

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Thompson's Cat, by Robert Moore Williams

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: Thompson's Cat

Author: Robert Moore Williams

Release Date: April 11, 2010 [EBook #31948]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Greg Weeks, Mary Meehan and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net>

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THOMPSON'S CAT ***



THOMPSON'S CAT

By ROBERT MOORE WILLIAMS

[Transcriber Note: This etext was produced from Planet Stories September 1952. Extensive research did not uncover any evidence that the U.S. copyright on this publication was renewed.]

"It's a dead world," Thompson spoke. There was awe in his voice, and in spite of his sure knowledge that nothing could happen to him or to his crew here on this world, there was also somewhere inside of him the trace of a beginning fear.

Standing beside him on the rooftop of the building, Kurkil spoke in a whisper, asking a question that had been better unasked. "What killed it?"

Thompson stirred fretfully. He hadn't wanted to hear this question, he didn't want to hear it now. His gaze went automatically to the trim lines of the space cruiser resting quietly in the square below the building. His spirits lifted at the sight. That was his ship, he was in charge of this far-flung exploring expedition thrown out from Sol Cluster to the fringes of the universe, thrown out by Earth-sired races beginning their long exploration of the mysteries of

The weird, invisible insect depopulated an entire planet. Now it was felling Thompson's crew as his ship hurtled toward the sun ... certain death for all, including the disease carrier. Forgotten in the panic was Buster, Thompson's wise cat.

space and of the worlds of space. There was pride in the sight of the ship and pride in the thought of belonging to this space-ranging race. Then his gaze went over the deserted city radiating in all directions from them and he was aware again of the touch of fear.

Resolutely he turned the feeling out of his mind, began seeking an answer to Kurkil's question.

This place had been a city once. If you counted buildings and streets, tall structures where people might work quietly and effectively, broad avenues leading out to trim homes where they might rest in peace after their labors of the day, if you counted these things as being important, it was still a city. But if you thought that the important element in the make-up of a city was its inhabitants then this place no longer deserved the name.

It had no inhabitants.

"I don't know what killed it," Thompson said. Before landing they had circled this world. From the air they had seen more than a dozen cities such as this one. All of them dead, all of them deserted, all of them with streets overgrown by shrubbery, the pavements buckling from the simple pressure of roots pushing upward, the buildings falling away into ruin for the same reason. But they had seen no inhabitants. They had seen the roads the inhabitants had built to connect their cities, deserted now. They had seen the fields where these people had once worked, fields that now were turning back into forests. They had seen no evidence of landing fields for air craft or space ships. The race that had built the cities had not yet learned the secret of wings.

From the roof of the building where they stood, the only living creatures to be seen were visible through the plastic viewport of the ship below them—Grant, the communication specialist, and Buster, the ship's cat.

Grant had been left to guard the vessel. Buster had been required to remain within the ship, obviously against his will. He had wanted to come with Thompson. A trace of a grin came to Thompson's face at the sight of the cat. He and Buster were firm mutual friends.

"I don't like this place," Kurkil spoke suddenly. "We shouldn't have landed here."

Kurkil paused, then his voice came again, stronger now, and with overtones of fear in it. "There's death here." He slapped at his arm, stared around him.

"What happened?"

"Something bit me." He showed the back of his hand. A tiny puncture was visible.

"Some insect," Thompson said. The matter of an insect bite was of no concern. Kurkil, and every other member of this expedition, were disease-proof. Back in Sol Cluster vaccines and immunizing agents had been developed against every known or conceivable form of germ or virus. Each member of the crew had been carefully immunized. In addition, they had been proofed against stress, against mounting neural pressure resulting from facing real or imaginary danger.

Barring space collision or an accident on a world they were exploring, nothing could happen to them.

"We checked the air, took soil and vegetation samples, before we landed," Thompson said. "There is nothing here that is harmful to a human." There was comfort in the thought.

Kurkil brightened perceptibly. "But, what happened to the race that built this city?"

"I don't know," Thompson answered. A tinge of gruffness crept into his voice as he forced out of his mind the memories of what they had seen in this building they had entered and had climbed. This had once been an office building, a place where the unknown people who had worked here had handled their business transactions and had kept their records. They had seen no bookkeeping machines, none of the elaborate mechanical devices used in Sol Cluster to record the pulse of commerce. This race had not progressed that far. But they had left behind them books written in an unintelligible script, orders for merchandise still neatly pigeonholed, all in good order with no sign of disturbance.

The workers might have left these offices yesterday, except for the carpets of dust that covered everything.

"There isn't even any animal life left," Kurkil spoke.

"I know."

"But what happened? A race that has progressed to the city-building stage doesn't just get wiped out without leaving some indication of what happened to them."

"Apparently they did just that."

"But it's not possible."

"It happened."

"But—"

"There's Neff," Thompson spoke. Far down the avenue below them, three figures had appeared,

Neff, Fortune, and Ross. Neff tall and slender, Fortune round like a ball, and Ross built square like a block of concrete. Neff saw them on top of the building and beckoned to them. There was urgency in the gesture.

"They've found something," Thompson said. With Kurkil following him he went hastily out of the building.

"What is it?"

"Come and see," Neff answered. Neff's face was gray. Fortune and Ross were silent.

The building in front of which they were standing had been a house once. The architecture resembled nothing they had ever seen on Earth but the purpose of the structure was obvious. Here somebody had lived. Thompson tried to imagine people living here, the husband coming home in the evening to the dinner prepared by the wife, kids running to meet him. His imagination failed.

"Back here," Neff said.

They went around what had been a house into what had been a garden of some kind, a quiet nook where a family might sprawl in peace. "There," Neff said pointing.

The three skeletons were huddled together in an alcove in front of what had once been a shrine. They lay facing the shrine as if they had died praying. Above them in a niche in a wall was—

"An idol," Kurkil whispered.

"They died praying to their god," Thompson said. He was not aware that he had spoken. Three skeletons....

The bones indicated a creature very similar to the human in structure. A large, a middle-sized, and a small skeleton.

"We think the small one is that of a child," Ross spoke. "We think this was a family."

"I see," Thompson said. "Did you find other skeletons?"

"Many others. We found them almost everywhere but usually tucked away in corners, as if the people had tried to hide from something." His voice went suddenly into uneasy silence.

"Any indication as to the cause of death?"

"None. It apparently came on quite suddenly. We judge that the inhabitants had some warning. At least we do not seem to find enough skeletons for a city of this size, so we estimate that part of the population fled, or tried to."

"I see," Thompson repeated tonelessly. He caught a vague impression that something had passed before his eyes, like a darting flicker of light, and he caught, momentarily, a fast rustle in the air, as of souls passing. His mind was on the flight of this race, the mass hegira they had attempted in an effort to escape from some menace. What menace? "What do you think caused it?"

Ross shrugged, a gesture eloquent with a lack of knowledge and of understanding. "War—"

"No wars were fought on this planet," Neff spoke quickly. "These cities show no evidence of conflict."

"Um," Thompson said. The four men were looking uneasily at him. They were waiting for him to make up his mind, to decide on a course of action.

Thompson did not like his own thinking. Something—the blood-brother of death—had been here on this planet, that much was certain. The evidence was everywhere.

"We will return to the ship," Thompson said.

Grant saw them coming, had the lock open for them. His worried face looked out at them. "What gives here?"

"We don't know," Thompson answered. The cat, Buster, pushed forward between Grant's legs, took a long leap at Thompson's chest, made a twenty-claw safe landing there. "Hi, old fellow, were you worried about me?"

They passed through the lock. "Take her up," Thompson said. "We need a little time to think about this enigma. Maybe we can think better when we're not so close to it."

At his words, relief showed on the faces of the men. "Maybe sometime soon we'll be heading for home?" Kurkil spoke, grinning hopefully.

"You can be certain of that," Thompson said.

The ship lifted, hung miles high in the air above the silent planet. The group considered the problem.

"I vote to make a complete investigation," Grant said. He was full of eager enthusiasm. "There was a race here. Something happened to it. We've got to find out what happened because—" He got no further. Slowly the enthusiasm went from his face. "No, that's not possible," he ended.

"There's no danger of the virus that destroyed this race crossing space to Sol Cluster," Kurkil spoke. "The distance is too great."

"The distance wasn't too great for us to cross it," Fortune spoke.

"Please," Thompson interrupted. "We can't use logic on this situation until we have adequate data. The only data we have—" His voice trailed off into silence as his memory presented him with a facsimile of that data—silent, deserted cities, a world going back to vegetation, three skeletons in front of a shrine.

Abruptly he reached a decision. It was impulsive. "Our tour of exploration is near an end anyhow. We're leaving. We're heading back to Sol Cluster. We'll mark this planet on the star maps for further exploration."

The face of every man present brightened as he made the announcement. Sol Cluster! Home! The green world of Earth across the depths of space. In even the thought there was almost enough magic to wipe out the fear of what they'd seen back there on the deserted planet.

Less than an hour later, the drone of the drivers picked up as the ship, already set on course, began to accelerate in preparation for the jump into hyper-flight. Thompson was in his cabin making a final check of the machine-provided flight data. Buster was in his lap half-asleep. Suddenly the cat jumped from his lap and seemed to pounce on some elusive prey in the room. The cat caught what it was seeking, its jaws crunched, it swallowed.

Thompson stared at the cat from disbelieving eyes. "Buster, are you dreaming? Did you dream there was a mouse in here?"

The cat meowed, came toward him, jumped again into his lap and went back to sleep. Thompson returned to his figures. They were correct.

Over the ship's communication system came the soft throb of a gong. The warning that the jump was coming. In his lap, Buster awakened, instantly sank twenty claws into Thompson's clothing. Thompson reached out and took a firm grip on the hand holds on his desk, began to breathe deeply. The gong sounded again. Final warning that the ship was going into hyper-flight. Thompson took as deep a breath as possible, held it.

The gong went into silence. The ship throbbed. The jump was in progress. Thompson had the dazed impression that every atom in his body tried to turn over at once. For a moment, there was a feeling of intense strain. Then the feeling was gone as the ship and its contents passed into hyper-flight. Thompson began to breathe again. In his lap, Buster relaxed his claw holds, began to purr. Buster was an old hand at taking these jumps.

"EEEEEEyoow!"

The eerie scream that came echoing through the ship seemed to lift up every single strand of hair on Thompson's head. Thompson ran out of the cabin. The scream came again, from the lounge. Thompson entered the lounge just in time to see Kurkil standing in the middle of the room, rip the last remnant of clothing from his body. Revealed under the lights, his skin was turning a vivid green.

Fortune was trying to approach him. Kurkil was warning the man off.

"Stay away, stay away. Don't touch me. You'll get it."

In the split second that was needed for Thompson to take in the situation, the green color flowing over Kurkil's body deepened in intensity.

As the color deepened, the screams bubbling on his lips began to die away. He fell slowly, like a man who is coming unhinged one joint at a time.

He was dead before he hit the floor. Dead so completely that not even a convulsive tremor passed through his body.

A frozen silence held the lounge. For this was a dream, a nightmare, wild, distorted imagery.

Fortune's hand waved vaguely in the direction of Sol Cluster. "It looks as if we're not as bug and stress proof as they said we were."

"What happened?"

"He was sitting there in the chair and I thought he was asleep. Then he was screaming and tearing his clothes off." Ross spread his hands. "I tried to help—"

"I know," Thompson said. He was trying to decide what to do. This ship possessed no facilities for handling the dead. Such a contingency had been thought too remote for consideration. Well, there was the ejection port. "Get sheets," Thompson said. With Fortune and Ross helping, he set about doing what had to be done.

Later, in the lounge, they met to decide what had to be done. Neff, leaving the drivers on automatic control, came up from the engine room. Grant came forward from the control room. If any danger presented itself, warning bells would call them back to their posts.

They were a silent and an uneasy group. Only Buster remained unaffected.

"There seems no doubt that we brought the infection back on board ship with us," Thompson said.

He had stated the obvious. It got the answer it deserved. Silence.

"We also must consider the possibility that another of us, possibly all of us, are infected."

No man stirred, no man spoke. Apparently they hoped they had not heard correctly the words that had been spoken. In Thompson's lap Buster grumbled as if he had understood and did not like what had been said.

"What are we going to do?"

"How can we find out what's causing this disease?"

Two voices came. Then came Fortune's voice. "And even if we find out, what can we do about it? *They* couldn't do anything about it."

"The fact that the race back there couldn't stop the disease, doesn't mean we can't stop it. We're a different race with a different metabolism and a different body structure—"

"Kurkil had the same metabolism and the same body structure," Ross said.

"We will do what we can," Thompson spoke flatly. In spite of the fact that these men were supposed to be nerve proof, there was panic in the air. He could sense it, knew that it had to be stopped before it got started. Inwardly he cursed the fact that there was no doctor aboard, but he knew only too well the line of reasoning that had led to the omission of a physician.

"We have a medical library," Ross said, tentatively.

"Yes," Fortune spoke. "And it tells you exactly how to treat every conceivable form of accident but it doesn't say a single damned word about infections, and if it did we don't have any medicine to treat them."

Again silence fell. In Thompson's lap, Buster squirmed, dropped to the floor. Tail extended, body low, he moved across the plastic floor as if he were stalking something that lay beyond the open door. "We'll fumigate anyhow," Thompson said. "We'll scour the ship."

There was some relief in action. The clothing that had been worn by the landing party went out through the ejection lock. Inside the ship, the floors, walls, and ceilings were scoured by sweating men who worked feverishly. Fumigants were spread in every room.

With the spreading of the fumigants, spirits began to rise, but even then the signs of stress were still all too obvious. No one knew the incubation period of the virus. Hours only had been needed to bring Kurkil to his death. But days might pass before the virus developed in its next victim.

Months or even years might pass before they were absolutely sure they were free from any chance of infection.

By the time the ship reached Sol Cluster, and the automatic controls stopped its hyper-flight, they might all be dead.

If that happened, the ship's controls would automatically stop its flight. It would be picked up by the far-ranging screens of the space patrol, a ship would be sent out to board it and bring it in.

At the thought of what would happen then, Thompson went hastily forward to the control room. Grant, thin-lipped and nervous, was on duty there. Thompson hastily began plotting a new course. Grant watched over his shoulder.

"Make this change," Thompson said.

"But, Captain—" Grant protested. The man's face had gone utterly white as he realized the implications of this new course. "No. We can't do that. It'll mean—"

"I know what it will mean. And I'm in my right mind, I hope. This course is a precaution, just in case nobody is left alive by the time we reach Sol Cluster."

"But—"

"Make the change," Thompson ordered bluntly.

Reluctantly Grant fed the new course into the computers. A throb went through the vessel as the ship shifted in response.

"We'll come out of hyper-flight in less than three hours," Grant spoke. "Heaven help us if this course is not changed before that time."

"If this course is not changed before that time, Heaven alone can help us. From now on, you're not to leave this control room for an instant."

"Yes, sir."

With Buster following behind him, Thompson left the control room.

"Yooooow!" The scream coming from the lounge this time was in a different key and had a different sound. But the meaning was the same as it had been when Kurkil had screamed. Thompson went forward on the run.

The victim was Ross. Like Kurkil, he was tearing his clothes off. Like Kurkil, he was turning green. When he went down, he did not rise again.

As he stood staring down at Ross, Thompson had the vague impression of whirring wings passing near him. Whispering wings, as if a soul were taking flight.

From the engine room Neff appeared. "I heard somebody scream over the intercom. Oh, I see." His face worked, his jaws moved as if he was trying to speak. But no sound came.

Fortune emerged from his quarters to look down at Ross. "Our fumigating didn't work, huh?"

"Maybe he caught the bug on the planet," Thompson said. He tried to put conviction into his voice. The effort failed. "Get sheets," he said.

There was no prayer. There was no burial ceremony. The body went through the ejection port and disappeared in the vast depths of space.

Thompson returned to his cabin, slumped down at his desk, Fortune and Neff following.

Buster meowed. "Okay, pal." The cat jumped into Thompson's lap.

"I guess there's not much point in trying to kid ourselves any longer," Fortune said. His voice was dull and flat, without tone and without spirit. A muscle in Neff's cheek was twitching.

"I don't understand you," Thompson said.

"Hell, you understand me well enough. The facts are obvious. We've either all got the virus, or it's here in the ship, and we will get it. All we're doing is waiting to see who goes next. What I want to know is—Who'll shove the last man through the ejection port?"

"I don't know," Thompson answered.

"Isn't there anything else we can do?" The tic in Neff's cheek was becoming more pronounced.

"If there is, I don't know—What the hell, Buster?" The cat which had been lying in his lap, suddenly leaped to the floor. Tail extended, crouched, eyes alert, the cat seemed to be trying to follow the flight of something through the air above him.

Very vaguely, very dimly, Thompson caught the rustle of wings.

The actions of the cat, and the sound, sent a wave of utter cold washing over his body.

Before he could move, the cat leaped upward, caught something in snapping jaws.

In the same split second Thompson moved. Before Buster had had time to swallow, Thompson had caught him behind the jaws, forcing them shut. On his desk was a bell jar. He lifted it, thrust the cat's head under it, forced his thumb and forefinger against the jaws of the cat.

The outraged Buster disgorged something. Thompson jerked the cat's head from under the jar, slammed down the rim. The angry cat snarled at him. Neff and Fortune were staring at him from eyes that indicated they thought he had lost his senses. Thompson paid them no attention. He was too busy watching something inside the bell jar even to notice that they existed.

He could not see the creature under the jar.

He knew it could fly but he did not know its shape or size. He could hear it hitting the falls of the jar. And each time it hit the wall, a tiny greenish smudge appeared at the point of impact.

"What—what the hell have you got there?" Neff whispered.

"I don't know for sure. But I think I've got the carrier of the virus."

"What?"

"Watch."

"I can't see anything."

"Nor can I yet, but I can hear it and I can see the places where it hits the wall of the jar. There's something under the jar. Something that Buster has been seeing all along."

"What?"

Thompson pointed at the jar. "One or several of those things came into the ship when the lock was open. We couldn't see them, didn't know they existed. But Buster saw them. He caught one

of them in this cabin soon after we took off. I thought he was playing a game to amuse himself, or —" He broke off. From the back of his mind came a fragment of history, now in the forgotten Dark Ages of Earth, whole populations had been ravaged and destroyed by a fever that was carried by some kind of an insect. Did they have some kind of an insect under his jar?

Holding his breath, Thompson watched.

The pounding against the walls of the jar was growing weaker. Then it stopped. On the desk top, a smudge appeared. Wings quavered there, wings that shifted through a range of rainbow colors as they became visible.

As the flutter of the wings stopped the whole creature became visible. Made up of some kind of exceedingly thin tissue that was hardly visible, it was about as big as a humming bird.

Silence held the room. Thompson was aware of his eyes coming to focus on the long pointed bill of the creature.

"Alive it was not visible at all," Fortune whispered. "Dead, you can see it." His voice lifted, picked up overtones of terror. "Say an hour or so ago Ross was complaining that something had bit him."

Like the last remnant of a picture puzzle fitting together, something clicked in Thompson's mind. "And Kurkil. While we were out of the ship something bit him."

Silence again. His eyes went from Neff to Fortune. "Did—"

They shook their heads.

"Then that ties up the package," Thompson whispered. "This creature carried the virus, or poison, or whatever it was. Without being bitten, the virus cannot spread. We've found the cause. We've got it licked."

He was aware of sweat appearing on his face, the sweat of pure relief. He sank back into his chair. Buster, recovering from his indignity at the outrage he had suffered, jumped to the top of the desk, settled down with his nose against the glass, watching the dead creature inside the bell jar.

"He caught one of those things right in this cabin," Thompson whispered. A shudder passed over him and was gone. He had been so close to death, and had not known it. Buster had saved him.

Instead of seeking protection from him, the cat, in a sense, had been protecting him. His gaze centered fondly on the cat.

"What if there are more of those things in the ship?" Fortune spoke.

"We can solve that one," Thompson spoke. "Space suits. And, now that we know what we're looking for, we can clean out the ship. If we don't, Buster will do it for us."

"Space suits!" As if he had heard no more than those two words, Fortune ran from the room. He returned with three suits. They hastily donned them.

"No damned bug can bite through one of these things," Neff said exultantly. "Say, what about Grant? Hadn't we better take him a suit too?"

"I should say so. Fortune...." But Fortune was already leaving the room on his errand. Thompson snapped open the intercom system. "Grant?"

"Yes, what is it?"

"We've found the cause and we've got the disease licked."

Grant's voice a shout coming back from the control room. "Thank God. I've been sitting here watching Sol grow bigger and bigger...." His voice suddenly choked, went into silence, then came again, asking a question. "Is it all right to change course now?"

"Definitely it's all right," Thompson answered. "In fact, it's an order."

An instant later, the ship groaned as the direction of flight was shifted. Thompson took a deep breath, was aware that Neff was staring at him. "What was that he said about watching Sol grow bigger and bigger? Say, what course were we on?"

"Collision course with the sun," Thompson answered.

"What?" Neff gasped. "Do you mean to say that you were going to throw the ship into the sun?"

Slowly Thompson nodded. "I didn't know whether we would be alive or not but I didn't want this ship to enter Sol Cluster and turn loose there the virus that had already depopulated a planet."

He spoke slowly, with the sure knowledge of a desperate danger safely passed. Neff stared at him from round and frightened eyes.

On the desk top Buster gave up his vigil, meowed, and jumped into the captain's lap. With the thick gloves of his space suit clad hands, Thompson fondly stroked him.

Buster arched his back in grateful appreciation and began to purr.

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.