The Firefly

An Honors Thesis (ID 499)

By

Sandra L. King

Thesis Director

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Ball State University

Muncie, Indiana

February, 1979
Introduction

When I decided to write "The Firefly," I had two main purposes in mind. First, I wanted to attempt a creative project; and second, I wanted to learn about the business of writing fiction - especially as it applies to "science fiction."

Since beginning the project, I have developed a keener awareness of the difficulties involved in such writing. It is one thing to admire the structure of a building, but quite another to build an edifice. As a result of such an experiment, one sees and appreciates the abilities and talents of writers of fiction more acutely.

I believe that a thesis of this nature should be included in the education of every English major. I have gained some insights into the process of writing fiction that I could never have learned by attending lectures on the subject. There is a time when theory must step aside and allow experience center stage.

In conclusion, the time involved in the thesis was well spent. As a result of this exercise in the art of "science fiction," I feel that I have become a more knowledgeable and capable student of literature.
Part One

I

Dr. Joseph Tate held the drawing slightly higher as he said, "Now, who can tell me what ancient animal this is?"

A boy in the back row responded by saying it might be a deer.

"Well," Tate replied slowly, "It is a member of the deer family. Can anyone be more specific?"

A slim, blonde girl raised her hand hesitantly. Tate nodded to her.

"Professor Tate," she said, "what did you call those horn things?"

"Those are antlers, Peggy, but who knows the name for this creature?"

One hand was raised in the back row. Tate noticed her chestnut-colored hair before his eyes focused on the face of Susan Bentley.

"Susan?"

"It was called a moose. It is distinguished from the rest of the deer family by its large and unshapely head."

"Very good Susan."

Tate now held up a second artist's conception, and this time it was a drawing of an elephant. Again, Tate questioned the class, and once more, Susan Bentley answered correctly.

A tall boy in the last row complained to his buddy that there were just too many ancient animals to remember, even if one cared to remember them. What use did people of today have for learning about the ways and cultures of the surface dwellers anyway? Tate heard these remarks, but decided to
ignore them. He quickly turned to the next drawing.

"What animal is this?," he asked.

Tate saw Susan's hand, but hoped to question some of the other students who had not yet answered.

"Alice, do you know?"

"I know I don't like it," the girl replied quickly and laughed.

The class was disrupted, for Tate had difficulty hearing Susan's answer.

"It was called a snake," she repeated effortlessly.

"Correct, Susan."

"All right class! May I have your attention? Good. Please remember that we will conduct tomorrow's class at the museum. We'll meet in the lobby. You may go now."

As he gathered up his notes and drawings, Tate noticed that Susan was still in the room. As she approached his desk, he noted that her eyes were greener.

"Yes, Susan?," he asked.

"Dr. Tate, I was wondering about the firefly, and since you didn't discuss it in class...," her voice trailed off.

Firefly - the word struck a responsive chord somewhere in the depths of his memory. He summoned up an image in his mind, an image long ago forgotten.

"The firefly? Oh, yes. They say it was an interesting creature. Let me see, I believe it was an example of 'cold light.' It gave off light without giving off heat. A very unusual insect. Where did you hear of it?"

"I was doing a little additional research. I wondered, was it really as the scholars say? Did it really glow in the dark?"

"Well, no one knows for sure, but it is generally believed that the firefly did exist. Supposedly, it was a winged insect whose abdomen glowed with a phosphorescent light. The light glowed and went out as the insect breathed."

"It just seems hard to believe that something like that really lived. But if you say so, I know I believe it."
Tate blushed slightly. The girl had seemed to imply that he was on the level of a god, that his saying something was such and such would make it so. After she excused herself politely and was gone, Tate pondered over this girl for a minute. Not only did she know her lesson thoroughly, but she was also doing "additional research." Well, she was the only one. Five years ago today's lesson would have bored students because of its simplicity, and today the students weren't even reading their assignments. Interest in the surface sciences was flagging. Lately, every semester had been worse than the one before. He had hoped the trend would reverse itself. He had enjoyed teaching surface history when the students were eager to learn. Once, students had demanded extra courses and demonstrated before the council headquarters, saying that the council had no right to keep them from the surface. They had called themselves "the children of the Earth." Although their enthusiasm for his subject had impressed him, he had not joined the cult because of its religious fanaticism. But, now, the fervor was over. Surface scientists like himself were thought to be queer birds, as the medievalists were in another time. Students just did not seem to care anymore.

Tate sighed as he walked onto the speedstep. He watched the floor moving beneath his feet, and he wondered why he was always feeling so tired lately. Could it be that he took his teaching too seriously? But then, his teaching was his life.

II

In his private cubicle, Tate had a leisurely repast. He listened to one of his favorite musical pieces, stopping every so often to savor a special set of notes, and then going on with his dining. He was a young-looking man, and although he was in his late thirties, there were few strands of gray in his medium brown hair. His eyes were bright blue,
and they twinkled merrily when he smiled. And he was smiling now, as he enjoyed his Bach. But, as the piece went on, his smile changed to a grim frown. His mind was wandering back to his teaching. Tate gathered his thoughts, reconsidering his plans for the remaining classes of the session, as the maid android came and cleared the table. The android's noisy movements irritated him, as machines usually did, and he decided to retire to his study, snapping off the Bach as he went.

He would, of course, have to dispense with his usual lesson on Earth geography. This term's class could not care less what continent they lived beneath, let alone what name the country had been called, or how many states it had had. Tomorrow's trip to the museum might be helpful, but he needed another plan to stir his students' interest. His mind became ever more jumbled as he reconsidered the problem, so he decided to allow a plan to incubate. He selected a historical study and for a time forgot machines, gadgets, and disinterested students. He plunged into the wild wilderness that had been called the West, in a time long ago, when man had lived on the surface. He was in the middle of a particularly interesting part, which discussed the treeing of a buffalo, when he was disturbed by the communicon. His initial displeasure at being interrupted by the machine turned immediately to grief as the machine related the news of the death of a dear friend and colleague, Dr. James Martin.

III

Tate sat quietly during Martin's memorial service. The memorial room was darkened, leaving only the candles to give off a glow of warmth. When his eyes adjusted to the lack of light, he noted that the room was antiseptically clean, and it appeared as though no one ever sat on the velvet cushions, or touched the white walls. After a few moments, the overly
sweet scent began to make him feel weak and weightless.

He watched all the members of the high council file in, wearing their long, black robes, just as they did any time a member of their body had passed away. Tate wondered if the character of the council would change now that Martin was dead, but that thought passed away quickly, for he had other questions to ponder. He remembered when he first met Martin, the pleasure he had had in working with him, and the honor Martin had bestowed on him when he had chosen Tate to be his assistant. Now, his friend and mentor was gone. It was Martin who had first stirred his interest in the subject, and Martin who had kept him going. Now Tate was alone. He was the only surface historian left, the last of a rare breed. Tate tried to turn his thoughts to other subjects, but he felt overwhelmed with depression and despair. He would, of course, have to go through the things in Martin's study. He had learned that Martin had left all of his research and collections to Tate. No one would treasure Martin's things the way Tate would. But, it would seem odd to examine Martin's study without him being there. Tate decided to get the difficult task over with this very evening.

IV

Tate strolled silently onto the speedstep. He patiently waited until he came to Martin's cubicle and got off. He punched the correct code into the doorlock and allowed his fingerprint to be recorded. He had an uneasy feeling as he entered the study. Perhaps he had expected to find the smiling figure of his friend behind the massive desk.

The room felt eerie and empty without Martin. Tate would get this over quickly and depart. He chose the chips that he thought would be the most valuable to him. He could always view them later on the computer in his own cubicle. Among the various chips, Tate found a container, with the words Dr.
Joseph Tate written across it. Tate opened the container and slipped the disc onto the reading machine. Tate turned on the machine and read:

Joseph,

I know my time is coming. I am not what I used to be; it is good that it should soon be over. I am ready to die.

Do not worry for me, Joseph, because my only concern is for you and our great work. The surface sciences are dying out, Joseph. You are the only one left now. You must carry on the work.

Oh, I know you will never sit on the council, for you are a scholar, not a politician. Your great strength is in your teaching and research. You must lead the way for your students. I know it will not be easy in times such as these, but select one student, one who is bright and interested in our work. Teach this student as I have taught you, and then select another, so that our work can be carried on in this way.

Few men, Joseph, carry the burden of an entire profession on their shoulders. But, you are capable of bearing this load. The future of the surface sciences is yet to be shaped. I beg of you, do not let our cause die.

I have had such dreams for your. You always needed someone to dare you to attempt great things. I dare you now. If you fail me or this work, all is lost for us. All we have done will be without meaning.

I have seen the fine young people sneering at those who cherish the old ways. The opposition is strong; do not be weak, Joseph.

The note was signed "James Martin."

The days dragged on. Tate felt continually depressed,
and he wondered why everything seemed to irritate him. Lately he was going to sleep earlier each evening, and yet every morning he arose as weary as before. He seemed to be worried about everything. He worried whether or not he could measure up to Martin's expectations of him. He worried about his teaching. The last few times he had felt an increasing anxiety. Sometimes, he believed that he could get his students really interested, but, most of the time, he knew he was in trouble. It was not uncommon to have a few laggards in a class, but this semester it seemed that most of the students were bored and restless.

The one, shining light in all of this was Susan Bentley. It was her fervor for the subject which spurred him on and kept him trying to reach the others. Susan was like no other student he had ever known. He had known brighter students, although she seemed to be quite intelligent, but he had never known any with such enthusiasm for the subject. Susan relished every morsel he threw her way, and she was always eager to learn more. When Tate felt the class was losing interest, he would glance at Susan, and seeing her listening so attentively would help him regain his vigor and confidence.

Susan was definitely the student whom Martin had written about. Martin could not have described her any better if he had known her. Yet, Tate was a man of conscience. In the first place, he did not know what Susan's career plans were. And in the second place, he doubted the wisdom of encouraging Susan. The surface sciences were dying out, and Susan was so young. Should he encourage her to enter a disappearing field? Could he, in good conscience, do what Martin had asked? He reconsidered the matter, and decided that there would be no harm in speaking to her for a few minutes after the next day's class.
VI

Dr. Tate sat at his desk in the empty classroom. He looked over his notes, commenting to himself that once again he would kill the surface dwellers. He killed them every semester, detailing the horror of their deaths. Then, he put his notes away. Today they would all die, again. He shook his head and wondered why he had become so cynical lately.

After the students filed into class, Tate announced the topic for the day. He caught Susan's eye for a moment. Yes, he thought, there will be no harm in talking with her. He wouldn't try to push her into anything; he'd just mention it. What could be the harm in that?

Tate began at his usual starting place. He told of the forefathers. At first, when the scientists had predicted an intense solar flare, many had laughed. Some scientists had even disputed the claim. But, in their wisdom, the forefathers had taken refuge in an underground station. The shelter had been specially prepared in the event of a nuclear holocaust, but the intense radiation of the solar flare was just as deadly. After the forefathers had gone into the shelter, they had stayed in contact with the surface. They heard of the reaction when the people started to die. Then, one day later, the contact had been broken. It was believed that the radiation had killed everything that lived on the surface. But, the forefathers survived; and as their number grew, they expanded the shelter until it was the size of the present city.

He told them of the painful effects of radiation, and tried to make them understand just how very many people had died. But, how could young people in a city the size of Andros understand the huge numbers of people who had once existed? The students seemed to be interested in hearing about the anguish that the surface dwellers had endured. He hadn't been able to interest them in the life and culture of the surface dwellers, but they listened intently when he
talked about their deaths. The class had perked up consider-
ably when he had related the story of this calamity of bil-
lions of people. How morbid they are!, he thought to himself.
But, no, he decided, it's not them, it's me. What is wrong
with me lately? They're just a normal group of young people.
The surface dwellers who died mean nothing to them, because
their ancestors survived. I have become cynical regarding
my students, while I am discussing the near destruction
of mankind with all the emotion of a steel android. I am
finding fault with them even when they are attentive.

He drew to the end of his lecture. When it was over,
he dismissed the class and motioned for Susan to come to his
desk. Once again, his mind was a blur of anxiety, of not
knowing which way to turn. Susan respected his opinion.
What right did he have to lure her into a future that might
prove empty? Suppose public opinion was correct, that the
past was now simply irrelevant? His mind raced wildly on
as Susan came forward.

VII

"Did you want to see me, Dr. Tate?"

"Yes, Susan. Please sit down. I've been meaning to
speak with you about your work."

"Was there something wrong with my last paper?"

"No, no. It was excellent, in fact, it was the best
analysis of the solar system that I've ever received. All
of your work has been more than satisfactory."

Susan smiled and seemed to relax.

"Susan you show great potential in the surface sciences.
You not only have talent, but also you are willing to work
very hard. A student as gifted as you are could earn a doc-

torate in surface science."

Susan let out a little gasp. She seemed to be very
happy at the prospect.

"Yet," he continued, "I don't know what your career
plans are. And I can't tell you that there is a need for surface scientists. Some say that the renaissance for the surface sciences is over, and so I'm not sure what the future would hold for you."

Tate paused a few seconds and then went on.

"But, if you decide that you want to continue in this field, I would be more than happy to instruct you. Later, you could help with the teaching in my classes. But, remember, the decision must be yours. Take all the time you need to decide."

"But, I don't need any time. I want to start as soon as possible. Dr. Tate, I can't tell you how pleased I am that you are giving me this chance."

"But, you are certain that this is what you want?"

"I'm sure."

VIII

Tate felt happier than he had in weeks. Susan had responded to his proposal with greater enthusiasm than he had ever suspected. He was to begin instructing her the very next day. He would teach her all that Martin had taught him. He had been concerned needlessly, for he would do as Martin had asked. Perhaps the slump was almost over. He wondered if interest in subjects such as his rose and fell in cycles. There had been great interest before and now there was little interest. Surely, that was all there was to it. He just had to wait for a new cycle to begin. He had thought Martin's death would change everything. Perhaps he had given his old mentor more credit than he deserved. Just because Martin no longer sat on the council, well, it did not mean that everything was over.

That night he slept better than he had in weeks. In the morning, he felt so refreshed that he hummed a little song to himself as he dressed. Today was going to be a good day. From now on, the days were going to be good. He was not an old man, and there was no excuse for his acting like
one. His students were fifteen years younger than himself, but he had the edge of experience, and he no longer felt anxious about going to class.

IX

Susan Bentley was smiling as she cautiously moved onto the speedstep. She never quite trusted all the devices that were a normal part of living in Andros. She often wondered why she never seemed to belong anywhere. Although she had lived her whole life in Andros, she would not have called it "home."

Once she had believed that she would never find what she was looking for. But, since she had talked to Dr. Tate she knew what she wanted. Nothing had ever stirred her interest as the surface sciences. For Susan, the search was over. She had found her dream.

Yet, she would have to inform her father of her decision. This would not be an easy task, for Susan's father held the surface sciences in contempt. He would tell her she was being foolish. He would say she was throwing her life away. But, it didn't matter. Her father could yell as loud and as long as he wanted - it wouldn't make any difference. She knew in her heart that what she was doing was the right thing for her. After all, it was her life, wasn't it?

She got off at her family's cubicle. She would eat supper before speaking to her father. There was no point in ruining the family's dinner hour. She took a deep breath before opening the door, for she might as well prepare for the worst.

X

Susan was watching her father's face intently as he spoke. Thomas Bentley's forehead became redder and redder as he continued to tell Susan all the reasons why pursuing a career in the surface sciences was tantamount to insanity. Susan found herself privately wondering if the purple vein on the right
side of his forehead was going to pop. Tears were streaming down her face. She had never imagined that her father would be this upset.

She loved her father. But, she also cared about her career choice. Dr. Tate had chosen her for special instruction, and it seemed to her to be the chance of a lifetime.

She had so enjoyed meeting with Dr. Tate these last few weeks. This afternoon, Dr. Tate had explained more fully the solar system. In her mind, she had tried to picture the other planets, and what the sun must look like. She tried now to visualize a twinkling star. Dr. Tate seemed to bring the textbook material to life. The tutoring sessions excited her, and she couldn't imagine going back to life without them.

But, her father didn't understand. She couldn't quite explain it to him. He would never share her elation for the surface, for he thought only of the horror of the last days that life had existed there. She felt that she should be listening to what her father was saying, but it only upset her when she did. She didn't like arguing with him. Why couldn't he just accept her decision? His reaction made her feel that he was not only rejecting her choice, but her as well. Finally, she rose.

"We're just not getting anywhere," she said everly.
"Susan, I only feel..."
"No, please, just stop. I won't change my mind. Don't fight me anymore. I love you, you know that, but I've made my decision."
"Susan, I am not finished discussing this!"
"I'm sorry, but I am."

She turned and hurried to her cubicle before the next wave of tears began. Susan heard her father's footsteps behind her, and then her mother's voice.
"Let her go, Thomas," her mother said. "I have some things I need to say to you."
Susan was weeping as she burst into her sleeping cubicle. She was just bringing herself under control when she heard her parents arguing.

"There are hundreds of things Susan could do that would benefit the city - that would help it to grow. Don't you see that she would just be dead weight?" her father asked.

"I believe that historians can make a valuable contribution to society."

"The city is too small to support two historians; we already have Tate."

"We had two before Martin died," her mother countered.

"Martin was a politician in his last years. If Susan wanted to be a politician, I wouldn't object."

"Because you're a politician?"

"No, because Andros needs good politicians. Many of the council members are growing old and will soon retire."

"There are those who say Andros already has too many council members. But let's not get off the subject. The point is that you must learn to accept Susan for what she is, Thomas."

"I am not rejecting Susan. I only want what is best for her."

"So do I. But, think a minute, Thomas. Remember when you gave her her first computer? Do you remember how she cried? She only learned to program because you insisted..."

"What has that got to do with anything?" Thomas exclaimed.

"It has to do with what Susan is. Ever since she was a little girl, she has disliked the machines."

"Except for Friend."

"Except for Friend. And she has always been interested in the surface. Look at her chip library, if you don't believe me. There is more information on the surface than anything else. Remember what she used to say she was going to
do when she grew up? She was going to visit the surface.
The surface frightens us, but it's the machines that frighten Susan."

"Val, what are you trying to say?"

"That I don't like the idea of Susan becoming a surface scientist any better than you do. But if you force Susan to choose between her dreams and us, she may choose her dreams. You're afraid of losing face when your colleagues hear that your daughter is going to be a surface scientist. I'm afraid of losing my daughter," she began crying.

Susan let out a sigh of relief. Her mother would persuade him. She decided to look in on her younger sister Jenny, who had run from the table crying when the fighting started. She would comfort Jenny while her mother convinced her father. It was odd, she thought to herself as she walked through the doorway connecting their cubicles, that she had forgotten about going to the surface. The thought filled her with excitement.

XII

Tate was preparing the next day's lesson when the communicon buzzed. It didn't even irritate him. He was feeling so much better lately.

Perhaps it was because of Susan's outstanding interest and ability that Tate was surprised to receive a communigram from Susan's father. Usually, he only met the parents of the students who were having difficulty with the course. But, Susan's father had asked for an appointment at Tate's earliest convenience, as if there was some problem which they needed to discuss immediately. Tate recognized Bentley as being a member of the high council. But, he could not see any reason for a meeting—especially if the problem wasn't Susan, and he doubted that it could be. He thought of the tutoring sessions, but quickly rejected the thought. How could Bentley complain if he gave Susan free lessons on his own time?

He put his response back into the communicon and regretted
that he would have to wait until the following day to accept his prestigious guest.

XII

Thomas Bentley was several minutes early when he entered Tate's cubicle. Bentley was a dignified, gray-haired gentleman of about fifty, and Tate could not help but wonder why all the council members seemed to have the same confident air about them. Before either man had said anything, Tate knew that Bentley considered him an inferior, and that Bentley was used to deference from inferiors.

Bentley greeted Tate with a subjugating smile, and introduced himself in smooth syllables. It was as if Bentley knew that no introduction was necessary, but that he simply enjoyed repeating the syllables of his own name.

"My daughter speaks quite highly of you, Dr. Tate. I think you are the girl's favorite professor."

"Well, Susan is an excellent student," Tate replied. "I can't tell you how much I have appreciated her participation in class."

Tate felt uneasy. He was sure that Bentley had not come to trade compliments with him, and he wished that Bentley would get to the point.

"Yes, Dr. Tate, Susan is bright, if a bit impressionable. She has become so enchanted with your class that she thinks she wants to be a surface scientist," he finished in an amused chuckle.

"I think Susan is entirely capable of pursuing a career in this field," Tate replied evenly.

"Well, you know how young people are, constantly changing their minds. Tomorrow she'll probably want to be an interior decorator. At first, Susan's announcement was of little concern to Mrs. Bentley and myself, but when we heard that you were giving her special instruction,... frankly, we were shocked. Someone of your maturity ought to know better."
"I did not pressure Susan into making this decision."

"But why encourage her? Now that you see how we feel about this, you will certainly agree to stop giving her extra instruction."

"Don't you think that Susan has the right to be included in this discussion? After all, it is her life."

"Susan is too young to know what she wants. As I said, she is very impressionable, and she thinks highly of you. She is in no position to make a rational choice."

"I'm afraid I must disagree. Susan is a mature young woman, very capable of making a career decision."

Bentley waved off Tate's remarks impatiently. He looked extremely disgusted with Tate.

"Dr. Tate, I would prefer to dispense with this business pleasantly, but you leave me no alternative. As you well know, the council will soon vote on the funding for next semester. We would like to have your department included in the budget, but you know the difficulties. Unless I feel that the council is receiving your full cooperation—well, you understand of course."

Tate couldn't believe what he was hearing. Bentley was willing to use his seat on the council to blackmail him.

"Well, Tate, I don't mean to be abrupt, but I do have another appointment. I want to thank you in advance for taking care of this little matter, as well as for your time. Perhaps, we'll see each other sometime soon, eh?"

Bentley extended his hand, which Tate shook with all the awkwardness of someone who is trying to be polite despite a strong desire to be otherwise.

XIV

Tate didn't realize that he was shaking until Susan's father was gone. He sat down and tried to sort out what had just transpired.

Well, it didn't seem as though he had been given any
choice. He would either have to discourage Susan or find himself another job. The university was controlled and funded by the council, and Bentley was one of its most powerful members.

Losing his position wouldn't help Susan. He couldn't really tutor her as he should without the use of university materials. Besides, what other vocation could he pursue? Surface history was all that he knew. Perhaps, if he could continue to teach, he would find another capable student for special instruction. But, he wasn't really convinced, for students like Susan came along once in a lifetime.

He felt overwhelmed by despair. No matter what he did, he would fail someone who was counting on him. He thought himself to be the most wretched man alive, for he knew what he must do. In spite of Martin's request, he would have to find a way to discourage Susan.

XV

When Tate walked into the museum, Susan was waiting patiently. He had already given the class a tour, but he had promised Susan a more in-depth look. He had promised her, so he would at least give her today's instruction. He then would explain that there would be no more special sessions. It hurt him to think about how Susan would react.

Susan greeted him cheerfully. She seemed as anxious as ever to learn. The episode she had had with her father only served to strengthen her commitment.

They were to look at some of the special collections, which were locked away. The machine recorded Tate's fingerprints, and the door slid open. Susan put her own fingertips up to the viewer, but Tate motioned her on.

"The machine's programmed to allow others in as long as they're with me," he explained.

They walked into a large room filled with skeletons.

"Now, Susan, this room is very special. These bones
are not man-made replicas as one finds in the rest of the museum. These skeletons actually come from the creatures themselves."

Susan gasped. She had never dreamed that real bones could be preserved so long.

"We'll begin here, Susan. This animal was called a bird. It is believed that there were many different kinds of birds once. This particular bird was a robin. The drawing behind the bones is how the robin looked when it was alive. I didn't tell the others about birds because it's so difficult to explain. You see, birds actually flew."

Susan thought to herself that she was once again reassured about her career choice. Never in all of her life had she seen such a marvel! She felt very lucky. She was glad that she had worked so hard on all of Dr. Tate's assignments. She must have impressed him if he had decided to reveal such treasures to her.

Tate showed her each exhibit in turn. She responded so warmly that Tate couldn't remember when he had enjoyed himself more. But, this would be the last instruction given, he thought with a pang of remorse. In his mind, he tried to form the words that would discourage Susan without disappointing her. He feared that she would be hurt no matter how tactfully he said it. As they looked at the last exhibit, Tate prepared himself to say the words; but, his heart was not in it.

"Susan, let's sit down a moment. There is something I must tell you. I was wrong when I talked to you before. Your future is not in this field, Susan. There is no future in surface science."

"But, Dr. Tate, you said that..."

"No, Susan. You are too young; I cannot ask you to devote your life to something that is dying. No, hear me out. I was selfish to ask you to do this. I cared only for the welfare of my work, when I should have been concerned about you. I cannot give you any more lessons outside of class."
"You can't mean that!"
"I'm sorry, Susan, but this is for your own good."
"Please, Dr. Tate, don't stop the lessons. I'm an adult now. You first proposed it, but it was finally my decision. If I am making a mistake, it's not your fault."
"Susan, I must be responsible for you. You are my student, and I must consider what is best for you. I cannot in good conscience go on teaching you."

Tate didn't like himself much at the moment. He remembered how it was when he had chosen this work - when Martin had shown him this room. It would have destroyed him then if Martin had told him to forget about a career in the surface sciences. He knew if he remained long he would weaken.

"Susan, I don't mean to be abrupt, but I must go now. I am already late for a faculty meeting. Stay here as long as you wish. I'll see you in class."

As he hurried through the door, Susan let the tears run down her cheeks. She had never felt at such a loss. Just when she had found what she wanted, it had been snatched away. She was sure Dr. Tate hadn't been truthful with her. He was not a good liar. He was usually quite calm, but when he had talked with her today, he had been very nervous. He hadn't been able to stand still for very long, and he wouldn't look at her. Also, he hadn't mentioned the faculty meeting before.

The lesson had seemed to be going well. She had thought that he was enjoying it as much as she was. She must have said or done something wrong - something that made him change his mind about her.

The tears began to fall again with the thought of her father. She would be so embarrassed now, after she had fought so hard with him. Now, she would have to say that Dr. Tate no longer wanted to work with her. But, she didn't honestly believe that Dr. Tate wanted to end their sessions together.

She had always trusted her intuition. She had found that how something was said was more important than what was said.
Dr. Tate had said the words, but he had also told her much more. She had an uncanny feeling that he regretted this as much as she did. She decided to put her trust in her feelings, and give the class everything she had.

It then occurred to her that Dr. Tate was only testing her. It would take great determination to become a surface scientist. Dr. Tate only wanted to be sure that she had that determination before going on with her training. She felt sure that this was the answer.

Well, she would show him that she would not falter. She would work very hard, doing extra research for every assignment. No matter how hard she had to work at it, she would convince him that she had all the determination that anyone could ask for.

She quickly wiped her tears away. She couldn't afford this wave of self-pity, because she had too much to do. She gathered up her things, glanced around the room, and departed.

XVI

Tate was in a state of shock. He had just received notice that he would not be teaching surface science the next semester. Indeed, surface science was no longer going to be taught. It seemed a "reorganization" was taking place, and his department was being "phased out."

At first he wondered if it was because of student protest. Then, he supposed it was because Martin no longer had a vote on the high council. But, his final belief was that surface science was no longer going to be taught because Thomas Bentley's daughter showed excessive interest in the subject. Thomas Bentley not only had the will to "phase out" his department, but he also had the power. And it seemed that the council didn't mind exercising that power.

John Cook, the head of the university, mentioned at the end of the notice that perhaps Tate could teach history of the city. This, of course, would require that he take a leave of
absence to research the subject. But, saying that Tate could no longer teach what he wanted to teach was almost as good as dismissing him outright.

Tate did something now that he seldom did. He opened a canister of spirits and downed a quick gulp. He could think of nothing else to do. How could Cook let Bentley do this to him – to the university? But, Tate couldn't really blame Cook, for Cook had no real choice. It was Bentley that Tate should blame, even if he was Susan's father.

Tate never really planned to get himself inebriated. It happened quite easily as he pondered all the ramifications of the notice. He tried to see himself teaching city history and couldn't. He could not sing the praises of a city that had lost all of the things that he loved so well about the past. Andros had rejected Shakespeare in favor of a DW-5 computer. He shook his head and took another long drink. He must support himself somehow, but there seemed to be no other job for which he was suited. Maybe now he was paying for taking away Susan's dream, and as a result, he had lost his own.

He had honestly tried to discourage Susan. It had upset him, but he had done it in order to keep his position. Susan just didn't respond. The more he had discouraged her, the harder she had tried. Bentley must have observed Susan's continued interest, and concluded that he hadn't done as Bentley had instructed him. There was no use in trying to talk to Bentley now, for Bentley had already carried out his threat.

Tate felt himself becoming drunk, and a great sadness fell over him – sadness because it was the end of his teaching, and sadness because it was the end of a great work. Martin was right about him. He never dreamed of great things. He had only wanted to continue his teaching and research. He had hoped to make some little contribution to the field, but now even that was beyond his reach. He had not only let Martin and Susan down, but also he had let himself down. He was a ruined man, a man who had tried but failed. In his drunken stupor,
it occurred to him that he was a museum piece. He was the last of his breed, a creature that had lived beyond his time. He decided that there would be something very appropriate about preserving his bones and placing them next to the bones of the tiger and the eagle, for all the city to gawk and point at. No, he thought, not the tiger and the eagle, more like the extinct firefly. Centuries later a Susan Bentley would find it difficult to believe that something like him had ever existed. Yes, that was right, he thought to himself as he passed out; he was the firefly.

XVII

When Tate awoke, he was still in his nourishment cubicle. He hadn't ever retired to his sleeping cubicle the evening before. His secret wish was that someone would disconnect his head and remount it after it stopped its wild throbbing. He moved very slowly and deliberately until he noticed the time. Then, he increased his pace despite his aching head. He did what little grooming that could be done quickly, and as he passed through his nourishment chamber he noted that his early meal had become cold. The android had served it precisely on time, regardless of his condition. He went without eating, and decided to purchase a more advanced android. But, then he remembered that yesterday he had received notice.

He felt very old lately, and his current condition didn't help much. The last thing that he felt like doing was to go to class. But, it never even occurred to him that he could take the day off for illness.

He wondered if he shouldn't be glad that he wouldn't be teaching the following semester because it seemed that the university was changing so much. In the future, all classes were to be conducted over the visacon. Due to the demand for space, the council declared that there would be no more classrooms available. Even if he would have kept his position, he doubted that he could have adjusted to lecturing to a visacon screen. The city was depersonalizing everything, and he wanted
no part of it.

He was late for class, but the only one who seemed to mind was Susan Bentley. He tried his best to stimulate class discussion, but he just wasn't feeling well. He dismissed the class early, promising himself that he would put his head down on his desk and keep it absolutely still, as soon as the last student left. Susan, however, lingered behind. She approached his desk rather meekly, as if she were afraid to speak to him. Despite his physical discomfort, he made an effort to look at her in a kindly way. There was no point in continuing to hurt her now, and in fact, he owed her something for the way he had shunned her before.

"Yes, Susan?"

"Dr. Tate, I was wondering, if you don't mind too much, I..."

"Go on, Susan, it's all right."

"Well, Dr. Tate, I wondered if I passed the test."

"The test? Why we haven't had one in several weeks."

"No, no. I mean the test you gave me. Did I show you how determined I am to be a surface scientist? I'm not a quitter."

Tate smiled softly to himself. Susan had seen through him, and not believing his arguments, had decided that he was testing her. He could see no harm in letting her cling to this idea. It would be wrong to turn her against her father, and perhaps she might learn enough in the next few weeks to do some independent research after he left the university. She couldn't be a surface scientist now, because there was no longer any available positions. But it might be a hobby for her, since the subject so held her interest.

"I realize that you're not a quitter. You have done admirably. We'll continue with the lessons."

XVIII

They went to his home cubicle and worked in his study.
They admired his specimens together and discussed the surface at length. Tate couldn't remember when he had so enjoyed an afternoon.

When Susan left, Tate thought to himself that he honestly liked her. Susan was not only intelligent, but she was also interesting and fun. They had joked in a good humored way often during the session. But, now, Tate wondered whether or not Susan was serious about something she had said.

Susan had said in a rather off-hand way that someday she would go to the surface. At first, he was sure that she wasn't serious. But, now he was convinced that she meant it quite sincerely, because she had said it in a whisper as though it were a secret. The council had never permitted anyone to visit the surface. How did she plan to escape the city?

Tate considered for a moment the possibility of exploring the surface. Now that the flare was over and the radiation had surely decayed, it should be quite safe. What an opportunity it would be! He wondered if he dared to hope the council would permit an expedition. He could certainly gain much knowledge from such a trip.

Of course, knowledge of the surface would mean more to him than to the council. Still, Thomas Bentley would like nothing better than to rid himself of Tate for awhile. If he promised to make it a long trip, perhaps Bentley would sway the rest. Besides, they had to keep him on salary as he had tenure, and they might as well get their money's worth.

Tate excitedly put a message in the communicon. He would arrange an appointment with Cook, and go through him to the council. Perhaps he could be ready to leave after the semester ended. Tate hoped the plan wouldn't fail. If it did, he had no idea what he would do with the rest of his life. Maybe an expedition would renew interest in the subject, and students would demand classes on the surface. If public interest were on his side, he might be able to get his position back. Tate wondered how he would ever rest until he talked to Cook.
"Jen, repeat what you said again," Susan said, "this time more slowly."

"Well, it's like I told you. Daddy was talking to this other man, a member of the council. I think."

"How long ago?"

"Awhile back. And Daddy was asking the man to allow Dr. Tate to go to the surface."

"Are you sure, Jen? Dad tried to get the man to allow Dr. Tate to go to the surface. Are you positive you heard correctly? You were in the next cubicle."

"Yes, but Daddy didn't know that. And they were yelling. The man was the only one Daddy hadn't been able to convince. Daddy was really mad at him. I guess the man voted against him the last time, too."

"What last time?"

"I don't really understand. Something about stopping Dr. Tate from teaching anymore. Daddy said Dr. Tate was a bad man. He thinks Dr. Tate will hurt you somehow. That's why Daddy got the council to keep him away from big kids like you."

"Dad is trying to keep Dr. Tate from teaching anymore?"

"He already did. Now he wants to send Dr. Tate away."

"And the man didn't want him to?"

"No, not exactly. The man just wanted to be sure that Dr. Tate didn't ever come back once he went away."

"You mean he didn't want Dad to ever let Dr. Tate back into the city? And Dad agreed?"

"Yes. They both thought Dr. Tate might bring back a disease or something, so they decided not to let him come back."

"Does Dr. Tate Know?"

"I don't know. I don't think so. You won't tell Daddy I told you, will you?"
"I won't tell. But, I've got to see Dr. Tate right away. He must be warned before he leaves."

XX

Susan Bentley ran over the speedstep. She fell once when she came down on the wrong place, but she was more concerned about missing Dr. Tate than she was about falling. She was out of breath by the time she arrived at his cubicle.

She buzzed and buzzed but no one answered. Impatiently, she ran her fingers over the viewer, and to her surprise the door opened. Dr. Tate must have programmed the viewer to permit her to enter. Susan didn't know what to make of the situation until she saw a lone computer chip lying on the table. She placed the chip into the computer terminal and saw her own name flash onto the screen.

Susan,

I am sorry to keep you in the dark about my expedition to the surface, but the council wouldn't permit me to discuss it with anyone. I didn't want to take any chances of jeopardizing the trip. Please forgive me.

I'll be back in three months, and then we can discuss my findings. You must still keep my trip to the surface a secret, though, because the council won't announce it to the people until they're sure it's a success.

I am certain that the people will respond with interest when I return. Maybe some day they'll permit others to go, and your dream will also come true.

Keep working on your special project until I return. I left you access to my information files to aid you in your work.

Work hard and I will see you soon,

Joseph Tate

Susan Bentley turned quietly away. Her father had won. She felt a numbness in her body as though she were half frozen. She allowed her body to slowly sink into a nearby chair.
Part Two

I

Joseph Tate carefully pushed the numbered buttons in the order that the council had given him. Tate held up his hand and permitted his fingertips to be scanned. He carried some of his gear, but most of the burden was borne by a large android named Samson. Tate wore a radiosuit as a precaution.

As he moved through a series of airlocks, he felt the tension within himself build. What would it be like to be the first man in centuries to step out on a new earth? There could be great dangers, and he was a scholar, not an explorer. Yet, it was because he was a scholar that he knew that he must do this thing. Nothing would keep him from this chance to study his subject. Not even his own fear.

Suddenly, the last door slid open, and Tate felt himself flooded with light. At first, he assumed it was some kind of decontamination process, but then he realized that he was on the surface. He felt certain that he would have been blinded if he hadn't been wearing a radiosuit with a tinted face shield. He had never experienced such intense light. He strained until he could focus his eyes on a shadowed place. Then, with Samson behind, he stepped out.

He hadn't anticipated that the floor or the surface would be so incredibly uneven, but he somehow made it to the shadowed place. The bulky radiosuit and heavy equipment slowed him down, and the hot sunlight made the way difficult. He was sweating profusely when he reached his goal.

While he was resting, his eyes became somewhat adjusted, and he began to pick out the details in the landscape. He decided to risk raising his tinted face shield in order to see the true colors, and he was amazed at what he saw. All around him was the lush green of vegetation. Almost all of the plants that he had seen in books now were alive and growing in abundance.

He fondled the grass beside him and marveled at the erd-
less array of bushes and trees. There were several large oak
trees near him which provided him with shade. He carefully
rose in his radiosuit and went over to one huge oak. He
paused before touching it, as if he feared that the oak would
bite him, and then cautiously inspected the bark and a fallen
leaf.

He focused now on the very blue sky, and all the various
cloud formations. A smile broke over his face as he became
even more enchanted with his wonderful new world.

II

Susan was awake. She had tried to sleep for hours, but
she couldn't manage to turn off her mind. She kept thinking
the same thoughts over and over.

She sat up, and put her hands over her face. She was to
blame, pure and simple. Dr. Tate had been happy teaching his
classes. It was because of her that he was no longer teaching.
And even now, he was alone in a wild, brutal world, just because
of his relationship with her.

She wondered if he now knew that the council never in-
tended that he should return, or if he still thought he would
be welcomed home. He deserves a hero's welcome, she thought,
although he'll never receive one. He was doing a very brave
thing.

It now occurred to her that Dr. Tate might be dead. She
had never allowed before for the possibility. Perhaps some
wild animal attacked him, or the radiation was too great, or
he fell and hurt himself. She wondered if she would be a mur-
derer if he were found dead. Perhaps, she killed him indi-
rectly.

She wanted to cry, but she refused to let herself off
that easy. She must take responsibility for her actions now
that she was an adult. She couldn't believe that she had been
so stupid as not to have known what her father was planning.

I must find a way, she said to herself as she lay back
down. I must put things right again. Perhaps she could find
a way to arrange for Dr. Tate's return in spite of the council. She felt a tiny glimmer of hope, but she wasn't very convinced. Deep inside, she was sure she would never see him again.

III

Tate sat on a large rock and watched the sun go down. It was a ritual he had begun his first evening on the surface. He had photographed the best sunsets to show the people back in the city. He had become quite impressed with the beauty of the surface.

He no longer wore the radiosuit. After he completed his tests on the air, soil, and water, he discarded the bulky outfit in favor of his own clothes. He wished, though, that he had brought warmer garments. Towards evening, it began to get chilly. He would have many suggestions for the next expedition.

The last glints of sunlight fell across the landscape. A cherry tree (at least he thought it was a cherry tree) on his right looked particularly handsome. He watched the rosy hues play on the lush vegetation and wished that he could share the spectacle with someone. Maybe someday he would make the trip with a group of students. Susan, especially, would love the surface.

The only thing that had really bothered him was the insects. Apparently no creatures of any size had survived. But, through mutation, or some kind of immunity, the insects lived. A few honey bees flourished on the many varieties of flowers, and although he had gained personal experience with their sting, he supposed them to be a necessary evil. He could find no such excuse for the gnats. And, of course, there were the fireflies. He couldn't wait to tell Susan about them. He probably took too many photographs of the fireflies, but he wanted to be sure to get some good shots for Susan. The fireflies would be coming out soon.

Although he had been on the surface only a few weeks, he had adjusted fairly well. His eyes were becoming used
to the sunlight and his ankles were gaining greater freedom of movement. He had been forced to practice stretching exercises to prevent straining the muscles when he twisted his foot on the rough terrain. But, all in all, he had managed to survive very well in a strange new world.

In the last rays of sunlight he looked down at his burnished arm. He was becoming increasingly tanned. He wondered if the people in Andros would recognize him in a few month's time.

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw a firefly, and then another, and soon there was a field of tiny, bright lights. The moon was clearly visible, and several stars were coming into view. He never seemed to be able to look at the night sky without wonder. As many times as he had read the account of the moon landing in the history books, he could not honestly conceive of the spectacle. He saw, rather, the moon of the romantic poets — the pale and beautiful, but inaccessible, goddess Diana. He wondered if Diana was as lonely on her globe as he was on his. Then he laughed at himself and wondered why the evenings on the surface put him in such a queer, romantic mood. Perhaps the night sky was meant for man to dream on. And the stars were the model for dreaming, since they were in clear view but always beyond a man's reach. He had attempted to photograph them, but he could never quite catch their mysterious beauty.

He was a bit concerned about the radiophone. No one was responding to his calls. He was certain that it was just a temporary problem that would soon be repaired, but it was a little frightening. What if he became injured in a fall, or some kind of accident? They might not answer in time. If the council didn't reach him soon — no he mustn't think about that. Perhaps, he shouldn't have agreed to three full months, but he had agreed, and now he would have to make do. Men once survived here without any help from the council, and he, too, would live until communication was restored.
IV

Susan let out a low sigh. She might as well give up, because she would never find the secret code that would allow her to gain entrance to the chambers leading to the surface. Even if she could find the code, the machine would not respond correctly when it viewed her fingertips. She simply had to find another way.

When she found a way out, she would also have to find Dr. Tate. Then they would need to find a way back in. It was all very complicated, and it would only grow more so in the days to come. Every day Dr. Tate might be moving farther and farther away from Andros. How would she know which way to follow? He could go in various directions, and he had already been gone weeks. It could already be impossible to locate him once she was on the surface, and she didn't even know how she was going to get there yet.

She rolled her fists in a determined gesture. Despite all the problems, she must find a way, and quickly.

V

He awakened. The morning was crisp and clear, and the chill convinced him to linger a few extra moments in the warmth of his makeshift bed.

He rose, washed, and prepared himself a light breakfast, hoping somehow to ease the emptiness inside of him with the repast. The effort was fruitless, for the gnawing emptiness inside of him was not for the want of food, but for the want of companionship. He was just beginning to realize how very alone he was.

His new world was quiet and still. Perhaps, he told himself that what he really missed was the whirl and click of machines that had been so much a part of his life in Andros. But, he didn't honestly believe that; it was just another attempt to avoid facing the new reality that had become so painful: He was so alone.
In the city, he had worried about survival, about holding onto his life in the "wild." But, "the wild" had not proven to be so very precarious. It was just still and lonely, without the buzz of a communique, and most sorrowfully without the music of another human voice.

He had seen little that lived. There were no ferocious tigers or charging elephants, just the evergrowing vegetation, the sky, and the stillness. He tried to laugh off his thoughts, but even the sound of his own chuckle seemed to die in the melancholy morning air.

The wind blew gently over his face. When first this wind was strange and new, he had thought it fierce, but now he knew it to be a fearless thing. The wind didn't seem to disturb the stillness, but rather seemed to pervade it, and be a part of it.

He began to explore near the buildings. Tate found one place where there were many crosses, and other symbols of worship. He walked among the many temples in this section, and finally decided to go inside one, leaving Samson alone outside. Both of the doors on this particular edifice were intact, and with a small shove, one of them opened.

At first, he was startled, for many different spires of light instantly streamed over his body. He concluded once again that the surface dwellers were not total primitives, for they had created this spectacle of light and love for their God.

A peace descended on him as he walked down the main aisle, and the only sound was that of his muffled feet. It was warmer here in the sanctuary, and he felt a strange little quell of joy.

VI

Susan moved quietly in her cubicle, for it was the family's sleep period. She gathered up several bundles that she had previously prepared. Taking the bundles to the enter-
taining cubicle, she whispered the word "Friend." Friend was a small, red android, who had been with her since she was a baby. Friend was not a mechanized whizz that spouted numbers, but a loyal and caring buddy. He was programmed to give up his life to save her, were it ever necessary. Susan didn't know many people that could have cared so much for her. As always, Friend responded immediately to her call, and took the bundles from her hands, replying, "you shouldn't carry so many heavy things, Miss Susan. Human beings are so very fragile."

"Listen, Friend, you and I are going out. We must be very quiet. The whole city is asleep and we want to keep it that way."

"Oh, I wouldn't advise going out now, Miss Susan."

"It'll be all right, Friend. You'll be there to protect me."

"May I inquire if your parents know about this trip?"

"No, they don't know. But, it is necessary that we go. Don't worry, Friend, I'm not an impulsive little girl any more. Dad is not going to blame you this time as he did the time we ran away."

"You ran away. I only went to protect you."

"Of course. Now, wait here for me. I'll be back in a moment."

Susan laughed under her breath. Friend was always such a worrier. If he knew her current scheme, he'd never go along. Her father probably would take Friend to task when he returned without her. In fact, getting the android to return without her would be quite a job. She would have to trick him some way, for he would never do anything that would endanger her. She hated to deceive him, but there was no other way.

She returned to her cubicle for the last bundle. She said a silent good-bye to the household and all of its members. Now, she was ready to go. She went back to the entertaining cubicle and nodded to Friend, who, as always, followed.

She had decided to go past Dr. Tate's cubicle to see if
there was anything that she should take to him. But, when she arrived, she found someone else's name beside the door. The council hadn't wasted any time giving Dr. Tate's space to someone else. Well, since she didn't have the time to find out what the council had done with his belongings, she would just have to go on.

There was both joy and sadness in what she was doing. She was giving up the past, and she was going on to a new future. She told herself that it was not an end, but a bright new beginning.

Friend wanted to know where they were going.
"You'll see," she replied.

"But, Miss Susan, we'll be leaving the city proper soon, and we're getting close to the forbidden area," he said excitedly.

"Stop worrying, Friend!"

"No one knows you the way I do. I've seen that look in your eyes before. Do you remember when we got lost on the Southside? We were both punished for a week. I am not concerned for myself, but you..."

"Shh, Friend. We're almost there."

VII

Tate moved into the sanctuary, for it had quickly become his favorite place. During the day, he would often sit on the soft cushions and bask in the warm glow of light. In the evening, he would light the candles that he found there. Somehow, he didn't feel so alone in this place. He felt the security of a long forgotten womb when he was inside of the massive walls.

On this particular night, he picked up one of the many books that he had found. He chose a book called Holy Bible because he had read parts of it before in the city. Since he had never read any of the Old Testament, he decided to read from it tonight. He might as well start at the beginning, so
he opened the book to Genesis, and began with the story of creation. It was very strange for him to turn pages as he read, for he was so accustomed to reading with the scanner. But, he overcame this difficulty when he became involved in the story of a man named Adam.

Adam had once lived in a world like his, a beautiful, but lonely, garden paradise. Then, God had declared that it was not good that man should be alone. Tate thought to himself that this God was very wise, for He had solved Adam's dilemma by creating the woman Eve.

Tate was glad that God had solved Adam's problem, but doubted whether God would smile so favorably upon him. If a God looked down upon him, He did not show his concern by sending Tate a companion. Tate closed the book slowly. He wondered if he would be able to wait through all the weeks to come to speak with another human.

He decided to try to talk with Samson. But, Samson was made for hard work, not companionship. Seldom did any response come from his sturdy body, except perhaps for a metallic "Yes, Master" or "No, Master."

After several moments of forced conversation, Tate said good-night to Samson. Samson wished him the same in harsh tones, and asked permission to return to his work. Samson always worked quietly when Tate was eating, but still the android annoyed him. Perhaps it was because the android needed neither rest nor food, but probably it was because the android didn't need anyone to talk to.

He rolled over and tried to find a comfortable spot. He had trouble falling to sleep because he had been sleeping too much lately. Only in the numbness of sleep had he been able to erase his loneliness.

VII

"Friend, we are very near the site of expansion,"

Susan whispered.
"Oh, Miss Susan, let's go back. It's not too late. We're not allowed here."

Sometimes Friend reminded Susan of a frightened teddy bear. Her father had reprimanded Friend so often that he was terrified of breaking rules.

"Come on, Friend. I'm ordering you. You had no choice, just remember that when Dad questions you."

"Oh, dear, dear, dear," the android cried sadly. If Susan planned to get caught they were in trouble.

Susan told Friend where they were going. Friend protested mightily that it was too dangerous, and that human beings were too fragile for this area.

"No, Friend. We have to go in there. I have to get to the surface. It's my fault that Dr. Tate is up there. The council isn't going to let him back in. If I don't go, he'll be alone on the surface for the rest of his life."

"Going to the surface is not permitted," Friend ventured.

"It doesn't really matter because I have to go there."

"How will you get there?"

"Well, I figured I'd never get to the surface the way Dr. Tate did. So I tried to think of another way. That's when I realized that as the city expands, they need to scoop out more soil. Well, they've got to get rid of that soil somewhere, right?"

"I suppose it is logical."

"So, I looked and looked until I found that machine over there. They put the dirt in the bottom of the big scoop, and, then, it goes up that shaft to the surface. I watched them working the other day."

"But, how far up does it go?" Friend worried.

"To the surface. Oh, you mean how far is it to the surface?"

Friend nodded.

"Oh, not far at all," Susan lied.
"This machine was not created to convey humans. You might get damaged."

"It's all right. I tried it yesterday. One of the workers helped me. I only came back to get some things," Susan was piling one lie on top of another.

"I can't recommend this. Please, Miss Susan, let's go home."

"No. I need your help Friend. Help me put this gear in the scoop, and then put me in. After that just turn on the machine and press the red button."

"I cannot do it; it will endanger you."

"Friend, listen to me. I have tested this before, and it worked perfectly. I wouldn't ask for your help if there were any other way. If you refuse to help me, I will send you away. You'll never see me again."

"I wouldn't see you on the surface either."

"Yes you will. I'm coming back very soon. Now put in this last bundle. I'm next. Please, Friend."

Friend hesitated, and finally obeyed. He picked up his mistress, and gently let her down in the bottom of the scoop. She leaned out and gave him a good-by hug, which he returned robustly.

Friend cried, "I can't do anything that would harm you," and wound his metal arms more tightly about her.

"You won't."

"Impossible," Friend returned.

With coaxing from Susan, Friend set the machine on low speed and moved his finger towards the red button. He heaved a ghastly sigh, and then he touched the button. Susan's last glimpse was of a very dismayed and fearful Friend. Then, suddenly he was out of sight, and she was moving quickly toward the surface.

Susan anxiously awaited her first view of the surface. She saw a tiny light up ahead, and then she saw a huge, luminous object in the night sky.
The machine stopped. Susan peered over the edge and realized that she was quite high above the ground. She couldn't jump down without breaking her ankles. Then the machine was in motion again. She was relieved, because it was surely going to set her down on the ground, just as if she were a load of soil.

Then she understood what was going to happen. The machine was not rearing back to put her down, but to catapult her across the landscape. She felt herself being thrown out of the machine at a tremendous speed. She thought to herself that Friend was right, and then everything went black.

IX

It was a beautiful morning. Tate decided to collect some samples after breakfast. He enjoyed eating in the fresh, morning air, while he made witty, little comments to Samson, who always agreed with him. At least, there was one good thing about Samson; he never argued with you. If you said a morning was beautiful, Samson never took issue with it. And he never talked back. Samson wasn't like the TR8's, who sometimes seemed almost human. But, once in awhile, he wished he could talk about his feelings with someone who had feelings.

Tate decided to start west of the city, with Samson trailing behind. Samson cheerfully carried any samples that Tate wanted to keep, and except for an occasional caution about a possible danger, he was silent. Tate was glad, because on this particular morning he was lost in his thoughts.

He stopped to rest on a nearby rock. A dream that he had the night before was troubling him. He had seen himself chasing a laughing girl through the vegetation on the north side. The girl's face was hidden, but she had chestnut-colored hair. He worried if he was losing his professional distance. He asked himself if he was anxious to see Susan again to discuss his findings with her, or if he just longed to be near
her. He had never felt this way about a student before. But, he had to admit it; he wanted to see Susan the person, not Susan the student. When he returned to Andros, he would have to be very careful.

It was still early, but he was growing weary in the hot, morning sun. He decided to have some lunch. They went to a spot where they often had lunch. Tate liked this spot because the machine was there. The machine reminded him that he was not alone – that underneath him an entire city of human beings thrived. He saw the movements of the machine on the horizon. Well, the people of Andros were busy this morning, tunneling out the soil for their ever-expanding city. As he was looking for a place to sit, he decided he would never allow himself to think of the dream again. He had always been an honorable man, not the sort who would become involved in a reprehensible situation.

As he was about to sit down, he saw several bundles, and Samson brought them to him immediately. They were very dirty, for they had been half hidden in dirt when Tate saw them. He opened one bundle and found a large supply of food. He first thought that the council had been concerned for his welfare and had sent him extra rations. But, when he opened the next bundle, he found women's clothing. He quickly scanned the scene for another clue, and his eyes came to rest on a mound of dirt. Upon closer examination, he saw an arm and several locks of chestnut-colored hair. He questioned his sanity, but he was on his feet, running as fast as he could. Through the dirt he pieced out the outline of what appeared to be a woman's body – what he actually saw looked like a large, dirty, broken doll. The woman wasn't moving at all.

The machine came to the surface again, and Tate realized that it was about to throw another load of dirt. He snatched up her body, with what little tenderness time would allow, and seconds later, a huge load of dirt came flying towards them.
A bit of the soil hit them, but most of it went right to the
spot where she had been. When they were a safe distance from
the machine, Tate stopped and put the woman down. He brushed
away the loose soil, and looked at the face of Susan Bentley.

X

Tate lay still on the cool ground. He heard their voices
before he could discern what they were saying, and then he
laughed when he realized that Susan was teasing Samson. She
now asked the android if he thought she was pretty. The agree-
able Samson answered in the affirmative. Then Susan asked him
why he thought she was pretty, and before long, the android was
hopelessly confused and sputtering incoherently. It was quite
a sight, and Tate laughed in a good-natured way. After Samson
regained control, Susan gave him an affectionate hug, which she
had taught him to return. Tate was not sure whether Susan had
only taught the android the mechanics of hugging, or if he was
actually becoming affectionate. He did know that Samson liked
Susan, for he followed her around whenever he wasn't ordered
to do something else.

They had spent the day exploring some buildings, and Tate
was very tired. He enjoyed watching Susan and Samson from his
comfortable spot. Samson was helping Susan make dinner. At
one point, Susan asked Samson to taste the soup that she was
making, and the android calmly explained that he didn't take
nourishment. Susan acted as though this was very puzzling,
and asked Samson to explain the mystery. With urging from
Susan, and a bit of her programming knowledge, Samson was
developing a personality.

After dinner, Susan rubbed Tate's sore shoulders. It had
been several months now, since she had come. When he first
found her he worried that she was seriously hurt. But, except
for many bruises, and a large bump on her head, she had been
all right. A few days later, she had walked out of the temple,
mostly under her own power, to see the sunset, the fireflies, and the night sky. She had adjusted to the surface even more quickly than he had, and she never seemed to tire. Even after a long day, she spoke excitedly of their discoveries.

His life was greatly changed since she had come. Initially, he couldn’t understand why she would sacrifice her life in Andros to come to him. He would have found out the council’s plan eventually. But, by the time she was well enough to discuss it, he no longer had the desire to ask. It was enough that she was here, and that he was no longer alone.

They went together to watch the sun go down. Before their eyes, the miracle occurred again, and they marveled at the moon and all the tiny stars. It grew cold, and he slipped his arms around her.

In Andros, he had devoted his life to his work. Now, he had done what all the other surface scientists had only dreamed about, and yet what he valued most was not all the discoveries that he had made. The sweetness of it all was sharing his life with the girl whom he now held in his arms. Susan made him feel young and alive again.

They had been very careful of each other at first, each hesitating about taking any liberties with the other. He had forced himself to remember always that she was his student, and that he was responsible for her welfare. For weeks, she had called him "Dr. Tate," and it took them both awhile to get used to her calling him "Joseph." But, it was in Andros that they were professor and student, for here they were simply a man and a woman. They were the only two humans in a huge world.

Susan looked up and smiled. She felt comfortable being with him. When she had awakened for the first time, she had seen him looking down at her, and she felt nervous. She hadn’t been certain that he wouldn’t object to her interfering in his life. In Andros, he had seemed quite content to live without the company of a woman.
She loved him now. When she was his student, she had admired his knowledge and expertise, but now that she was his woman, she loved him. After a brief adjustment period, when each of them was unsure of the other, she began to feel that he needed her. She desperately wanted to make his life happy and full.

She was glad to be a part of his exciting new life. It was very fulfilling to share in his discoveries. She was learning so much about the surface from him, but it wasn't as dry as textbook education had been. Before her eyes, the past was seeming to unfold.

She had known other men in Andros. But, they never made her feel the way Joseph did. He honestly cared about her growth as a person, and when she was with him, she felt vulnerable and pretty. He now held her as he usually did, gently cradling her body as though she were very fragile.

He pulled her closer, and tenderly stroked her long hair. He wondered what would eventually become of them. He felt very protective of her, but hardly knew if he could take care of her in this new world. They both could be injured in numerous ways, and it seemed that they would not be able to look to Andros for any assistance. There was, however, a small doubt in his mind, because it seemed that the situation with Andros had changed a bit since Susan had come. Thomas Bentley could certainly forget him, but he doubted that Bentley could forget Susan. Perhaps the council was arranging an expedition this very minute.

But, the thought that they might be entirely forgotten didn't disturb him. In his darkest hour, he had known the great fear of man: To be completely alone, to be cut off from one's own kind. There would always be difficulties ahead, but he was not afraid. He was no longer one alone, and he had learned the strength that can be found in two.