They had missed our small communications reactor unit. We sent out our call, and we all huddled around the small reactor. There might be enough heat out of it to let us live five hours. If we were lucky. It was the third hour when Yuan Saltario began to talk. Maybe it was the nearness of death.

"I was twenty-two. Portario was the leader on our planet. He found the error when we had one ship ready. We had three days. No time to get the other ships ready. He said we were lucky, the other planets didn't have even one ship ready. Not even time for United Galaxies to help. Portario chose a thousand of us to go. I was one. At first I felt very good, you know? I was really happy. Until I found out that my wife couldn't go. Not fit enough. United Galaxies had beamed the standards to us. Funny how you don't think about other people until something hurts you. I'd been married a year. I told them it was both of us or neither of us. I told Portario to tell United Galaxies they couldn't break up a family and to hell with their standards. They laughed at me. Not Portario, the Council. What did they care, they would just take another man. My wife begged me to go. She cried so much I had to agree to go. I loved her too much to be able to stay and see the look on her face as we both died when she knew I could have gone. On the ship before we took off I stood at a port and looked down at her. A small girl trying to smile at me. She waved once before they led her away from the rocket. All hell was shaking the planet already, had been for months, but all I saw was a small girl waving once, just once. She's still here, somewhere down there under the ice."

The cold was slowly creeping into us. It was hard to move my mouth, but I said, "She loved you, she wanted you to live."

"Without her, without my home, I'm as dead as the planet. I feel frozen. She's like that dead sun out there, and I'll circle around her until someone gets me and ends it." Saltario seemed to be seeing something. "I'm beginning to forget what she looked like. I don't want to forget! I can't forget her on this planet. The way it was! It was a beautiful place, perfect! I don't want to forget her!"

Colenso said, "You won't have long to remember."

But Colenso was wrong. My Third Battalion showed up when we had just less than an hour to live. They took us off. The Earth mining outfit haggled over the contract because the job had not been finished and I had to settle for two-third contract price. Rajay-Ben did better when he ransomed Arjay-Ben's two Sub-Commanders. It wasn't a bad deal and I would have been satisfied, except that something had happened to Yuan Saltario.

Maybe it made him realize that he did not want to die after all. Or maybe it turned him space-happy and he began to dream. A dream of his own born up there in the cold of his dead planet. A dream that nearly cost me my Company.

I did not know what that dream was until Saltario came into my office a year later. He had a job for the Company.

"How many men?" I asked.

"Our Company and Rajay-Ben's Patrol," Saltario said.

"Full strength?"

"Yes, sir."

"Price?"

"Standard, sir," Saltario said. "The party will pay."

"Just a trip to your old planet?"

"That's all," Saltario said. "A guard contract. The hiring party just don't want any interference with their project."

"Two full Companies? Forty thousand men? They must expect to need a lot of protecting."

"United Galaxies opposes the project. Or they will if they get wind of it."

I said, "United opposes a lot of things, what's special about this scheme?"

Saltario hesitated, then looked at me with those flat black eyes. "Ionics."

It's not a word you say, or hear, without a chill somewhere deep inside. Not even me and I know a man can survive ionic weapons. I know because I did once. Weapons so powerful I'm one of the last men alive who saw them in action. Mathematically the big ones could wipe out a Galaxy. I saw a small one destroy a star in ten seconds. I watched Saltario for a long time. It seemed a long time, anyway. It was probably twenty seconds. I was wondering if he had gone space-crazy for keeps. And I was thinking of how I could find out what it was all about in time to stop it.

I said, "A hundred Companies won't be enough. Saltario, have you ever seen or heard what an ionic bomb can ..."

Saltario said, "Not weapons, peaceful power."

"Even that's out and you know it," I said. "United Galaxies won't even touch peaceful ionics, too dangerous to even use."

"You can take a look first."

"A good look," I said.

I alerted Rajay-Ben and we took two squads and a small ship and Saltario directed us to a tall mountain that jutted a hundred feet above the ice of Nova-Maurania. I was not surprised. In a way I think I knew from the moment Saltario walked into my office. Whatever it was Saltario was part of it. And I had a pretty good idea what it was. The only question was how. But I didn't have time to think it out any farther. In the Companies you learn to feel danger.

The first fire caught four of my men. Then I was down on the ice. They were easy to see. Black uniforms with white wedges. Pete O'Hara's White Wedge Company, Earthmen. I don't like fighting other Earthmen, but a job's a job and you don't ask questions in the Companies. It looked like a full battalion against our two squads. On the smooth ice surface there was no cover except the jutting mountain top off to the right. And no light in the absolute darkness of a dead star. But we could see through our viewers, and so could they. They outnumbered us ten to one. Rajay-Ben's voice came through the closed circuit.

"Bad show, Red, they got our pants down!"

"You call it," I answered.

"Break silence!"

Surrender. When a Company breaks silence in a battle it means surrender. There was no other way. And I had a pretty good idea that the Council itself was behind O'Hara on this job. If it was ionics involved, they wouldn't ransom us. The Council had waited a long time to catch Red Stone in an execution offense. They wouldn't miss.

But forty of our men were down already.

"Okay," I beamed over the circuit, "break silence. We've had it Rajay."

"Council offense, Red."

"Yeah."

Well, I'd had a lot of good years. Maybe I'd been a soldier too long. I was thinking just like that when the sudden flank attack started. From the right. Heavy fire from the cover of the solitary mountain top. O'Hara's men were dropping. I stared through my viewer. On that mountain I counted the uniforms of twenty-two different Companies. That was very wrong. Whoever Saltario was fronting for could not have the power or the gold to hire twenty-four Companies including mine and Rajay-Ben's. And the fire was heavy but not that heavy. But whoever they were they were very welcome. We had a chance now. And I was making my plans when the tall old man stood up on the small, jutting top of that mountain. The tall old man stood up and a translating machine boomed out.

"All of you! O'Hara's men! Look at this!"

I saw it. In a beam of light on the top of that mountain it looked like a small neutron-source machine. But it wasn't. It was an ionic beam projector.

The old man said, "Go home."

They went. They went fast and silent. And I knew where they were going. Not to Salaman. O'Hara would have taken one look at that machine and be half way to United Galaxy Center before he had stopped seeing it. I felt like taking that trip myself. But I had agreed to look and I would look. If we were lucky we would have forty-eight hours to look and run.

I fell in what was left of my Company behind the men that had saved us. More Company uniforms than I had ever seen in one place. They said nothing. Just walked into a hole in that mountain. Into a cave. And in the cave, at the far end, a door opened. An elevator. We followed the tall old man into the elevator and it began to descend. The elevator car went down for a long time. At last I could see a faint glow far below. The glow grew brighter and the car stopped. Far below the glow was still brighter. We all stepped out into a long corridor cut from solid rock. I estimated that we were at least two hundred miles down and the glow was hundreds of miles deeper. We went through three sealed doors and emerged into a vast room. A room bright with light and filled with more men in Company uniforms, civilians, even women. At least a thousand. And I saw it. The thousand refugees, all of them. Gathered from all the Companies, from wherever they had been in the Galaxies. Gathered here in a room two hundred miles into the heart of their dead planet. A room filled with giant machines. Ionic machines. Highly advanced ionic power reactors.

The old man stood in front of his people and spoke. "I am Jason Portario, I thank you for coming."

I broke in, "Ionic power is an execution offense. You know that. How the hell did you get all this ..."

"I know the offense, Commander," Portario said, "and I know you. You're a fair man. You're a brave man. It doesn't matter where we got the power, many men are dead to get it, but we have it, and we will keep it. We have a job to do."

I said, "After that stunt out there you've about as much chance as a snowball in hell. O'Hara's half way to Galaxy Center. Look, with a little luck we get you out to Salaman. If you leave all this equipment I might be able to hide you until it blows over."

The old man shrugged. "I would have preferred not to show our hand, but we had to save you. I was aware that the Council would find us out sooner or later, they missed the ionic material a month ago. But that is unimportant. The important matter is will you take our job? All we need is another two days, perhaps three. Can you hold off an attack for that long?"

"Why?" I asked.

Portario smiled. "All right, Commander, you should know all we plan. Sit down, and let me finish before you speak."

I sat. Rajay-Ben sat. The agitation of his colored lights showed that he was as disturbed as I was. The thousand Nova-Mauranians stood there in the room and watched us. Yuan Saltario stood with his friends. I could feel his eyes on me. Hot eyes. As if something inside that lost man was burning again. Portario lighted a pipe. I had not seen a pipe since I was a child. The habit was classified as ancient usage in the United Galaxies. Portario saw me staring. He held his pipe and looked at it.

"In a way, Commander," the old man said, "this pipe is my story. On Nova-Maurania we liked a pipe. We liked a lot of the old habits. Maybe we should have died with all the others. You know, I was the one who found the error. Sometimes I'm not at all sure my friends here thank me for it. Our planet is dead, Commander, and so are we. We're dead inside. But we have a dream. We want to live again. And to live again our planet must live again." The old man paused as if trying to be sure of telling it right. "We mean no harm to anyone. All we want is our life back. We don't want to live forever like lumps of ice circling around a dead heart. What we plan may kill us all, but we feel it is worth the risk. We have thousands of ionic power reactors. We have blasted out Venturi tubes. We found life still deep in the center of this planet. It is all ready now. With all the power we have we will break the hold of our dead sun and send this planet off into space! We ..."

I said, "You're insane! It can't ..."

"But it can, Commander. It's a great risk, yes, but it can be done, my calculations are perfect! We

want to leave this dead system, go off into space and find a new star that will bring life back to our planet! A green, live, warm Nova-Maurania once again!"

Rajay-Ben was laughing. "That's the craziest damned dream I ever sat still for. You know what your chances of being picked up by another star are? Picked up just right? Why ..."

Portario said, "We have calculated the exact initial thrust, the exact tangential velocity, the precise orbital path we need. If all goes exactly, I emphasize, *exactly*, to the last detail as we have planned it we can do it! Our chances of being caught by the correct star in the absolutely correct position are one in a thousand trillion, but we can do it!"

It was so impossible I began to believe he was right. "If you aren't caught just right?"

Portario's black eyes watched me. "We could burn up or stay frozen and lifeless. We could drift in space forever as cold and dead as we are now and our ionic power won't last forever. The forces we will use could blow the planet apart. But we are going to try. We would rather die than live as walking dead men in this perfect United Galaxies we do not want."

The silence in the room was like a Salaman fog. Thick silence broken only by the steady hum of the machines deep beneath us in the dead planet. A wild, impossible dream of one thousand lost souls. A dream that would destroy them, and they did not care. There was something about it all that I liked.

I said, "Why not get Council approval?"

Portario smiled. "Council has little liking for wild dreams, Commander. It would not be considered as advancing the future of United Galaxies' destiny. Then there are the ionics." And Portario hesitated. "And there is the danger of imbalance, Galactic imbalance. I have calculated carefully, the danger is remote, but Council is not going to take even a remote chance."

Yuan Saltario broke in. "All they care about is their damned sterile destiny! They don't care about people. Well we do! We care about something to live for. The hell with the destiny of the Galaxies! They don't know, and we'll be gone before they do know."

"They know plenty now. O'Hara's beamed them in."

"So we must hurry," Portario said. "Three days, Commander, will you protect us for three days?"

A Council offense punishable by instant destruction with United Galaxies reserve ionic weapons in the hands of the super-secret police and disaster teams. And three days is a long time. I would be risking my whole Company. I heard Rajay-Ben laugh.

"Blast me, Red, it's so damned crazy I'm for it. Let's give it a shot."

I did not know then how much it would really cost us. If I had I might not have agreed. Or maybe I would have, it was good to know people could still have such dreams in our computer age.

"Okay," I said, "beam the full Companies and try to get one more. Mandasiva's Sirian boys would be good. We'll split the fee three ways."

Yuan Saltario said, "Thanks, Red."

I said, "Thank me later, if we're still around."

We beamed the Companies and in twenty minutes they were on their way. Straight into the biggest trouble we had had since the War of Survival. I expected trouble, but I didn't know how much. Pete Colenso tipped me off.

Pete spoke across the light years on our beam. "Mandasiva says okay if we guarantee the payment. I've deposited the bond with him and we're on our way. But, Red, something's funny."

"What?"

"This place is empty. The whole damned galaxy out here is like a desert. Every Company has moved out somewhere."

"Okay," I beamed, "get rolling fast."

There was only one client who could hire all the Companies at one time. United Galaxies itself. We were in for it. I had expected perhaps ten Companies, not three against 97, give or take a few out on other jobs. It gave me a chill. Not the odds, but if Council was that worried maybe there was bad danger. But I'd given my word and a Companion keeps his word. We had one ace in the hole, a small one. If the other Companies were not here in Menelaus yet, they must have rendezvoused at Galaxy Center. It was the kind of "follow-the-book" mistake United would make. It gave us a day and a half. We would need it.

They came at dawn on the second day. We were deployed across five of the dead planets of Menelaus XII in a ring around Nova-Maurania. They came fast and hard, and Portario and his men had at least ten hours work left before they could fire their reactors and pray. Until then we did the praying. It didn't help.

Mandasiva's command ship went at the third hour. A Lukan blaster got it. By the fourth hour I had watched three of my sub-command ships go. A Sirian force beam got one, an Earth fusion

gun got another, and the third went out of action and rammed O'Hara's command ship that had been leading their attack against us. That third ship of mine was Pete Colenso's. Old Mike would have been proud of his boy. I was sick. Pete had been a good boy. So had O'Hara. Not a boy, O'Hara, but the next to the last of old Free Companion from Earth. I'm the last, and I said a silent good-bye to O'Hara. By the sixth hour Rajay-Ben had only ten ships left. I had twelve. Five thousand of my men were gone. Eight thousand of Rajay-Ben's Lukans. The Sirians of Mandasiva's O Company were getting the worst of it, and in the eighth hour Mandasiva's second in command surrendered. It would be over soon, too soon. And the dream would be over with the battle. I broke silence.

"Red Stone calling. Do you read me? Commander Stone calling. Request conference. Repeat, request conference."

A face appeared on the inter-Company beam screen. The cold, blank, hard-bitten face of the only Free Company Commander senior to me now that O'Hara was gone, Jake Campesino of the Cygne Black Company. "Are you surrendering, Stone?"

"No. I want to speak to my fellow Companions."

Campesino's voice was like ice. "Violation! You know the rules, Stone. Silence cannot be broken in battle. I will bring charges. You're through, Stone."

I said, "Okay, crucify me later. But hear me now."

Campesino said, "Close silence or surrender."

It was no good. We'd had it. And across the distance of battle Rajay-Ben's face appeared on the screen. The colored lights that were a Lukan's face and I knew enough to know that the shimmering lights were mad. "The hell with them, Red, let's go all the damned way!"

And a new face appeared on the screen. A face I knew too well. First Councillor Roark. "Stone! You've done a lot in your day but this is the end, you hear me? You're defending a madman in a Council crime. Do you realize the risk? Universal imbalance! The whole pattern of galaxies could be destroyed! We'll destroy you for this, Stone. An ionic project without Council authorization."

I said to Campesino, "Five minutes, Commander. That's all."

There was a long blank on the screen, then Campesino's cold face appeared. "Okay, Red, talk. I don't like civilian threats. You've got your five minutes, make it good."

I made it good. I told them of a handful of people who had a dream. A handful of people who wanted their home back. A few lost souls who would rather die trying to live the way they wanted to live than go on living in a world they did not want. And I told them of the great United Galaxies, that had been created to protect the dreams of everyone in it and had forgotten why it had been created. I told them that it did not matter who was right or wrong, because when a man can no longer dream something has gone wrong in the Universe. When I finished, Campesino's face was impassive.

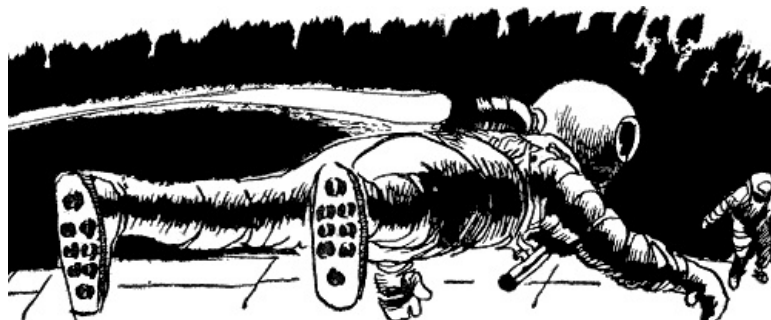
Campesino said, "You heard Commander Stone, men. Close off, Stone, give me a minute to get the vote."

I waited. It was the longest minute of my life.

"You win, Red," Campesino said. He was smiling at me. "Go home, Councillor, battle's over."

The Councillor went. He said there would be hell to pay, and maybe there will be, but I don't think so, they still need us. We lost thirty thousand good men in all the Companies. But when the next dawn came Nova-Maurania was gone. I don't know where they went, or what happened to them. Here in my stronghold I sometimes imagine them safe and rebuilding a green world where they can smoke pipes and live their own lives. And sometimes I imagine them all dead and drifting out there in the infinity of space. I don't think they would mind too much, either way.

THE END



Transcriber's Note: This etext was first published in *Amazing Stories* May 1961. Extensive research did not uncover any evidence that the U.S. copyright on this publication was renewed. Minor spelling and typographical errors have been corrected without note.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK DEAD WORLD ***

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.

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. 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), 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.

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

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.

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

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.

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.