

COLLIDE

by Edwin Balmer and Philip Wylie

Copyright, 1934, by Edwin Balmer and Philip Wylie—WNU Service

SYNOPSIS

Under the leadership of Cole Hendron, American scientist, some 100 persons escape in a space ship just before a cosmic collision that wipes out the earth and land on Bronson Beta. A first bottom green with vegetation is discovered and great forests of dead trees, preserved by the absolute cold of space. The appearance of what looks like an airplane, and which disappears without making an attempt to communicate with the humans, leaves a feeling of alarm. They realize they are not alone on the new planet, and that their visitors may be enemies. Tony Drake and Elliot Jones, on an airplane flight, come upon a city, enclosed under what seems like half an inch of glass bubble six miles wide and half a mile high at its center. Among their finds in the city, is an edible grain—millions of bushels. On their way back they stumble upon the camp of more than 100 persons who left the earth where they did, in a second space ship piloted by Dave Ransdell. Ransdell goes to Hendron's camp with Tony, and the latter tells the people of the spacious city. Tony learns that Ransdell, Japanese and German Communists have reached Bronson Beta and probably sent the mysterious plane to spy on their camp. In Tony's absence Hendron's outfit is gassed by unseen enemies, but all recover. The Asiatics, as Hendron calls them, make an aerial raid. Tony and his men annihilate their armada with terrific atomic blasts from the space ship's propulsion times. Hendron's health failing, he orders Tony to remove everybody to one of the sealed cities.

CHAPTER VIII—Continued

"German was to be their universal language. We had to learn it. Every woman was to be married. We had been given three months to choose mates. We were to bear children. There was no property. No God. No amusement or sports. No art—except for education—propaganda, you might call it. No love, no sentiment. We were being told to consider ourselves as ants—part of a colony. The colony was all important, the individual ants, nothing."

"How did you escape?"

"I'd elected to marry a leader. I was considering—seriously—jumping from a building in one of the cities. But I had a little more freedom than most. I was assigned to truck driving. I went every day to the gardens for vegetables. I befriended one of the guards there, I made rather deceitful promises to him; and he let me enjoy what I had told him was a craving of mine, going for a spin alone. I went, and I didn't come back."

Duquesne asked: "You knew where to find us?"

"Vaguely. In our city—the city was called Bergard, by them—they had been discussions of you. Our spaces called you American rabble. They are determined to subdue you."

"Sweet!" said Williamson.

"Of course—in the last days on earth—I'd read about you. I knew two or three of your party. I knew Elliot James. He'd stayed once at our castle. Is he—?"

"Very much so," said Tony happily.

"That will be marvelous! And how many of you—?"

Tony explained. "We have two camps."

"So I heard."

"A van has gone ahead of us. It will deposit its stores and passengers at the new city, and then start at once to the other camp. We did not dare radio."

"They listened for you all day," said Lady Cynthia. "And at night. But my other friends: Nesbit Darlington? Is he here?"

There was silence.

"I see," she said slowly. "And Hawley Tubbs?"

Again there was silence.

The Englishwoman sighed heavily. "So many people! Ah, God, so many! Why was I spared? Why do I stand here this night with you on this foreign world? . . . I'm sorry!"

Tony jumped. Von Belts was rapping on the window of his driver's compartment. Tony peered through the window. Von Belts was pointing ahead.

Tony's eyes followed the German's arm. Far away on the horizon the night sky was pinkly radiant. At first he thought that it was the aurora. Then he knew. He turned to the others.

"There are the lights of our new home!"

A murmur rose, a prayer, a hushed thanksgiving. . . .

Tony bent over Eva. "We'll be safe soon, dear."

"Yes, Tony."

They came out on a valley floor. In the valley's center was the bubble of the new city. It was not as large as the first one they had seen. But its transparent cover was identical; and, like the first, it was radiant with light. Did the lights glow on all over Bronson Beta every night? Had Ransdell turned them on? They did not know. They only saw out on the valley floor the resplendent glow of a Bronson Beta at night, and became none the less as Tony and Lady Cynthia had seen the sight before their emotions were tearful. There were tears on almost every enraptured countenance.

"What a strange thing happened," said Hendron stirred.

"I dropped a tear on his face

as she bent over him. Hendron put her hand aside and slowly, majestically, sat up in his improvised cot.

"Father!" he said.

He was staring at the city.

"Cole!" Tony whispered.

Cole Hendron stood now. "Tony, my son!" His words rang like iron.

The greatest scientist Earth had ever produced stretched out his two hands toward the city. "The Promised Land!" Now his voice was thunder.

Eva sobbed. Tony felt a lump swelling in his throat.

Hendron looked up to the cold stars—to Arcturus and Sirius and Vega.

"Father!" he said in a mighty voice. "We thank thee!"

Then he pitched forward.

Tony caught him, or he would have fallen to the earth. He lifted him back on his pallet and opened his coat. Dodson pushed through the herded people. The head of the physician bent over the old man's chest. He looked up.

"His brain imagined this," said Dodson. "He brought us here in his two hands, and with his courage as our spiritual flame we shall remain!"

It was an epitaph.

Eva wept silently. Tony stood behind her with his hands on her shoulders—mute consolation and strength.

"Hendron's dead," was whispered through the throng.

The city was now looming in front of them. They could see presently that the great gate was open. Figures stood beside it, motionlessly watching their approach.

Ransdell had been one of those waiting. Tony leaped out, and Ransdell smiled.

"Welcome!"

"Hendron's dead."

"Oh!"

The people began to alight—but they were quiet and made no attempt to celebrate their security. Others came up.

"We'll take his body into one of these buildings," said Tony. "In the morning we'll bury him—out there, under the sun and the stars—in the bare earth of Bronson Beta."

Dodson, Duquesne and Eva sat in a room with Hendron's body—a room of weird and gorgeous decoration, a room of ancient dimensions, a room indirectly illuminated. If they had but known they would have been glad that Cole Hendron lay in the hall of the edifice that had been the home of the greatest scientist of Bronson Beta some incalculable ages before them.

Tony left the watchers reluctant-

"Like Moses," said Ransdell. "A single glimpse of the Promised Land."

"Like Moses," Tony looked with astonishment at the man. He had not imagined Ransdell as a reader of the Scriptures.

"We must go on. He'd want it," said Williamson. Tony nodded. "The first van has left your camp?"

"Yes."

"And the second?"

"Fifteen minutes ago."

"It is about four miles from the road to your camp. But I think those tractors can pull all the way in. They will bring nothing but people—and they'll be able to accommodate every one." He looked at his watch and pondered. "They should be here before daybreak. Now—I don't know about the power and light in these cities. Von Belts, suppose you take another man and start an investigation of its source. We'll want to know that. The other city I investigated had enormous subterranean granaries and storehouses. Williamson—you search for them. Jack—you take care of housing. Shirley, find Kyto and arrange a meal at daybreak. Prepare for five hundred—we're almost that many."

Shirley left.

Hastily Tony dispatched others from his improvised headquarters. Soon he was alone with Ransdell.

"I got your signal," he said. "You wanted every one cleared out but me. Why?"

Ransdell glanced at the door. "For a very good reason, Tony. I've something important to tell you."

"What?"

"There's somebody else in this city."

Tony smiled. "I know that feeling. James and I had it. You get used to it."

Ransdell shrugged. "I'm not queer—you know. I don't get those feelings. Here's my evidence: I drove the first caravan. When I reached the gates, I saw something whish around a distant building. It might have been a man—it might have been the end of one of those little automobiles. . . . Then, after I'd started things going, I took a walk. I found this."

He handed Tony half of a sandwich. A bite had been taken out of it—a big bite. The other half and the filling were missing. But the bread was fresh.

Tony stared at it. "Good Lord!"

"That bread would be stale in twelve hours, lying as it was on the street."

"Anything else?"

"This building was open. The others were shut. We used your instructions for getting into them. But in here things were disturbed. Chairs, tables. There was a ball of paper on the floor of this room. Nothing on it." Ransdell produced a crumpled sheet of paper.

"The Other People had paper," Tony said.

"Not paper watermarked in England."

Tony walked around the room, pondering this. "Well?"

"There can't be many people. Since we arrived, ever since I found the sandwich, I've been conducting a search. So have five other small parties. Nothing was discovered, however."

"I see," Tony sat down. "The Midianites have forsaken our scheme, then, and put watchers here."

"Of course," said Ransdell. "It might be some one else. The Midianites might have explored here—and left. The Other People had bread—like ours—more or less; and this isn't familiar—exactly. It looks like whole wheat—"

Tony grinned. "You aren't seriously suggesting that the Other People may be alive here?"

"Why not?"

"Well—why not? Anyway—some one is. Spies—ghosts—some one."

It was growing light when the trucks came back from the other camp. Tony was busy with hot soup when Peter Vanderbilt approached him. "Where's Von Belts?"

"I don't know."

"Didn't he see you?"

"No."

Vanderbilt scowled. "Funny! Quarter of an hour ago I saw him a few streets from the square here. He was on his way to tell you something about the power. He turned a corner. I thought I heard the first faint part of a yell—choked off. I hustled around the same corner, but he was out of sight. It seemed odd—he'd have had to run pretty fast to make the next corner. So I jammed along looking for him. No sign of him. Thought he was reporting to you. But I went back. Nothing to see at the spot where he'd left me."

Tony was calling. "Taylor—Williamson—Smith—Alexander—look for Von Belts. Arm yourselves."

But two hours later Von Belts had not been found.

Day broke with its long, deliberate dawn, while the strange, eerie glow of the night light that illumined the city faded. There was no sound in the streets but the scuffling feet of the sentinels whom Tony had posted.

Now the night watch was relieved, and searching parties set out again under strict order not to search into squads of less than six, and to make communication, at regular intervals, with the Central Authority.

together with the power was exploring behind the walls of the building. Power was "on." Impulses, electrical in character, were perceptible; and Malby was studying the problem of them.

"I believe," Malby said, "that the Bronson Betans undoubtedly solved the problem of obtaining power from the inner heat of the planet, and probably learned to utilize the radium-bearing strata under the outer crust. They must have perfected some apparatus to make practical use of that power. It is possible, but highly improbable, that the apparatus came through the passage of cold and darkness in space in such state that when the air thawed out and the crust conditions approached normal, it set itself in operation automatically."

"What is far more probable is that the Midianites have discovered one installation of the apparatus. We know from Lady Cynthia that they are months ahead of us in experimenting with Bronson Betan machinery. I believe that they have put in order and set going the power-impulse machinery connected with the city which they have occupied."

"The impulses from that installation may be carried by cables under the ground; more probably,



"I've Been Conducting a Search. So Have Five Other Parties. Nothing Has Been Discovered, However."

however, they are disseminated as some sort of radio-waves. Consequently, they reach this city, as they reached the city that Tony and James entered, and we benefit from them."

CHAPTER IX

DOWN the sunlit streets of the city the children of the Earth, Dan and Dorothy, walked hand in hand, staring at the wonders about them, crying out, pointing, and fattening their noses against the show places.

Though they plainly remembered the thrills and terrors of the flight, they could not completely understand that the world was gone, that they had left it forever. This was to them merely another, more magical domain—an entrancing land of Oz, with especially splendid sights, with all the buildings strange in shape and resplendent in colors, with tiers of streets and breath-taking bridges. Behind the children Shirley Cotton and Lady Cynthia strolled and stared; and along with them went Elliot James, who could not—and who did not attempt—to conceal his continued astonishments.

"Don't run too far ahead of us," Shirley bade the children in a tone to avoid frightening them. For danger dangled over these splendid alien thoroughfares apparently untenant, yet capable of snatching away and keeping Von Belts. Was it conceivable that survivors of the builders—the Other People—haunted these unrunned remains of their own creation? Or was it that the ruthless men from Earth—the "Midianites"—as Hendron had called them—had sent their spies ahead to hide in this metropolis before its occupation by Hendron's people?

Tony called a council of the Central Authority to consider, especially, this problem.

Ten men chosen more or less arbitrarily by Tony himself composed the Committee of the Central Authority—four from the survivors of the hundred who had come from Hendron's camp, six from Ransdell's greater group; and these, of course, included Ransdell himself.

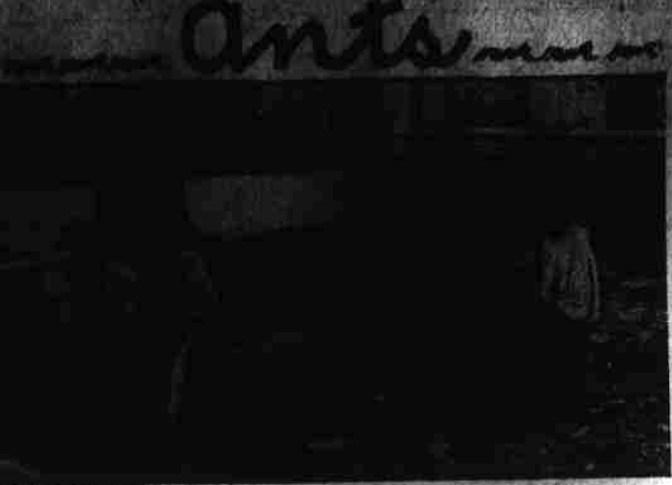
Such was the Central Authority improvised by Tony and accepted by his followers to deal with the strange and immediate emergencies arising from the occupation of this great empty city by less than four hundred people, ignorant of it.

The searching parties, as they returned or sent back couriers with reports, appeared before this committee.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Food All About Them

Clams, oysters, and mussels, crawling on the bottom of some stream, fed upon small bits of matter which they draw into their mouths from the water about them. In turn they are devoured by starfish and men.



Fighting Ants With Smoke in Brazil.

Prepared by National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.—WNU Service.

THE word "ant" in Japanese consists of two complex characters. The first character means "insect"; the second, "unselfish, justice and courtesy." In other words an ant is "an unselfish, just, courteous insect."

That is a delightful compliment, and many species may deserve it; but there are ants as savage and ruthless as the ancient Huns or Mongols—ants that devote their lives to foraging in vast armies, destroying the nests of others, and killing all insects and animals in their way.

There are queen ants that enter a foreign colony, ingratiate themselves with the citizens, foully murder the true queen, and usurp her place. There are ants that raid the nests of their neighbors and kidnap their young as slaves.

Some, high in the scale of ant civilization, make their own special food. There are ants that keep "cows"; others that gather and store honey in barrels made from living nest-mates; still others that use their own young as spoils of alken thread in making nests.

In sheer numbers, too, the ants challenge imagination. Their legions outnumber those of every other land creature in the world, except possibly some minute forms of life. So far, some 8,000 species, subspecies, and varieties have been collected and painstakingly classified.

Interesting Study.

The immense amount of work devoted to studying ants in all regions of the world bears witness to their magnetic appeal to the interest of man.

Thus there have been published monographs on the ants of Madagascar and of New Caledonia; catalogues of the species which inhabit Brazil, Chile, Switzerland, Connecticut, and the peninsula of Baja California. One huge volume concerned with the ants of the Belgian Congo alone contains 1,139 pages.

The common little yellow house ant takes readily to life on shipboard, and so has traveled to all parts of the world. It takes kindly, also, to heated houses, and so, although a tropical ant, it thrives in northern countries and has become a pest everywhere.

Some warm day, preferably after a shower, find a nice, flat stone on a sunny hillside and turn it over. There probably will be an ant nest beneath it—a series of channels leading from one cavity to another. Worker ants rush about, excited at the sudden uncovering of their home. One, very much larger than the others, is the queen, or there may be several of them if the colony is a large one. If there are males, they are present only during the mating season; they are usually much smaller than the rest, generally dark in color and wearing large wings.

sucked out and passed through the bodies of the tiny insects, most of which take more than they can absorb.

As this forms the chief food of many ants, they tend and protect their cows as conscientiously as do any pastoral people. Sometimes they even build sheds of carton, a papery substance, on the trunks of trees to shelter them. At the approach of cold weather the ants sometimes gather them into their nests on plant roots, taking them out to pasture again when the danger of frost is over and their proper food plants are growing.

One Point in Common.

All ant colonies have one point in common. The members, excepting, of course, guests, parasites, and other intruders, are all children of a widow queen who has left the home nest on her nuptial flight. After mating high in the air, the male always dies, as he falls to earth far from the home nest and is helpless without workers to care for and feed him. The female, however, has marvelous resources within herself, and all alone she establishes a home and a family of her own.

After fertilization the queen creeps into some cranny beneath bark or under a stone; sometimes she constructs a small shelter of crude paper made by chewing bark from a tree. Now she lays her first eggs. During the time when she was a larva and a newly hatched female in her home nest, she had been constantly cared for and even pampered by the workers of the parent colony. Special foods were given her.

From now on there is no further use for wings, so she scrapes or bites them off. The wing muscles disintegrate and add to the stored-up food which she is able to feed her first babies by regurgitation. The first hatched are runts and weaklings, but ants, nevertheless. Their instinct is fully developed and they go to work collecting for their mother and for their new and constantly appearing sisters.

An ant colony has been created. The queen, her troubles over, becomes a mere egg-laying machine, carefully fed and protected by her children.

Although practically all ant colonies are founded by a lone female, there are some extraordinary exceptions. One is Carebara, an ant of Asia and North Africa, noted for being a great enemy of the "white ants," or termites, on which it feeds.

Takes Help With Her.

When the mother-to-be Carebara goes on her honeymoon, a number of the almost microscopic workers attach themselves to her legs by their jaws, and in this way are with her to be of help when she starts the new colony.

Extraordinary and somewhat practical methods of establishing colonies are followed by the females of some ants, usually species not physically capable of caring for their own first brood. One kind steals into the nest of a related species, hurriedly seizes and makes a pile of the pupae already there, and fiercely defends them from their rightful owners. When adult ants emerge from these pupae they are loyal to their kidnaper mother and, unlike, commence to care for her eggs and for the young hatched from them. This results in a mixed colony of two species.

A few species of western ants of the genus Formica have very small females, thickly covered with soft yellow hair. Entering a colony of another, though closely related, species, they so ingratiate themselves with the workers that they are adopted and the rightful queen is murdered by her own progeny, who devote the rest of their lives to the new queen and her young. The original inhabitants eventually die off, leaving their native nest entirely in the possession of the usurper and her brood.

In north Africa a fertile queen of the "decapitating ant" (Bothriomyrmex decapitans) will fly to a nest of Tapinoma, a much larger ant, and loiter around the entrance until Tapinoma workers seize her. They take her into the nest, but for some reason do not eat her; whereupon she climbs onto the back of the rightful queen and saws at her neck until the head falls off. Then the Tapinoma workers adopt her and care for her eggs and young until the nest is populated only by the offspring of the regicide.

More males and females are produced; queens fly away, find another nest of Tapinoma, and repeat the process.

Housewife's Idea Box



For Your Comfort

It is sometimes very uncomfortable to hold a glass containing a hot drink. You can prevent this very easily by placing the glass containing the drink into another glass. The outer glass will remain cool. This is a good hint to remember when serving a hot drink to some one in bed.

THE HOUSEWIFE
Copyright by Public Ledger, Inc.
WNU Service.

Neatly Trapped

Recently a railroad, which was sued for \$100,000 by a negro who falsely claimed that his legs had been paralyzed in an accident, sent two negro detectives to his town to expose him. They set up a crystal gazing parlors and, after several weeks, subtly arranged to tell the victim's fortune in his home. The crystal "forecasted" that the only way he could win his suit was to carry a log over the railroad track the next morning, hopping across on one leg and back on the other several times. So he did. And a movie cameraman, hidden in a bush, "shot" the act—and killed the action.—Collier's Weekly.

BOYS! GIRLS!

Read the Grape Nuts ad in another column of this paper and learn how to join the Dizzy Dean Winners and win valuable free prizes.—Adv.

His, but How?

Composer—My tunes are the children of my brain.

Pianist—Yes, by adoption.—Pearson's Weekly.

To keep clean and healthy take Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets. They regulate liver, bowels and stomach.—Adv.

Tragic Truth

Some people are not deserving of their misfortunes.



MORE LUSCIOUS VEGETABLES

Fresh, large, full-flavored and luscious vegetables can be grown right in your back-yard or garden, if you use Ferry's Purebred Vegetable Seeds—the kind that have been America's favorite seeds for three generations and more. Don't miss this chance to economize!

YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD STORE SELLS THEM IN FRESH DATED PACKETS FOR ONLY 5¢

Count 'Em

God's gift to mankind is great men. There are not many.



BARGAINS

YES! You find them announced in the columns of this paper by merchants of our community who do not feel they must keep the quality of their merchandise or their prices under cover. It is safe to buy of the merchant who ADVERTISES.