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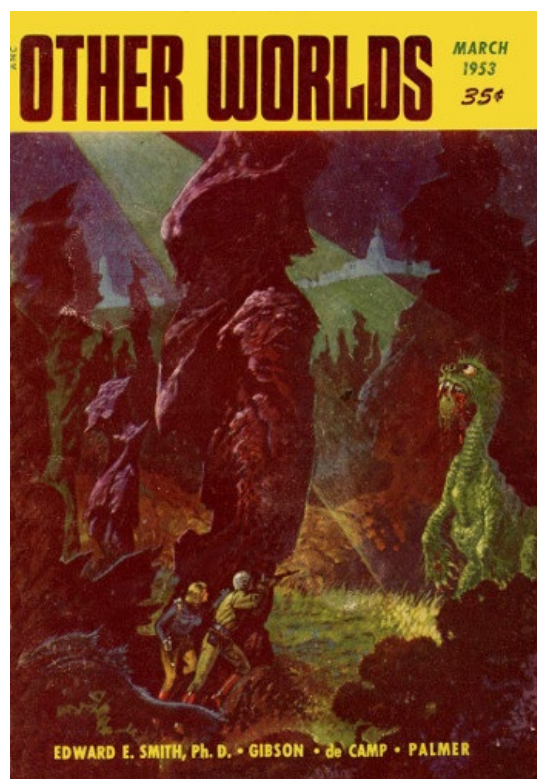
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK PUBLICITY STUNT ***



PUBLICITY STUNT

By Robert Moore Williams

Illustrated by Joe W. Tillotson

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The orders were to build up Venus, make it sound like the gateway to Paradise for the average Earthman—fog-flies, flying snakes and "tame" Venusians included.

"Just go right ahead and start chewing on me!" Molock briskly invited the Venusian, Shad Brisbee. "When you get a square meal, I'll get a lunch!"

Rita Morgan didn't turn a hair at the challenge but I thought Captain Wilkerson, who was officially in charge of us, was going to faint. "No, no, NO!" Wilkerson screamed. "Molock, you're getting us all into trouble. You're—"

"Sheddap!" Molock said to Wilkerson. He turned again to the Venusian, Shad Brisbee. "You heard what I said. If you want to try to start carving on me with one of those frog stickers you've got stuck in your belt, hop right to it. But remember, by Harry, while you're doing your carving, I'm going to be doing a little light whittling myself."

Except for the needle pistol in his pocket, Molock was unarmed. Lifting hands as big as hams, he looked Shad Brisbee square in all of the Venusian's eyes that happened to be turned toward him at the moment. Molock had the full attention of all six of those eyes. The expression on Shad Brisbee's face indicated that if he had had six more eyes, he would have been concentrating all of them on the antics of this mad human.

Shad Brisbee was seven feet tall, he must have weighed close to 300 pounds. Molock's six feet, 185 pound frame was a pygmy beside the Venusian. Shad Brisbee fingered the knives in his belt as if he was considering accepting Molock's invitation, then suddenly spread his hands. Protesting sound bellowed out of him.

"But you 'ave landed right in the middle of our dancing ground!"

"Then by Harry! dance somewhere else!" Molock shouted.

I thought at first that Shad Brisbee was going to explode. He puffed himself up until he looked to be eight feet tall. Indignation turned him green. Each of his six eyes turned yellow and he glared at Molock out of all of them.

"Molock, his dancing ground is sacred!" Wilkerson croaked.

"And to me, staying alive is sacred," Molock answered. "Which is the sacrest, my staying alive or his dancing ground?"

"But the way you're acting now, you're going to get us all killed!" Wilkerson screamed.

"Am I?" Molock answered. "Watch this!" He turned again to Shad Brisbee. "Listen, you six-eyed baboon. We landed in the middle of your dancing ground by accident but we're going to stay right where we are as long as we damn well please. Get it? *We're going to stay here as long as we damn well please.* And neither you nor any other of your six-eyed tribe is going to do anything about it."

I was holding my breath. Wilkerson looked as if he was about to faint. Only Rita seemed to be enjoying this scene. Perhaps she had illusions that two brawny giants were battling for her, which was a big mistake on her part. Shad Brisbee wouldn't have had her, or any other human woman, in his harem as a gift. If she was inspiring Molock to put on his act, then maybe he was battling for her sake. I had the impression that if Wilkerson had thought that she was inspiring Molock to this act, the captain would have drowned her in the nearest mudhole, publicity department or no publicity department. And I would have helped him.

Shad Brisbee puffed himself up until he looked as if he weighed 400 pounds. He fingered his knives in his belt, shifted his weight on his bare splayed feet. He extended two of his eyes and looked backward at the jungle behind him as if he was desperately hoping that some of his tribe would turn up to help him dispose of this brash human. The other four eyes continued to glare at Molock.

"There's none of your tribe around to help you," Molock stated, waving his fists. "It's just you and me."

Shad Brisbee shifted uncomfortably. He didn't know quite what to make of us. We were humans. Since he was a "tame" Venusian, he knew quite a lot about humans. We had landed right in the middle of the huge cleared space that his tribe used as a dancing ground. This in itself was sufficient reason for him to destroy us utterly. Each of his six eyes revealed quite clearly that he longed to destroy us and that only Molock was keeping him from doing it.

"Well?" Molock said, waving his fists. "If you're ready to start getting that square meal, I'm ready to start eating my lunch."

Shad Brisbee took a deep breath. Somewhere inside of him he made up his mind.

"It is all right for you to land on our dancing ground," he said. The way he spoke, the words hurt him.

Wilkerson, Rita, Molock, and I all beamed.

"But you must be gone in one zonar!" Shad Brisbee snarled. "Or I will tear you all to pieces with my own bare hands." Saying these words didn't hurt him. He enjoyed every one of them. Judging from the way his hands worked as he spoke, he would enjoy even more translating his words into action. "Be gone in one zonar—or else!" Turning, he stalked into the jungle.

I quit breathing again. The smile went from Wilkerson's face. Rita looked a little perturbed. Only

Molock was unconcerned even though he knew that a zonar was less than an hour and he wouldn't be gone from this place in two weeks, and then only if we were lucky.

"Did you see me out-bluff him?" Molock said, grinning. "Did you see me run a sandy on that six-eyed idiot?"

"You were marvelous, simply marvelous," Rita murmured.

"Oh, hell!" Wilkerson shouted. If there had been a stone wall handy for him to butt his head against, I'm sure he would have felt much better. "Yaas, you bluffed him. You bluffed him so goddamned good that we'll all be dead before we get out of this place. Remember, this is his country, this is his tribal dancing ground—"

"Captain, I'm sure you are taking much too negative a view," Rita interrupted.

Since she was a woman, Wilkerson couldn't slug her. But woman or not, he looked as if he was about to do it.

"I'm not taking nearly as negative a view as Shad Brisbee will take when he comes back and wants his dancing ground," Wilkerson said, bitterly.

For a moment, Molock looked worried.

"You were yelling for a light lunch," Wilkerson said. "You may find you have bitten off more than you can chew. Now I'm going into that ship and get headquarters on the radio and see if I can get some help out here in time to save our necks. In the meantime, by thunder, you get ready to take care of Shad Brisbee."

Turning, Wilkerson stalked toward the ship. Indignation bristled in every step he took. We followed him with reluctance.

Beneath my breath I cursed Trans-Space, Inc., its publicity department, and George Cooper. Cooper was head of the publicity department. It was his brilliant idea that had landed us here in the middle of Venus, where Shad Brisbee was giving us one zonar to get off of his dancing ground—or else.

Of course, you know that Trans-Space, Inc., has a monopoly on carrying passengers and freight to and from Venus, but what you probably don't know is that from the financial end, things have been a little tough for the company. Now don't go getting your sympathy aroused about this poor suffering corporation being down to its last billion credits. Let Trans-Space sympathize with itself, it's quite capable of doing the job very competently. It is also capable of hiring boys like George Cooper to help it sympathize with itself. Cooper had dreamed up the idea that the way to help the financial situation was to encourage human colonizing on Venus. If they could get several thriving human colonies settled on the Veiled Planet, the line would not only pick up revenue from transporting the colonists to Venus but it would also pick up some profitable freight business. In the long run, they foresaw a very happy increase in traffic.

One joker they ran into right from the start was that nobody but a damned fool wanted to go to Venus and argue with six-eyed apes like Shad Brisbee over the rights to their dancing grounds. Also, nobody wanted to put up with the fog flies and the flying snakes and the what-nots.

Cooper knew how to change all that. "We'll make films, write books, publish pamphlets—all of them emphasizing the good points of Venus. We'll make this planet look and sound like a seed catalogue. We'll soon have thousands, maybe millions of people, coming here. Build Venus up. Make people see Venus maybe not quite as good as heaven but at least as wonderful as Eden!"

This was where Wilkerson and Molock and Rita Morgan and yours truly, Sam Crane got into the act. Rita, who was the apple of Cooper's eye, got the assignment of taking the three dimensional movies in full color and full sound that would make Venus attractive. Of course, on the sound side we had Cooper's permission to dub out the screams of any Venusian getting swallowed by a forty-foot boa constrictor. Wilkerson, Molock, and I were included to fly the ship and help Rita.

In other words, it was our job to dig up the raw material that the publicity department could use to sell a bill of goods to suckers back on Earth who could be flim-flammed into making the big hop to Venus.

In getting these pictures of Eden in the Sky, we had hunted up the tamest of all tame Venusians, Shad Brisbee. We knew him, he knew us. To my mind, the fact that he knew us was not to our advantage. In some ways, I would have preferred taking our pictures among some of the wilder tribes, who didn't know us. But Know-All George Cooper had decided that the tame Shad Brisbee was just the lad for us. He had loaded the ship with trade goods and had told us where to go. All of this might have worked out fine, if we had not damaged the drive and had to make a forced landing right in the middle of Shad Brisbee's tribal dancing ground.

You may not know it, but these Venusians are funny about dancing. They don't go in for cultural amusements, there isn't a ball park or a library on the planet, a pin ball machine, a golf course, or anything else that might make life more cultivated. But every Venusian has his private dancing ground and every tribe has a big one. For amusement, the Venusians dance. They dance in the morning and in the afternoon. They dance to celebrate the beginning of a spell of wet weather and the end of it. The male Venusians dance as their squaws go out in the morning to gather fruits and vegetables, they dance in the afternoon when the squaws come home. At night, the squaws join in and everybody, big and little, old and young, dances.

They hold elaborate contests to determine who is the best tribal dancer. He's the chief, the big shot, the boss. They hold contests between tribes, everybody gets drunk, everybody dances.

Personally, I'll say one thing for the Venusians, it always seemed to me that dancing contests were a better way to settle personal and tribal problems than war, but the Venusians are just benighted, ignorant natives with no knowledge of the finer things of life. This doesn't mean they can't and won't fight—they fight alligators and flying snakes and blue tigers—but they just don't fight each other. Any personal or private quarrels they settle by dancing it out.

I've heard learned professors from Earth lecture on the vast satisfaction to be derived from expressing the kinesthetic sense, the rapture that goes with movements of the body, the sweet pure flame of mood expressed by body movement and gesture. All of this may mean something, to the professors. So far as I'm concerned, the Venusians just like to dance.

If you want to start a ruckus—and but good—just suggest to one of the males that things would be a lot better around the home place if he spent more of his time working and less dancing. If you want to start a real fracas, just come between a Venusian and his dancing. Hell hath no fury —

I know, this is not the way it is written up in the books. The authors usually speak of the "quaint" Venusian dancing customs, but this is the way it is.

Shad Brisbee might be a tame Venusian to the publicity department, but when we landed right in the middle of his tribe's dancing ground, you could guarantee he would revert to the wild state.

With Wilkerson stamping the ground ahead of us, we moved toward the ship.

Whuuuuuup!

An arrow eight feet long came out of the jungle behind us, passed between us, whammed into the open lock of the ship ahead of us.

It beat us to our destination, but it didn't beat us much. I don't know who led the way but it was my opinion that Wilkerson damned near beat that arrow into the ship. Jumping into the ship, we slammed the lock.

"Whew!" Wilkerson said, mopping sweat from his face.

"Just an arrow," Molock said. "Heck, they're nothing. Shad Brisbee and his boys will never get anywhere with arrows. And they haven't got any weapons except spears, clubs, knives." He sounded very comfortable about the situation.

"But we haven't even got a gun, except for your spring pistol!" Wilkerson said. For several minutes, he spoke freely and movingly about George Cooper. It had been Cooper's idea that we go unarmed. "Treat these natives with friendliness and they'll treat you with friendliness. No guns!" Cooper had decreed.

"Wait until I get that damned Cooper on the radio!" Wilkerson said, stalking into the control cabin.

"There won't be anything to this," Molock said. "Cooper will send out a couple of ships and blow these idiots to hell and gone. Or scare 'em to death. Let's go into the galley and have a beer."

We were starting on our second can of beer when Wilkerson stumbled into the galley. He had a glazed look in his eyes and he was waving his hands and sort of frothing at the mouth. Snatching up the can of beer Molock had just opened, he drained it.

"When will the ships be here?" Molock asked.

Wilkerson blew foam from his lips. "They won't!" he said.

"What?" Molock gasped. "Do you mean those dirty dogs are going to leave us here to be murdered by a bunch of six-eyed apes?"

"Cooper was mad as hell because we had crash landed. He wanted to know what the hell I meant by damaging company property. From the way he sounded, the cost of the repairs was coming out of his lunch money."

"I'll kill that Cooper!" Molock screamed. "Doesn't he know our lives are in danger?"

"He seemed to think that maintaining peaceful relations with the Venusians was more important than our necks," Wilkerson explained. "He said that if Shad Brisbee wanted to knife us for landing on his dancing ground, it was all right with Trans-Space and with him."

"But Rita is here!" Molock raged. "Doesn't he see he's risking the life of a woman?"

"He said that Trans-Space doesn't discriminate between its employees because of sex," Wilkerson answered. "Open me another can of beer, somebody. I feel faint."

"Let me at that radio!" Molock screamed. "I want to talk to that Cooper."

He slammed out of the galley. While he was gone we drank beer vigorously. When he returned his face was ash-colored. "What did Cooper say?" Wilkerson asked.

"He said that good publicity was more important than our necks, that if we are going to bring colonists here, we have to be able to prove to them how peaceful Venus is."

"Um," Wilkerson said. "What else did the good man say?"

"He fired me!" Molock sounded as if he was strangling. "He told me to come in and get my pay."

When I asked him how I was to get there, he said I was to walk."

"Um," Wilkerson said. "Well, go right ahead and start walking. You bluffed Shad Brisbee once. You can do it again."

"You're as bad as Cooper!" Molock screamed. "Shad Brisbee would murder me if he caught me outside this ship. I'm not a damned Venusian, I'm fair game to him."

"Nah, he wouldn't hurt you," Wilkerson said, "Hell, he's just an ignorant native. All he's got are knives and clubs and spears and bows and arrows—just a native. He's easy to bluff. Hell, you're a human being. He probably looks on you as a sort of a god. At least some of the literature I saw one of the trained seals pounding out in the publicity department said the natives regarded humans as minor gods who can do no wrong."

Whaaam! An arrow smashed against the plastite hull window bounced off. One point was definitely to our advantage. No weapon possessed by the Venusians could get through the steel hull or the plastite view ports of the ship. We were as safe as sardines in a can—unless the Venusians found a can opener.

We sat in the galley and morosely drank beer and considered how best to draw our wills.

"Hey, look!" Molock gasped, pointing toward the plastite window.

At first glance it seemed to me that the whole Venusian race had put in its appearance. There were hundreds of Venusians, thousands of them, coming from all directions. Shad Brisbee had called in his pals from miles around and they were all heading our way.

Wilkerson's face went white. "This looks like the end, boys," he said.

"Nah!" Molock answered. "They'll never get through the hull. I'll figure out something."

"You had better get your slide rule into action. Uh! What was that?"

That was the ship lurching as if it was about to turn over. From the ports, we could see what was happening. Venusians were on both sides of the ship. Those on one side were pushing while those on the other side were pulling. When the ship settled back, the ones on the second side pushed like hell, setting up a rhythmic rocking motion that was rapidly threatening to turn the ship over.

"You could turn over a mountain like this!" Wilkerson whispered, as the ship lurched. "My God! They're going to try to roll the whole damned ship into the swamp."

On one side of Shad Brisbee's dancing ground was jungle. On the other side was a deep pool of muddy water. Staring at it, Wilkerson seemed to talk out of a trance. "Drowned, like rats in a trap, in my own ship!" He took a deep breath, turned to Molock. "Go out and bluff Shad Brisbee now!"

Molock also took a deep breath and rose to his feet. "I'll just go do that," he said, moving toward the lock.

All of us were too stunned to try to stop him.

When he opened the outer door of the lock, the noise that came in was like the howling of a forest full of baboons. But the rocking of the ship stopped as soon as he appeared. I don't know why the Venusians didn't kill him before he had a chance to open his mouth, but probably they were too surprised at his appearance to take immediate action.

"I want to talk to Shad Brisbee!" he yelled at the top of his voice.

Shad appeared in the throng. He looked more than seven feet tall and I would have sworn he had more than six eyes. The throng grew so quiet you could hear these tame Venusians slobbering as they thirsted for human blood.

"I'll dance you ... for the right ... to keep our ship ... on your dancing ground ... until it is repaired ..." Molock said.

"The hopeless fool!" Wilkerson gasped. "The utter idiot ..."

"You will dance *me*?" You could have heard Shad Brisbee scream for miles around. The idea appalled him, because it was a direct challenge, and it also appealed to him because he was absolutely certain that he, or any other Venusian could out-dance any human who had ever put foot on the Veiled Planet. "I'll do it!" Shad Brisbee roared. "Make room for the dancers!" His voice was a howl that shook wondering echoes out of the jungle.

Molock came back into the galley. "You can't do it," Wilkerson gasped. "These dances are endurance contests. That big baboon has done nothing but dance all his life. He can dance straight into next week ..."

"I'm stalling for time," Molock said. "I want you to get on that radio again and convince that damned Cooper he's got to get here and help us. All he has to do is swoop low in a ship over this place and these baboons will take to the jungle or the swamp to dodge the rocket blast. Tell him."

"I'll tell him," Wilkerson said grimly. "The question is—will he act on what I tell him."

Molock's eyes went to Rita. "Honey, I want you to get those cameras going and keep them going. I want this recorded for posterity, if for nobody else."

Rita was shaken and scared. But there was good stuff down inside that girl. "Will do," she whispered. She got to her feet and headed for the observation dome in the top of the ship where the cameras were located.

Molock turned to me. "I've got a little job for you, Sam." Out of his pocket, he slipped the little needle gun. "I'm going to have to dance against that six-eyed baboon. When he gets to dancing real good and everybody is all excited, I want you to shoot him in the butt with one of these needles."

"But—" I whispered.

"Exactly," Molock said. "It won't kill him, but a couple of these needles will slow him down considerably."

I regarded the weapon with horror. "But that means I'll have to go out there where all those Venusians are!" Maybe this wasn't a heroic thing to say but the thought just popped out of my mind. Anyhow, I wasn't feeling very heroic.

"Yah!" Molock said.

"But—"

"I'll be out there," Molock said. "I'll be out there dancing. All you've got to do is squat on the ground."

"Okay," I said. The word cost me a desperate effort but I said it.

We went out together....

The Venusians had already cleared a circle fifty yards in diameter. They clustered around this circle like hungry dogs waiting for the kill. Shad Brisbee, stark naked, grinning out of all of his six eyes, looking nine feet tall and fit to dance all month, grinned as he waited. In Shad Brisbee's mind, here was a lamb being led to the slaughter.

Shad Brisbee and I had one thing in common—we both agreed on this lamb led to the slaughter idea.

I squatted on the ground at the edge of the circle and tried to lose myself between the legs of the Venusians towering over me.

Have you ever seen a Venusian dance? If you haven't, you have missed one of the weirdest sights in the solar system. They do everything in the books on ballets, ball room dancing, tap dancing, they also turn flip-flops and walk on their hands. They do things that no human being will ever believe until he sees it.

As big and as ponderous as he was, Shad Brisbee went into his act by turning three quick back flips.

I'll give Molock credit, he could do tricks I had never guessed he could do. He kept even with Shad. But within thirty minutes he was beginning to pant. Going round the circle, dancing every step of the way, he found wind to yell at Wilkerson, who was peering from the lock.

"Any news ... from that damned Cooper?"

"Operations contacted him ... in a bar!" Wilkerson yelled. "Cooper said you could dance your own way out of this ..."

"The dirty dog!" Molock screamed.

The next time he came around the circle, waving his hands and bending double as he imitated one of Shad Brisbee's more intricate steps, he whispered to me, "Bunt him...."

Keeping the little spring gun out of sight in my hand, I waited until the Venusian's back was turned to me, and pressed the trigger. The spring clicked softly. I caught a glint of the needle as it went home in Shad's backside.

He went right on dancing as if nothing had happened.

The next time he came around the circle, Molock whispered, "Let him have another one...."

As I started to pull the trigger, the sky seemed to fall down on top of me. A ham-sized Venusian hand smashed me downward.

"No tricks!" a Venusian voice snarled into my ear.

The gun was jerked away from me. About twenty-four eyes in my vicinity were concentrated on me, each one glaring in its own individual way. I was given to understand that if I attempted to take any further part in the proceedings, I would be fed to the nearest alligator.

"What happened?" Molock yelled, as he danced by again.

"They caught me. You'll have to out-dance him honestly."

"But I can't go much farther—" He was covered with sweat and his chest was heaving.

I felt like the lowest kind of a dog for having let him down. Molock might be an utter damned fool, but when the chips were down, he was in there trying for all of us. He had built all his hopes on this trick with the needle gun.

Circling the dancing ground, he suddenly stopped, stood with his hands on his hips, chest heaving.

"You give up?" Shad Brisbee shouted. "You quit?"

"I do not—give up!" Molock wheezed.

"But you have stop dancing."

"I have danced your way—for two zonars. Turn about is fair play. Now you dance—my way."

"Your way?" Astonishment showed in all of Shad Brisbee's six eyes. "You humans don't dance, you don't know how."

"That's where you're wrong!" Molock answered. "We know how to dance in a new way—a way you stupid Venusians have never heard of."

I didn't know whether Shad Brisbee and the others were more excited over the insult or the thought of a new way to dance. Dancing was the blood of life to them.

"No way Venusians not know!" Shad Brisbee shouted. "We know *everything* about dancing, all steps, all—"

"Hell, you don't know this way," Molock interrupted. "I doubt if you could do it even if I taught it to you."

He was stalling for time but as he was stalling he was getting his strength back. Personally, it was my opinion that all he knew about dancing he had learned in a dime-a-dance hall in some space port on Earth, but if he wanted to teach this to the Venusians, it was all right with me.

"Show him to me!" Shad Brisbee screamed. "I can do him."

"All right. Watch this." Weaving forward with his hands up, Molock slugged Shad Brisbee on the jaw.



The startled Venusian almost turned a somersault as he went over backward. A cry of rage arose, both from Shad and the onlookers.

"Kill the human—"

"Slaughter him—"

"Now you try to hit me!" Molock ignored the cries for his blood. He weaved away with his fists up.

"That's not dancing!" Shad Brisbee roared.

"It's *our* kind of dancing, the human way to dance," Molock answered. "Yah, you big yellow-belly, you can't do it!"

I held my breath. The hopeless idiot—or maybe genius—was trying to turn a dancing contest into a boxing match. And he did. Screaming, Shad Brisbee charged, swung a tremendous hay-maker at Molock's jaw. Dodging, Molock slugged him behind the ear.

For the next fifteen minutes, to my awed and thunderously appreciative delight, I watched a Venusian get carved to pieces. Molock hit Shad Brisbee with everything up to and including his elbows and knees. He hit the Venusian in the gullet, the stomach, all over the head, and he knocked at least three eyes out of commission.

It took him exactly fifteen minutes to reduce a seven foot Venusian giant to the status of a

whimpering child.

"I give ... I give ..." Shad Brisbee gasped. "You better dancer than me...."

"You will allow us to stay here unmolested, until we can get our ship repaired?" Molock demanded.

"Sure ... Sure ... I do that for you ... if you do one thing for me...."

"What's that?"

"Here, I whisper to you...." Leaning forward, Shad whispered something in Molock's ear. The human looked a little surprised and startled. "Okay," he said. "It's a deal." Then, as if some secret thought was pleasing him tremendously, he began to grin.

"I'll say it's a deal," he said.

"Boys, we go home now!" Shad Brisbee shouted.

With awed and appreciative looks at the greatest dancer they had ever seen, they went streaming away from Shad Brisbee's dancing ground.

An equally awed and appreciative Wilkerson met us in the lock. Rita was there too, but Rita wasn't awed. She climbed right up into Molock's arms. "Did you get the pics?" he asked her.

"I got them, darling."

"Then we've got the world by the tail, honey. We've got the world by the tail."

It took two weeks to get our ship repaired. During this time, Molock was a mighty busy man, both taking pictures of his own selection and spending hours each day with Shad Brisbee. In spite of the fact that he had been licked, Shad harbored no animosity. He and Molock struck up a beautiful friendship.

When we finally got the ship repaired and was about ready to take off, a ship arrived from headquarters, carrying a most important visitor, a Mr. George Cooper, head of publicity. Wearing beautiful clothes, his fingers manicured, delicately perfumed—for he was a sensitive man—he descended from the lock.

Molock and Shad Brisbee greeted him.

Cooper smiled urbanely at them.

"He wants to dance, Shad," Molock said. "Try out your new step on him, the one I've been teaching you."

With one single forearm jab, Shad Brisbee knocked Mr. Cooper clear back into the ship the publicity man had just left. Then Shad turned eagerly to Molock.

"Tell me ... do I dance him good...?"

"Shad," Molock said, beaming. "You dance him beautiful."

The smile on Molock's face was a heavenly thing.

Well, that's about it, except for the pics, the ones Rita took of the dance and other carefully selected horror shots of some of the less beautiful aspects of this Eden in the Sky.

I understand these pics are terrific box office on Earth. All we know is that they're kicking credits in to us so fast that we're all getting rich, Wilkerson, Molock, Mrs. Molock, and me.

Of course, we're not exactly trying to double-cross the publicity department of Trans-Space, Inc., but if you are thinking of coming to Venus, it might be wise to see our picture first. It will give you a little more rounded view of a place that is a little short of Heaven ... about a couple of billion miles short of it.

And, if you are thinking of coming to Venus, you had better take one other thing into consideration—the promise Molock made to Shad Brisbee before the Venusian would concede defeat in dancing. Shad made Molock promise to teach him this new and wonderful form of dancing that humans knew.

Molock spent two weeks doing exactly that, which accounts for the enthusiastic greeting Mr. Cooper got from one of the tame Venusians.

I understand this form of "dancing" is spreading like wild fire over the Veiled Planet.

If you are thinking of going to Venus, you had better take in consideration not only the fog flies, the forty foot boa constrictors, the blue tigers, but the fact that every blasted Venusian native now considers himself an expert at "human dancing" and spends most of his spare time looking for humans to practice with.

Unless you're fully prepared to "dance" with these Venusians, you had better think twice before deciding to settle on this Eden in the Sky.

THE END

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