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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ONE OUT OF TEN ***

Television quiz programs with an aspect of having just staged a raid on Fort Knox are very much in the news these days. Certainly the prizes to be won are astronomical and the contestants scarcely less so. Step right up, little lady and tell us why your eyes look so strange! What's that? You want us to read this astounding science fantasy documentary by J. Anthony Ferlaine first? Well—perhaps we should play it safe while the flying saucer folk are watching us!

one out of ten

by ... J. Anthony
Ferlaine

**There may be a town
called Mars in
Montana. But little
Mrs. Freda Dunny
didn't come from
there!**

I WATCHED Don Phillips, the commercial announcer, out of the corner of my eye. The camera in front of me swung around and lined up on my set.

"... And now, on with the show," Phillips was saying. "And here, ready to test your wits, is your quizzing quiz master, Smiling Jim Parsons."

I smiled into the camera and waited while the audience applauded. The camera tally light went on and the stage manager brought his arm down and pointed at me.

"Good afternoon," I said into the camera, "here we go again with another half hour of fun and prizes on television's newest, most exciting, game, 'Parlor Quiz.' In a moment I'll introduce you to our first contestant. But first here is a special message to you mothers ..."

The baby powder commercial appeared on the monitor and I walked over to the next set. They had the first contestant lined up for me. I smiled and took her card from the floor man. She was a middle-aged woman with a faded print dress and old-style shoes. I never saw the contestants until we were on the air. They were screened before the show by the staff. They usually tried to pick contestants who would make good show material—an odd name or occupation—or somebody with twenty kids. Something of that nature.

I looked at the card for the tip off. "Mrs. Freda Dunny," the card said. "Ask her where she comes from."

I smiled at the contestant again and took her by the hand. The tally light went on again and I grinned into the camera.

"Well, now, we're all set to go ... and our first contestant today is this charming little lady right here beside me. Mrs. Freda Dunny." I looked at the card. "How are you, Mrs. Dunny?"

"Fine! Just fine."

"All set to answer a lot of questions and win a lot of prizes?"

"Oh, I'll win all right," said Mrs. Dunny, smiling around at the audience.

The audience tittered a bit at the remark. I looked at the card again.

"Where are you from, Mrs. Dunny?"

"Mars!" said Mrs. Dunny.

"Mars!" I laughed, anticipating the answer. "Mars, Montana? Mars, Peru?"

"No, *Mars!* Up there," she said, pointing up in the air. "The planet Mars. The fourth planet out from the sun."

My assistant looked unhappy.

I smiled again, wondering what the gag was. I decided to play along.

"Well, well," I said, "all the way from Mars, eh? And how long have you been on Earth, Mrs. Dunny?"

"Oh, about thirty or forty years. I've been here nearly all my life. Came here when I was a wee bit of a girl."

"Well," I said, "you're practically an Earthwoman by now, aren't you?" The audience laughed. "Do you plan on going back someday or have you made up your mind to stay here on Earth for the rest of your days?"

"Oh, I'm just here for the invasion," said Mrs. Dunny. "When that's over I'll probably go back home again."

"The invasion?"

"Yes, the invasion of Earth. As soon as enough of us are here we'll get started."

"You mean there are others here, too?"

"Oh, yes, there are several million of us here in the United States already—and more are on the way."

"There are only about a hundred and seventy million people in the United States, Mrs. Dunny," I said. "If there are several million Martians among us, one out of every hundred would have to be a Martian."

"One out of every ten!" said Mrs. Dunny. "That's what the boss said just the other day. 'We're getting pretty close to the number we need to take over Earth.'"

"What do you need?" I asked. "One to one? One Martian for every Earthman?"

"Oh, no," said Mrs. Dunny, "one Martian is worth ten Earthmen. The only reason we're waiting is we don't want any trouble."

"You don't look any different from us Earth people, Mrs. Dunny. How does one tell the difference between a Martian and an Earthman when one sees one?"

"Oh, we don't *look* any different," said Mrs. Dunny. "Some of the kids don't even know they're Martians. Most mothers don't tell their children until they're grown-up. And there are other children who are never told because they just don't develop their full powers."

"What powers?"

"Oh, telepathy, thought control—that sort of thing."

"You mean that Martians can read people's thoughts?"

"Sure! It's no trouble at all. It's very easy really, once you get the hang of it."

"Can you read my mind?" I asked, smiling.

"Sure!" said Mrs. Dunny, smiling up at me. "That's why I said that I'd know the answers. I'll be able to read the answers from your mind when you look at that sheet of paper."

"Now, that's hardly sporting, is it, Mrs. Dunny?" I said, turning to the camera. The audience laughed. "Everybody else has to do it the hard way and here you are reading it from my mind."

"All's fair in love and war," said Mrs. Dunny.

"Tell me, Mrs. Dunny. Why are you telling me about all this? Isn't it supposed to be a secret?"

"I have my reasons," said Mrs. Dunny. "Nobody believes me anyhow."

"Oh, I believe you, Mrs. Dunny," I said gravely. "And now, let's see how you do on the questions. Are you ready?"

She nodded.

"Name the one and only mammal that has the ability to fly," I asked, reading from the script.

"A bat," she said.

"Right! Did you read that from my mind?"

"Oh, yes, you're coming over very clear!" said Mrs. Dunny.

"Try this one," I said. "A princess is any daughter of a sovereign. What is a princess royal?"

"The eldest daughter of a sovereign," she said.

"Correct! How about this one? Is a Kodiak a kind of simple box camera; a type of double-bowed boat; or a type of Alaskan bear?"

"A bear," said Mrs. Dunny.

"Very good," I said. "That was a hard one." I asked her seven more questions and she got them all right. None of the other contestants even came close to her score, so I wound up giving her the gas range and a lot of other smaller prizes.

After we were off the air I followed the audience out into the hall. Mrs. Dunny was walking towards the lobby with an old paper shopping bag under her arm. An attendant was following her with an armful of prizes.

I caught up with her before she reached the door.

"Mrs. Dunny," I said, and she turned around. "I want to talk to you."

"When do I get the gas stove?" she said.

"Your local dealer will send it to you in a few days. Did you give them your address?"

"Yes, I gave it to them. My Philadelphia address, that is. I don't even remember my address at home any more."

"Come, now, Mrs. Dunny. You don't have to keep up that Mars business now that we're off the air."

"It's the truth and I didn't come here just by accident," said Mrs. Dunny, looking over her shoulder toward the attendant who was still holding the prizes. "I came here to see you."

"Me?"

Mrs. Dunny set the paper bag down on the floor and dug down into her pocketbook. She took out a dog-eared piece of white paper and bent it up in her hand.

"Yes," she said finally. "I came to see you. And you didn't follow me out here because you wanted to. I commanded you to come."

"Commanded me to come!" I spluttered. "What for?"

"To prove something to you. Do you see this piece of paper?" She held out the paper in her hand with the blank side toward me. "My address is on this paper. I am reading the address. Concentrate on what I'm reading."

I looked at her.

I concentrated.

Suddenly, I knew.

"Two fifty-one South Eighth Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania," I said aloud.

"You see, it's very easy once you get the hang of it," she said.

I nodded and smiled down at her. Now I understood. I picked up her bag and put my hand on her shoulder.

"Let's go," I said. "We have a lot to talk about."

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*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ONE OUT OF TEN ***

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