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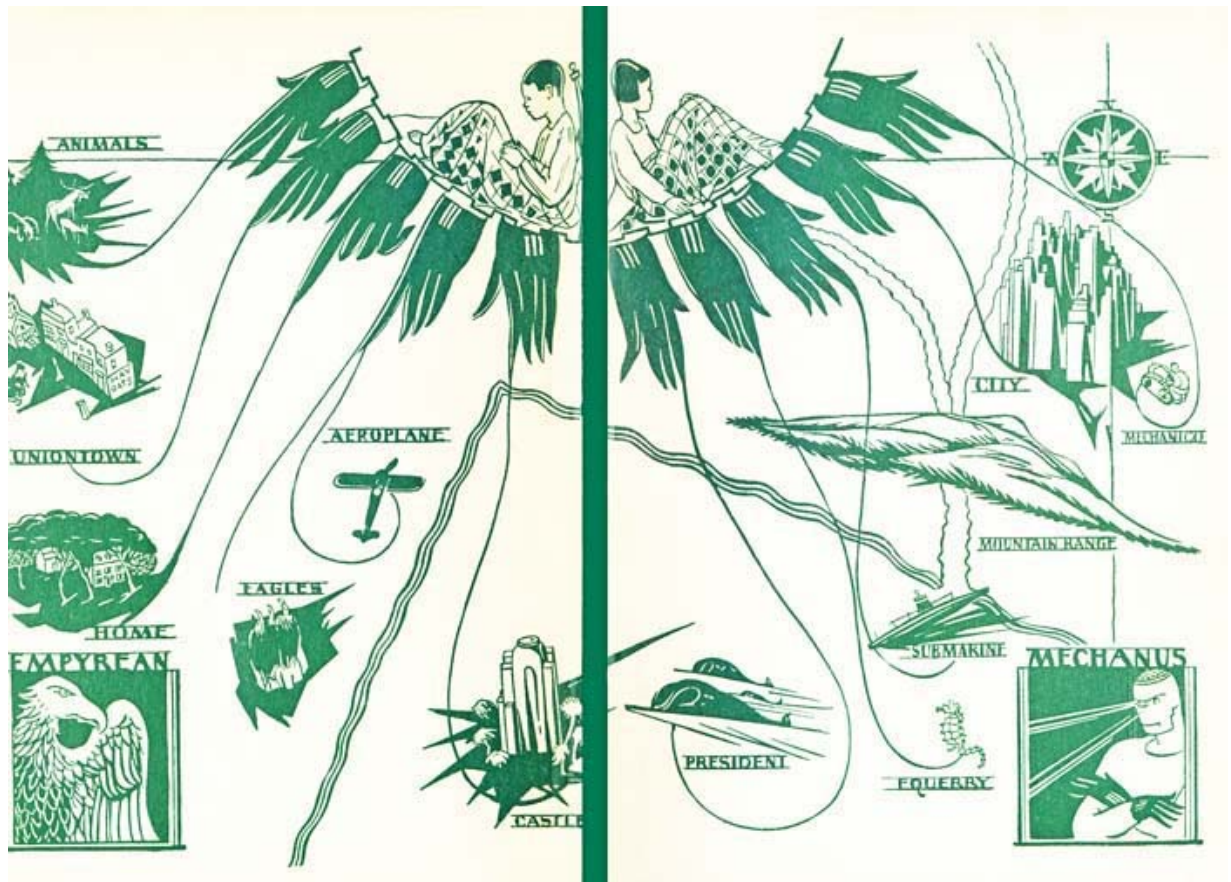
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SORCERER : OR THE EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURES OF
RAPHAEL AND CASSANDRA ***

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The Giant Sorcerer

or

***The Extraordinary Adventures of
Raphael and Cassandra***



**THE NAVY OF THE ATLANTIC PASSED SLOWLY BEFORE
THE PRESIDENT (*page [40](#)*)**

The GIANT SORCERER



OR

THE EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURES
OF RAPHAEL AND CASSANDRA:

by

WILLIAM WHITMAN 3RD

PICTURES
by FRANK BOYD

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

BOSTON NEW YORK

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TO
WILLIAM WHITMAN
WILLIAM WHITMAN, JR.
AND
WILLIAM WHITMAN, 4TH

CONTENTS

I. THE GIANT SORCERER	<u>1</u>
II. GÆA, THE EARTH MOTHER	<u>7</u>
III. THE CASTLE OF THE SORCERER	<u>14</u>
IV. DOWN TO THE SEA	<u>20</u>
V. HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT	<u>28</u>
VI. OFF TO WAR	<u>36</u>
VII. EAGLES! EAGLES!	<u>44</u>
VIII. ON TO MECHANA	<u>52</u>
IX. THE COUNCIL OF THE ANIMALS	<u>62</u>
X. THE CAPTURE OF RAPHAEL	<u>74</u>
XI. THE GARDEN OF THE SORCERER	<u>85</u>
XII. MECHANA	<u>95</u>
XIII. TO SAVE THE WORLD	<u>107</u>
XIV. THE BATTLE OF THE CITY	<u>115</u>
XV. VICTORY AND DEFEAT	<u>123</u>

ILLUSTRATIONS

THE NAVY OF THE ATLANTIC PASSED SLOWLY BEFORE THE PRESIDENT	<i>Frontispiece</i>
‘I AM MECHANUS, THE GIANT SORCERER’	4
‘IS THIS THE SORCERER’S CASTLE?’ RAPHAEL SHOUTED	14
‘MISS COD, INDEED!’ MOUTHED THE CODFISH	22
‘I SHOULDN’T GO IN THERE IF I WERE YOU,’ WARNED THE SEA HORSE	46
‘DOES THAT ROAD LEAD TO MECHANA?’	56
RAPHAEL SEATED HIMSELF ON A DRY LOG	58
‘A MOUSE MIGHT BE ABLE TO FIND OUT MORE THAN ANY OF THE REST OF US’	68
THE MECHANICO DISAPPEARED AND SUMMONED A LARGE GANG OF OTHER MECHANICOS	88
CASSANDRA SKIPPED GAYLY ALONG BESIDE RAPHAEL WHO TRIED TO KEEP STEP WITH MECHANUS	96
THE THING CAME SUDDENLY TO LIFE MARCHING OFF IN COMPANY WITH FIFTY OTHERS	102
THE WAR WAS OVER	120



The Giant Sorcerer

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CHAPTER I

THE GIANT SORCERER

RAPHAEL and CASSANDRA lived with their Aunt Mary in a white house which was tucked away from the road in a group of five elm trees. Behind the house was a white barn with a green door, and beside the barn to the west lay the orchard enclosed by a gray stone wall.

Often Raphael would lean out of the nursery window and wonder what lay beyond the wooded hill that sheltered the little farm from the north wind. There must be, he thought, great cities and seas and mountains. And animals like the tigers and giraffes which chased each other round his bedroom wall paper. Some day he would take Cassie and run away and visit these places. They would see the whole world for themselves.

One night when Raphael went to bed, he did not fall asleep. Instead he lay and watched the moonlight on the window sill. Across the room he could see the white outline of Cassandra's bed, and Cassie a motionless white mound asleep in it. To-morrow, he thought, sleepily, I must build a house for the robins. Habakkuk needs a bath and a new collar. Why do dogs hate baths? Why do I hate to have my face washed? Everything Aunt Mary called good was hateful.

A railroad engine hooted for the crossing a mile beyond the barn. Raphael heard the roar and rattle of the cars as they pounded over the tracks which curved through the valley like sleeping snakes. Trains were fast and powerful. He loved to watch them race to and from Uniontown.

Then a strange thing happened. Cassandra stirred in bed, pushing aside the blankets. Raphael watched her rise and walk to the open window. He was about to whisper to her, when she climbed over the sill onto the little porch which jutted out over the back door. Raphael immediately jumped from his bed and crossed to the window.

While he looked out, his sister climbed down the trellis that edged the porch and walked like a little white ghost past the barn and into the orchard that

lay along the slope of the hill. Raphael followed quietly. Aunt Mary would be very angry if she knew they were out of bed.

Everything was moist and silver in the moonlight. The grass bent under Raphael's feet as he hurried through the orchard and over the stone wall that rimmed the woods. By the time he had crossed the rough wall and felt the little sticks of the wood path under his bare feet, Cassandra had disappeared. Raphael hitched up his purple pajamas and ran.

He had taken only a few steps when to his amazement he heard the sound of voices. He stopped short, listened a moment, and then crept forward. He saw his sister standing before a tall figure which blocked the wood path. Raphael could not see the stranger's face, but he heard him say:

'If you will come with me, Cassandra, I will take you to a city full of strange toys. You shall have dolls to play with, dolls that walk and talk; and houses for them to live in with running water and elevators and electric lights. You shall have a little automobile, and a great store full of toys all to yourself.'

'Yes,' whispered Cassandra.

'Will you come with me?' went on the stranger. 'You needn't be afraid. I won't harm you.'

'Yes,' repeated Cassandra. Her voice was husky with sleep.

'Come, then,' commanded the stranger and held out his arms. 'I order it. You cannot disobey.'



‘I AM MECHANUS, THE GIANT SORCERER’

Raphael, who had crept close in order to hear more clearly what the stranger said, sprang forward.

‘Cassie! Cassie!’ he cried. ‘Wait! Wait!’

The stranger took Cassandra in his round arms. ‘Boy,’ he ordered, ‘go home to bed.’

‘Who are you?’ demanded Raphael.

‘I am Mechanus, the Giant Sorcerer,’ answered the stranger proudly.

Raphael looked at him fearfully. In the moonlight he appeared black and very terrible holding Cassandra so easily. He was taller than any man the boy had ever seen, and his eyes shone like pale electric lights. He was dressed in some light material that merged into the dark shadows.

‘Are you a man?’ whispered Raphael, awed.

‘No,’ said the Sorcerer conversationally. ‘I am a mechanical wonder invented by man to be greater than all men.’

‘What do you want with Cassandra?’ asked Raphael, taking heart.

‘My boy,’ exclaimed Mechanus, ‘that happens to be my affair. She will go home with me because I want her to.’

She would go home with him, Cassandra, his sister, and he would never see her any more. A mechanical wonder greater than all men blocked the path.

‘You shan’t take Cassie away! I don’t care if you are a sorcerer!’ screamed Raphael desperately and dashed at the stranger.

Cold fingers like steel hooks lifted him to one side, and a metallic voice rang in his ears, ‘Be quiet, young fool!’

Raphael felt himself falling slowly into space.

CHAPTER II

GÆA, THE EARTH MOTHER

WHEN Raphael woke, he was lying alone in the moonlight. Cassandra and the stranger had disappeared. The woods were very still. His head ached. Slowly the boy got to his feet and stumbled along the path which led to a small clearing at the top of the hill. Here he sat down on a large stone. Cassie was stolen!

Raphael was about to turn and run home when he heard the whistle of wings, and looking up saw a huge bird sail over the black tree-tops and light on the ground before him. Raphael was so astonished he could not move. He sat and stared in numb amazement.

‘Well,’ said the bird sharply, as he peered at him out of one yellow eye.

‘Who are you?’ asked Raphael faintly.

‘I am Empyrean, Chief of All the Eagles in the Sky, General of All the Armies of the Air.’

‘Oh,’ gasped Raphael. Then, because he felt powerless and lonely, he sniffled, ‘Cassie has been stolen. A sorcerer came and took her away.’

‘Stop crying!’ ordered the eagle fiercely.

Raphael dried his tears on an arm of his pajamas.

‘Tell me what happened,’ demanded the eagle.

‘Mechanus, the Giant Sorcerer, stole Cassie.’

‘Which way did they go?’ asked the eagle.

‘I don’t know. The Sorcerer knocked me down.’

The eagle said nothing for a moment, but stared straight at Raphael until he felt uncomfortable.

‘We shall find them. Come with me,’ the eagle commanded.

‘But how can I go?’ asked the boy.

‘I shall take you. Climb on my back. Hurry,’ ordered the bird when he saw that Raphael hesitated. ‘I won’t hurt you.’

He looked so fierce with his hooked yellow bill and curved talons that Raphael did not dare to disobey. He crawled clumsily astride the eagle’s neck and settled back between his great wings.

‘Are you ready?’ asked the bird.

‘Yes,’ answered Raphael breathlessly.

The eagle raised his wings and leapt into space. There was a slight shock as though they had jumped into a nest of down, and then with increasing speed the eagle forced his way higher and higher. Raphael could feel each upward surge as the wings rose and fell. The wind whistled in his ears a thin song.

Raphael thought of Cassandra and then of Aunt Mary. Would she cry when she learned that he and his sister had gone away? Would she blame him for letting the Giant Sorcerer steal Cassandra? He choked back the lump rising in his throat.

Suddenly he noticed that it was quite light, that it was morning. He looked ahead and saw the sun rising over a great mountain that stretched across the horizon. The night shadows were gathered like a curtain from a painting. When Raphael looked below, he could see great rolling forests laced by silver rivers. The eagle flew rapidly on.

Steadily they drew near the mountain, and Raphael noticed that they were rising higher and higher. Other great birds, eagles the boy supposed, swept down from the air and joined them, sailing round in great circles with fierce cries of welcome. It was cold flying so high in the air. Raphael shivered and leant back against the warm feathers of Empyrean.

They lit on the peak of the mountain just as the sun crowned the summit with light. One by one the other eagles swooped down and joined them on the bare rock.

Chief of All the Eagles turned to them and demanded, ‘Have you any news?’

‘We have news!’ screamed the eagles.

‘Quickly, then, let us make this boy one of us, in the name of Gæa!’ At this all the eagles raised their wings and bowed their heads reverently.

‘Are—are we going to save Cassie?’ asked Raphael nervously.

‘With the aid of Gæa she shall be saved,’ answered Chief of All the Eagles in the Sky.

‘Who is Gæa? Did she send you to help me? How did she know Cassie had been stolen?’

‘My son,’ said Empyrean sternly, ‘Gæa is the Earth Mother who knows all things. You shall learn more later.’

For a moment the eagle stared into the rising sun. Then, turning to Raphael, who did not dare to question further, he ordered him to take off his clothes. When Raphael stood naked upon the rock, the eagles solemnly bowed their heads as though in prayer. After which they presented Raphael with a magnificent suit of black feathers which buttoned up the front with clasps of luminous stone.

When Raphael had put on his new clothes, Chief of All the Eagles in the Sky spoke:

‘Comrades, I had a dream. And in my dream Gæa, the Earth Mother, the All-Powerful, appeared to me and told me of the Giant Sorcerer and of the great war between all nature and mechanics that is to be. Then She said, “A child shall save you, if it is written that you will be saved. Bless him with my power over land and sky and sea.” The dream changed and I saw a boy alone upon a hillside. I woke. And we are here!’

The eagles stirred uneasily, but said nothing. Empyrean continued, turning to Raphael, ‘In the name of Gæa I confer on you power over the Earth, the Air, and the Sea. Through Her you may command nature, the wind, the thunder, the lightning, the earthquake, and the volcano.

‘Already we have called upon all the people to help us, the animals, the birds, the fish, and the reptiles. In this way we shall crush the Giant Sorcerer, who is our enemy.’

The eagle, whose voice had grown louder and louder, strutted fiercely up and down. When he finished, all the eagles screamed together, and struck their breasts, and raised their wings. Anger flashed from their yellow eyes.

Then as at a signal they rose from the mountain on which they stood and flew in a circle above it. Faster and faster they flew, their wings sounding the thunder of flight.

‘Climb on my back quickly,’ commanded Chief of All the Eagles in the Sky.

When Raphael was seated, Empyrean darted into the air, and led his warriors up and up until the boy felt dizzy in the cold light air.

‘Behold!’ screamed the eagle suddenly.

Raphael looked down. Beyond the mountain lay the blue-white sea shimmering in the sunlight. Far below he noticed a black speck outlined against the ocean. It looked in the distance like a dragonfly. All the eagles cried out fiercely and beat their wings.

‘What’s the matter? What’s that?’ Raphael yelled, leaning along the eagle’s neck. ‘Is it an aeroplane?’

‘Yes,’ screamed the eagle.

‘Is it the Giant Sorcerer?’ gasped Raphael.

Chief of All the Eagles did not answer, but folding his wings dropped like a meteor toward the earth. Behind them swept the others like falling stars.

CHAPTER III

THE CASTLE OF THE SORCERER

THEY fell earthward until Raphael felt dizzy and sick. His ears hummed; his stomach rose. He shut his eyes and clutched desperately at the feathers along the eagle's back. After an agony of excitement, the wind-song died to a hum; they dropped less rapidly, and Raphael with a gulp opened his eyes.

They were flying above the sea, which appeared in the morning light to be covered by a bright sheet of silver mail. The aeroplane of the Sorcerer had disappeared.

The eagles bore Raphael swiftly toward a cloud which lay in the distance above the ocean. As they drew near, the cloud changed, and land appeared rising fresh and green out of the sea. On this land the boy made out a great palace of white marble.

'Is this the Sorcerer's castle?' Raphael shouted into his friend's ear.



‘IS THIS THE SORCERER’S CASTLE?’ RAPHAEL SHOUTED

Empyrean nodded.

First the eagles flew round the castle from left to right, and Raphael marveled that there were no doors, no windows in this strange building. All he saw were blind walls which towered heavenward, a huge pillar of cream-white stone.

When the eagles had circled the building three times, they flew directly across the top. On the roof was an immense court surrounded by walls and shaped like the inside of a saucer. Within this bowl lay the aeroplane of the Sorcerer. Raphael saw figures running about on the roof.

Beside the large island lay a little one, barren and brown like the naked back of a sea monster. Here the eagles gathered together for a council of war. After many impatient and fierce proposals from his followers, Chief of All the Eagles in the Sky spoke:

‘We have come, O Eagles, to save the sister of our friend and to war against our enemy, the Sorcerer. But harken. We pit our strength and cunning against a powerful foe who has magic at his command about which we know little. Our brother,’—the eagle motioned toward Raphael—‘is of another people, a people more accustomed than we to such machines as this Sorcerer is lord over. Therefore it seems advisable to me that he go forth and bring us news.’

The eagle ceased to speak. The bird-warriors turned and stared at the boy, who, proud and self-conscious, bowed his head in assent. His first test had come.

Calling upon Gæa, as Empyrean had instructed him, Raphael claimed the powers of a water spider, and turned toward the water that separated the little island from the larger one. He was to try the powers granted him by the Queen Mother. Would the sea hold him? He stepped nervously onto a wave that broke in a carpet of white foam at his feet, and took a hasty step forward, then another. It was partly like walking over an uneven floor, partly like climbing a moving sandhill.

Far below on the bottom of the ocean he could hear clams chanting a hymn of triumph in which he distinctly caught the echo of his own name.

In a few moments Raphael stood on the shore of the main island underneath the walls of the Sorcerer's castle. The tall blocks of stone which seemed to pierce the reeling sky were cold to his touch. There was no life, no movement on the whole island. Even the palms which fringed the shore were motionless. Only a large steel sign that read, *Keep Out! This Means You!* hinted at human occupation. To the castle itself he could find neither door nor window. That's very queer, thought the boy.

Calling upon Gæa for the powers of a bird, Raphael raised his hands above his head and stood upon his toes. Then, using his arms as wings, he jumped upward. It was like beating a very soft feather pillow. Slowly the boy left the ground, kicking awkwardly with his legs; and lit, out of breath and sprawling, in the saucer-like basin where he had last seen the aeroplane of the Sorcerer. The roof was deserted and bleak. Only the thin outline of a large trapdoor showed where the Sorcerer had entered his stronghold.

Raphael walked about nervously, expecting to be attacked at any moment. He could see no sign of life, and yet he felt that invisible eyes watched him.

There must be, he thought, another door to this castle under the sea.

Raphael leapt from the roof to fly back to the eagles. He dropped earthward, and only by beating the air wildly with his outstretched arms could he regain his balance. With a sense of relief he landed fluttering like a wounded bird on the little island.

When he told the eagles what he had found, they burst into a shrill clamor devising schemes of war. As before, Chief of All the Eagles in the Sky was the last to speak:

'Comrades, since you demand war, there shall be war. But I believe you underestimate the power and resource of the enemy. Before we use violence, let us discover whether there is another entrance to this castle through which the Sorcerer might escape. Although a journey below the sea is not possible for eagles, to Raphael, who has power over the sea, it should not be difficult.

'My boy'—he turned to Raphael—'I charge you with this mission. Go to the King or President of the Atlantic, for I think that he will help us.'

In this way the conference ended.



CHAPTER IV

DOWN TO THE SEA

CALLING upon the power of a dolphin, Raphael walked down into the sea. When the green water closed over his head, he realized that he had entered a new world, as strange as the earth which he had left. He took a breath cautiously and found that he could breathe. I wonder, he thought, whether the fish know that there is another world on top of the water, and that there are other worlds even beyond that.

Raphael climbed slowly down a great cinder cliff to which clung odd mosses and seaweed. He was looking for some sign of life in the silent depths when he stumbled carelessly over a rock and started to fall. It was then he noticed for the first time the peculiar nature of the land he was in. Instead of falling, he tipped forward and settled gently through the water face down. Why, thought Raphael, this is like flying. And he swam a few strokes.

At the bottom of the cliff, he sat down to rest in a large bush of seaweed which floated soft green branches toward him. He was out of breath.

‘Be careful,’ said a voice at his elbow as he was about to settle back comfortably. ‘There is a sea urchin almost underneath you.’

Raphael struggled to his feet as fast as he could. He saw no living thing, however, until he looked up. Above him finned a large pop-eyed fish which stared down at him coldly.

‘Oh,’ said Raphael, ‘I didn’t expect to see you there.’

‘Didn’t you?’ asked the fish sarcastically.

Raphael flushed, but replied politely. ‘May I ask, Sir or Madam, what a sea urchin is?’

The fish eyed him angrily. ‘My name is Mary Cod.’

And she pointed to a little round creature like a black pincushion with long spines.

‘I beg your pardon,’ answered Raphael humbly. ‘I suppose I should have recognized you.’

‘You could not be expected to know me,’ sneered the cod in a temper. ‘We look quite different on a dinner-table.’

Raphael was shocked at this. He thought it a joke in rather poor taste.

‘Miss Cod,’ he began, ‘I am sorry to have....’

‘Miss Cod, indeed!’ mouthed the codfish. ‘Tommy, Walter, Archibald, Augustus, Percy, Angela, Peter, William, and Mary, come here this minute.’

And Mrs. Cod sailed off, wriggling her fins indignantly, followed by her family, which dawdled indolently behind, opening and shutting their mouths.

I wonder if they all belong to her, thought Raphael. They look more like a school of fish on a lecture tour or an outing.

He was regretting that he had not asked her more about life under the sea, and where he might find the King or the President of the ocean, when a small voice fluted in his ear:

‘Do I understand, young man, that you would like to see the President?’



‘MISS COD, INDEED!’ MOUTHED THE CODFISH

Again Raphael, startled, looked helplessly about. He was not yet accustomed to the semi-twilight of the ocean. All he saw were the rocks down which he had tumbled, and the lacy branches of the seaweed which pulsed slowly back and forth with the ocean current. He looked up, but could see nothing except long rays of green light which filtered in broad bands through the water.

‘Do I understand, young man, that you would like to see the President?’ repeated the voice patiently.

Then Raphael discovered a sea horse hovering like a humming bird so close to his ear that he had to turn his head to see him. He balanced upright like a ribbed celluloid toy, and held a branch of green weed in his tail.

‘I want to see the President very much,’ answered Raphael hastily.

‘Follow me,’ said the sea horse. ‘I have the honor of being Equerry to the President.’ He started to swim away.

Raphael rose heavily, and, moving his arms in a swimming motion, followed his guide as rapidly as he could. They went up a steep ridge and came to a plateau covered with sea grass which moved with the ocean current like a field of wheat in the wind. As they hurried along, Raphael saw black shadows drift slowly back and forth, nosing the grass.

‘What are those, Mr. Sea Horse?’ he asked.

‘They are sharks, Mr. Raphael.’

‘Oh,’ said Raphael nervously, and looked about for a bush to hide in. The sea horse noticed this.

‘They won’t hurt you,’ he said, waiting for Raphael to catch up. ‘They are far too lazy.’

Raphael and the sea horse swam forward side by side. Now that he was more used to this strange method of walking, he found that he could travel quite easily.

‘I met Mrs. Cod,’ he said by way of conversation.

The sea horse laughed without changing his expression. 'I suppose she was as cross as usual. She has come south for the winter and has been complaining of the heat and her family ever since. She belongs farther north, and not in these semi-tropical waters at all,' the sea horse went on to explain, 'and her family is really quite a trial. Of course they aren't all hers. Most fish don't ever see their children.'

While they were talking, Raphael and the sea horse crossed the plateau and started to descend. The way became rough, and gigantic, moss-covered boulders blocked the path. The seaweed grew thicker, tangling into a rich brown and green jungle of limp branches through which Raphael found it increasingly difficult to force his way. Great lava mountains towered above them in ropy hills and cliffs, or overhung black pits which the rays of the sun could not pierce.

'Where does the President live?' asked Raphael after a long silence.

'Not far from here. I suppose you know that they are all expecting you.'

'Who is expecting me?'

'His Excellency, the Cabinet, and the Admirals of the North and South Atlantic.'

'Really?' said Raphael, who had ceased to be surprised at anything. 'Who told them I was coming?'

'Gæa, the Queen Mother, sent us word,' answered the sea horse as he dipped his body respectfully.

He seemed disinclined to say more and Raphael politely changed the subject.

'Would you mind telling me your President's name?'

'Willingly,' answered the sea horse. 'The President of the Atlantic democracy is His Excellency, Mr. Albert Right Whale. He was elected, as you may have heard, on account of his size.'

'Is the Pacific a democracy also?' asked Raphael.

'Oh, dear, no,' replied the sea horse proudly.

Just then the path they were following joined a broad highway of white sand which ran between two high mountains. Along this road swam thousands of fish, more fish than Raphael had ever seen. For the most part they drifted along in schools: gray snappers, muttonfish, and red and black groupers. Occasionally Raphael and his guide passed a sting ray asleep like a mottled fungus on the ocean floor. And once they came upon an immense octopus shambling along on his knuckles.

The road gradually narrowed to a gateway between two walls of black obsidian. Most of the fish made no effort to pass this barrier, but swam slowly in a circle about the entrance. Many of them turned away and drifted silently back the way they had come like ghosts.

‘Here we are,’ said the sea horse. ‘Follow me.’



CHAPTER V

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT

RAPHAEL and the sea horse swam through the gateway, which was guarded by two gray octopi, and entered a huge amphitheater. On all sides rose black hills covered with brown ooze. The floor was coral, whose pink-and-white branches were laced into miniature caves and grottoes in which lived strange crabs and small beautifully tinted fish. Clinging to the coral, brown sea fans waved in the pulse of the ocean, while here and there sea anemones bloomed like giant white chrysanthemums. Through this garden swam silver moonfish, striped black-and-white angel fish, and the spotted red and green rockhind.

After a quick glance Raphael paid them little attention as he moved across the uneven floor. Instead he stared at the indistinct forms which circled like shadows in the center of the immense arena. He had never seen such gigantic creatures.

‘Come with me,’ said the sea horse, and piloted him toward a magnificent black whale who swam sedately about in the center of a group of admirers. Cabinet ministers, Admiralty, and Senators, thought Raphael. When they were quite close, the sea horse stopped.

‘Mr. President,’ he announced in his thin small voice, ‘may I introduce Mr. Raphael, Commander of the Elements, and General of All the Armies Above and Below the Sea, Emissary Extraordinary of Gæa, the Earth Mother.’

The sea horse paused and asked Raphael in an aside whether he had any more titles. ‘For,’ he said, ‘they are very fond of titles in this democracy.’

The President smiled heavily, dropping his huge lower jaw and exposing the whalebone strainers in his mouth.

‘Pleased to meet you, Mr. Raphael. We have had word about you.’ And he held out an immense fluke toward the boy. Raphael’s hand seemed

ridiculously small, but he grasped the outer edge of the rough, oily flipper manfully.

‘Martha,’ called the President to a slightly smaller black whale, ‘meet Mr. Raphael.’

At this the First Lady of the Ocean bustled up, quivering with anxiety to please. ‘Glad to meet any friend of my husband’s,’ she gurgled. ‘You’re a real stranger round these parts.’

Raphael bowed. ‘Mr. President,’ he said, ‘might I have a word with you in private, if Mrs. Whale will excuse us?’

‘Certainly,’ said the President. ‘My dear, will you pardon us?’ Again they bowed to one another.

When Mrs. Whale and the sea horse had withdrawn, Raphael turned to the President. ‘Mr. President,’ he said very fast and without drawing breath, ‘I have come to ask a favor of you as the Leading Citizen of the Ocean.’ His Excellency smiled, flattered.

Then Raphael told him about Cassandra, the Sorcerer, and the blind castle on the island. ‘I have come,’ he concluded, ‘to find a door to the castle and to ask your help.’

‘Since you come from Gæa, the Queen Mother,’ replied the President in his best official manner, speaking very carefully, ‘you are more than welcome to the Sea. But here we are ignorant of the Earth, and such people as this Giant Sorcerer.

‘Besides this you are a man, and man has done us few favors. Instead he has destroyed many of our noblest sea families. For this reason our hearts are hard.’

‘But Mr. President,’ interrupted Raphael excitedly, ‘I don’t want very much help. All I need is a guard placed about the castle rock in case the Sorcerer should escape.’

The President was impressed. ‘Well, well,’ he muttered, ‘what you ask is little. And if we don’t love man, we should probably love a sorcerer even less.’ He sighed. ‘I don’t mean to be discourteous, but political life is full of difficult decisions, and times are not as easy as they used to be. What is

more, we have our own wars to fight in the ocean, for most of us feed by war. However, I'll help you now, if you will help us in the future.'

At this point Mrs. Whale burst in upon the conversation.

'Oh, Albert,' she cried, bumping him coyly, 'you men are always talking business. You'll forgive my interrupting, won't you, Mr. Raphael? I'm sure Albert will scold me later. But I do want you to see our son before you leave. Children of the Sea so seldom have a chance to see the strange people who come from the Land. Especially live ones. They tell me that we were land folk at one time. My husband says that if this were known it would do him no end of harm politically.'

'Now, now, little woman,' interrupted her husband kindly, 'run along. We have serious business to attend to.'

The President turned and beckoned with his fluke to the sea horse.

'Mr. Equerry,' he commanded, 'summon the Grand Council.'

At a word from the sea horse, the Grand Council, which was made up of the House of Representatives as well as the Admiralty, gathered and stationed itself in a semi-circle about the President, the big fish nearest the ocean floor, the little fish above them like spectators in a vast theater audience. Raphael saw a porpoise, a manatee, a sawfish, a swordfish, a spearfish, a sailfish, a tarpon, a tuna, several kinds of sharks, besides a dolphin, a turtle, and numerous representative sea creatures he could not name.

When they were all in their places, the President introduced Raphael, who repeated his adventures with the Giant Sorcerer and urged them to aid him.

'For,' he said, 'if my search for an entrance to the castle fails, in the name of Gæa I shall tear apart the ocean floor and bury the Sorcerer beneath the sea which otherwise he would surely dare to make his own.'

'Ah,' echoed the multitude, who stared at him out of round unlidded eyes. Raphael was about to continue his speech about the rescue of Cassandra, which secretly he thought very fine indeed, when swarms of little fish suddenly flashed through the assembly and darted into the green weeds that skirted the base of the surrounding cliffs. Several of the larger fish stirred hungrily, while the President looked annoyed.

‘Mr. Equerry,’ he demanded ponderously, ‘what is the meaning of this interruption?’

‘I shall try to find out, Your Excellency,’ answered the sea horse as he was tossed on the wave of the President’s double-chinned displeasure. But even as he spoke more fish streamed through the gateway to the great chamber, and swept the council amphitheater. Then shadows appeared struggling at the entrance, and fine sand clouded the water. No one said a word, but fear spread through the water in mysterious waves.

Suddenly from the shadows between the cliffs, Raphael saw a strange form appear, a creature with massive legs and arms, in whose round head gleamed two goggle eyes. This thing advanced slowly and, bending over, picked up a black cable from the ocean floor.

When the monster saw the gathering, it stopped and peered stupidly about, balancing on one squat, steel-ribbed foot. Then with slow strides it drifted back the way it had come.

‘Mr. Equerry,’ shouted the President in a shrill voice, ‘summon the Admirals of the North and South Atlantic. Instruct Rear Admiral Swordfish and Rear Admiral Sawfish to pursue the enemy and drive him from the sea. In the meantime, the meeting is adjourned.’ He turned nervously to Raphael. ‘I need a good blow of fresh air. I feel as though I had been down at least five hours.’

He lifted his immense head toward the surface, and without another word rose like a black cloud.



CHAPTER VI

OFF TO WAR

RAPHAEL followed the President as quickly as he could to the top of the ocean. The afternoon sun was descending when he lifted his head above water. Far away to the west he thought he could see the castle of the Sorcerer, but it was difficult to be sure with the sun shining in his eyes. He swam slowly toward the President, who was spouting feathery plumes of vapor as he circled about.

‘Goodness, that creature gave me a start,’ said the President when Raphael paddled up. And he blew a jet of vapor over the boy.

‘My nerves are not what they used to be,’ he confided. ‘It comes from being hunted. Anything that looks like a man makes me jump, with exceptions, of course. What did you make of it?’

‘It was a diver, I think,’ answered Raphael importantly. ‘A diver looks very terrible,’ he added, to save the President’s feelings. ‘I’ve often seen them in the movies at home when Aunt Mary let us go.’

‘Well, well,’ sighed the President, ‘if it’s only a diver. I thought that....’

Just then Mrs. Whale appeared blowing nervously, followed by an ugly, freckled, snub-nosed little whale some twenty feet in length.

‘Oh, Albert,’ she wailed, ‘what was it? Do you think there is any danger? I can’t bear the suspense. I don’t care for myself, but Junior will be frightened out of yards of growth.’

‘It was nothing, dear. Only a diver,’ replied her husband. ‘I don’t believe there is any danger.’

At this Junior playfully butted his mother.

‘Junior, don’t! Do you want to hurt your mother, who would give every fluke in her body for you?’

Then she saw Raphael. ‘Why, Mr. Raphael! How nice to see you up here! Junior’s such a bad boy,’ she apologized proudly. ‘He’s getting his strainers. Don’t you think he looks like the President? Stop it, Junior! Do you want me to slap you? There, shake a fluke with Mr. Raphael. Mr. Raphael comes from the Land, where they say we once lived. What is the world coming to!’

Junior said nothing, but bumped his mother again as if by accident.

‘Now, Junior, do stop!’ she exclaimed almost tearfully. ‘Where are your manners? Children are so difficult! I always try to reason with my little ones, but sometimes it seems as though Junior just won’t listen. My husband always laughs at me, but he spoils Junior just as badly as I do. What do you think, Mr. Raphael?’

Raphael did not have time to say what he thought, for just then a small voice fluted, ‘Mr. President, the Navy has formed in review.’ It was the sea horse.

‘I have enjoyed my blow,’ said the President more calmly. ‘And now I must leave you two to chat.’

‘Your Excellency,’ begged Raphael, ‘I want to know what happens. May I go down with you?’

‘Why, certainly, Mr. Raphael. I should be delighted. Good-bye, dear,’ called the President to his wife; ‘don’t go too far away.’ Then he turned to Raphael. ‘If you will catch hold of my fluke, we’ll be down in a moment.’

Raphael did as he was told. The whale rounded his back, lifted his tail out of water, and sounded with a splash.

Down they shot into the twilight world of the ocean. Raphael did not dare to breathe, and for a long time did not even open his eyes.

At last they came to rest by the gateway of the amphitheater fifty yards or so off bottom. Immediately a host of small fish swam up beside them, pushing and struggling for the best view of the parade. Gray police sharks drifted slowly up and down the line.

At a signal from the President, a huge sawfish approached and saluted with a sweep of his tail. He had small up-staring eyes and moved his saw sideways like a scythe.

‘All present, Mr. President,’ he intoned.

The right whale returned the salute and ordered, ‘Carry on.’

The sawfish saluted again and withdrew. The light was growing dimmer. Shadows clung to the rock floor, and Raphael had difficulty in seeing the black cliffs across the arena.

The review began in silence. Two Admirals, a swordfish and a sawfish, followed by four Rear Admirals, passed slowly before the President. Behind them swam, rank on rank, the Navy of the Atlantic led by a brilliant band of drum and trumpet fish. Eight deep they drifted past the reviewing stand in massed companies of a hundred—swordfish, sawfish, spearfish, porpoises, leopard sharks, devilfish, sting rays, and even a company of octopi which sculled along in the rear.

Behind them followed a second division composed of smaller fish led by a sergeant major and queen trigger fish with a host of flying-fish for scouts.

When the Navy had swum majestically out of the gateway, the crowd broke up into noisy little groups of non-combatants. Raphael saw a gathering of crabs arguing among themselves, while a large blue-green lobster ambled over to join the fight. A starfish, unmindful of the excitement, slept like a red rubber sponge on a coral ledge.

The ocean silence grew more oppressive as the light failed. Raphael was watching a hermit crab scuttle round hunting for an empty shell to hide in, when the sea horse swam up.

‘That creature killed both of the octopi guards,’ he said. ‘There must have been a terrible fight. What do you suppose he was doing here?’

‘He was probably one of the Sorcerer’s spies,’ answered Raphael.

‘Do you really think so?’

‘Yes.’

‘I wonder how much he discovered?’ mused the Equerry. ‘I couldn’t find out from the other fish. Some said one thing and some another.’

Just then the President swam up. He loomed dark and indistinct, stirring up the phosphorus in the water which shone about him like moonlight around the edges of a black cloud.

‘If you will spend the night with us, while the Navy drives that monster from the Sea, I will show you many wonderful things,’ he urged Raphael. ‘I know deep valleys in which all sorts of curious fish live, fish with no eyes, fish with windows in their stomachs, fish who light up the pits of the Sea with their own lanterns, besides numerous other serpents and sea beasts.’

For a moment Raphael was tempted to stay and see these wonders. Then he thought of Cassandra and gave up the idea. He was turning to bid the President good-bye, when a small needlefish darted up.

‘Mr. President,’ whistled the needlefish, ‘Admiral Sawfish has sent me with dispatches informing you that the enemy who invaded the Council Chamber has entirely disappeared.’ And he handed Mr. Right Whale a bundle of tightly rolled seaweed.

Raphael was worried.

‘Mr. President,’ he implored, ‘will you help me? The Sorcerer may have been warned already of our plans to get into the castle.’

‘I shall help you as I promised,’ answered the whale, ‘but I don’t know whether there is any entrance to the castle under the sea. If you will wait, I will have my scouts look for one.’

‘If you would lend me a guide, I could scout for myself,’ urged Raphael.

‘Very well,’ said the President. ‘I must apologize for not providing you with an escort to the island, but the Navy has gone. I am sure you understand my position. My Equerry, however, will guide you.’

Raphael bade the President farewell and sent his respects to the First Lady of the Ocean and her son.

‘Good-bye,’ called His Excellency. ‘Good luck. Farewell. Farewell.’

As he spoke the President drifted off, his voice grew fainter and fainter, the darkness deepened, and Raphael saw him no more.

CHAPTER VII

EAGLES! EAGLES!

AFTER bidding the President farewell, Raphael, guided by the sea horse, returned toward the highlands which jugged up to form the island of the Sorcerer. It was very dark. Phosphorus glowed about them in the ocean so that they moved like comets through the night.

They had been traveling for some time when a host of small mackerel darted by.

‘What’s the matter?’ asked the sea horse of one who paused a moment in his flight to look at them.

‘A huge silver whale chased us, a whale larger than any we had ever seen. It came out of those cliffs.’ And the mackerel turned and pointed with his tail.

‘Come on,’ said Raphael. ‘I don’t like this.’

Together the sea horse and the boy rushed westward. After a time they came to the cliffs themselves rising sheer and black.

Here they stumbled over a wire cable which ran along the ocean floor, and stopped for a moment out of breath.

‘I’m afraid the Sorcerer may have gone,’ panted Raphael to his companion.

The sea horse did not answer him, but stared intently into the gloom. At first Raphael could see nothing, but at last he made out the outline of a black doorway which gaped open in the cliff.

‘The door! The door!’ shouted Raphael.

He swam closer and felt one of the edges with his hand. It was made out of metal. Again he tripped over the cable which led into the depths of the chasm.

Raphael decided to follow it, and had started forward when the sea horse warned him.

‘Be careful. That water is poisonous and foul.’

Raphael hesitated. A raw stagnant odor hung about the mouth of the doorway which sickened him.

‘I shouldn’t go in there if I were you,’ warned the sea horse.

‘But,’ objected Raphael, ‘I must find Cassandra.’

The sea horse quivered. ‘Good-bye, then. I shall have to leave you here. I hope you won’t think me a coward, but I couldn’t live a minute in that water. Good luck.’

‘So long!’ said Raphael. He had become very fond of the sea horse. ‘See you later, and thanks ever so much for showing me about.’

‘See you later,’ echoed the sea horse sadly, and turned away.

I shall never see him again, thought Raphael, and shut his eyes as he stepped within the door.

It was cold and dead black inside. Raphael paddled blindly upward feeling choked and uncomfortable.

Suddenly without warning his head popped above the surface, and he could look around. He was in an immense cave hewn out of the solid rock. At one end of it a cluster of brilliant yellow lights was reflected in the oily black water that licked at the foot of a great pier carved out of the rock wall.



**‘I SHOULDN’T GO IN THERE IF I WERE YOU,’ WARNED
THE SEA HORSE**

Raphael swam rapidly to a flight of landing stairs which ran down into the water, and hauled himself out. Shivering he turned toward a few concrete steps which led from the pier up to the door in the rock wall. The black cable he had determined to follow also rose out of the water and disappeared through this door.

This is the cable that the diver carried from the Council Chamber, thought Raphael with sudden inspiration.

Not knowing exactly what to do, the boy mounted the steps and hurried along a smooth concrete passageway which led directly into the castle itself.

Forgetting the might and cunning of the enemy in his impatience, he ran, his feet pattering along the corridor like rain upon a shingle roof. Ahead of him lights blazed, but no one stopped him, no one appeared. He climbed a long flight of marble stairs, and so came through a door of brass into the great central hall of the castle. It was a huge semi-circular room like a cathedral apse, lined with winking elevator shafts that rose toward the distant ceiling in blazing piers of metal.

Raphael hesitated for a moment and then followed the cable through an open door. The room into which he came was lined with rich imitation oak paneling, and contained a large mahogany-stained table. The cable ended here. In the center of this table rested a steel box japanned in black enamel. Halfway under the box lay a letter, thin and white, on the outside of which was printed in large letters *RAPHAEL*, and below this in writing, *‘In the event of his discovering this dictaphone.’*

Raphael hastily tore open the letter, and read as follows:

CASTLE OF THE SEA

MY DEAR RAPHAEL:

Through my dictaphone I have discovered your plot to destroy me and my castle. As I quite realize your ability to carry out your plans so conveniently outlined, I have made mine in

advance. Cassandra and I leave in a moment by submarine for a safer retreat from your unwished-for attentions.

I trust that this letter will relieve you of further search, my only regret being that our destination must be kept a secret from you. Give my respects to all your old-fashioned friends above and below.

I remain

Your humble

And devoted servant

MECHANUS

P.S. Cassandra sends her love.

Raphael stared at the letter a moment. Then he ran to the door, and back into the great hallway. Here he stopped and looked desperately about. It was almost impossible to go back. He thought of the roof, the roof and the eagles.

All the elevator doors stood open. Raphael stepped into the nearest one and grasped the starting lever. Up, up he shot with dizzy speed. He wondered, as they passed floor after floor, how tall the castle was. Where should he stop? Perhaps the elevator would shatter itself against the roof and drop him down the long shaft.

The car jarred and came to a sudden stop. Raphael jerked back the elevator door and stepped into a long corridor. Peering up between the landing and the cage, he saw the roof itself just above him. He was on the top floor.

The boy ran along the corridor, and so came to a room where he discovered a huge aeroplane lying black and shining in its hangar. Raphael did not even stop to look at the machine, but hurried toward the great door which filled one end of the room. It was made of steel, thick and impassive. This was the entrance he had noticed from the outside. He pushed at it frantically, and beat his hands on the great locks. He might as well have tried to overthrow the castle itself.

Raphael had nearly given up in despair when he noticed a small lever on the wall. He reached over and pulled it down. With a click and whir the door swung smoothly back, and the boy stepped out onto the roof.

‘Eagles! Eagles!’ he shouted.

In a moment Chief of All the Eagles in the Sky wheeled into sight.

‘Well, my boy,’ he said shortly, ‘you’ve been gone a long time.’

‘The Sorcerer,’ choked Raphael handing him the crumpled letter, ‘has escaped by submarine with Cassie.’

‘I thought so,’ remarked Emphyrean without surprise. ‘My lieutenants reported earlier in the evening that they had seen a large fish swim from underneath the castle. It is easy to see such things from the air.’

‘Then Cassie is lost for good?’

‘Nonsense,’ said the eagle. ‘The war has only begun. I commanded my lieutenants to follow the submarine, and bring us news. Come, we must join them.’

Raphael scrambled upon Emphyrean’s back, and they winged their way into the night. Behind them the empty castle of the Sorcerer rose in the moonlight like a silver monument out of the black sea.

CHAPTER VIII

ON TO MECHANA

RAPHAEL settled back between the eagle's wings. He felt tired and very hungry.

'Here,' shouted the eagle, 'lean down.'

Raphael leaned down, and Empyrean handed him something cold and slimy.

'Thought you might be hungry,' screamed the bird.

Raphael held the thing up in the moonlight. It was a fish.

I am an eagle. I must do as the eagles do, reasoned the boy. At least this will keep me from starving.

But the limp fish in his hand did not bring him any desire to eat.

I wonder, he thought, whether this was one of my friends under the ocean. Meanwhile he held the fish almost at arm's length.

In a few moments, however, hunger overcame distaste, and he began to eat. Raw fish had its advantages. It was filling. Cats like raw fish.

When he had finished, Raphael wiped his hands carefully upon his feather suit and looked about, lulled by the rise and fall of the great wings. The moon, pale and remote, hung like a silver plate in the sky.

The boy wondered how the eagle knew where he was going. He remembered dimly that mariners guide their ships over the sea at night by the aid of stars. A meteor fell in a slow blaze of sparks across the sky. Once he had been on a boat at night....

When Raphael woke, it was early morning. In the east the sun was rising, to the west, land rimmed the horizon. Near at hand flew another eagle.

'Have they found the Sorcerer?' called Raphael, wide awake.

Empyrean nodded.

‘Where?’

‘Ahead of us.’

Other eagles joined them, sweeping down out of the sky in slow circles. Raphael could see the white line of surf breaking over the bleak shore back of which rose low hills covered with dark firs.

They flew on rapidly and came in a few moments to the head of a little bay where a sluggish river emptied into the sea. At the mouth of the river was a stone landing from which led a straight white road.

‘Look! Look!’ yelled Raphael.

Alongside the jetty lay a huge silver submarine with a gangplank leading from the conning tower to the jetty. Deserted, it slept like an ocean monster, gently rubbing against the pier head, while little waves creamed against its shimmering sides. There was no movement, no sign of life anywhere. Only the sun glistening on silver steel decks.

Without lighting they flew inland, following the river and the road which led away from the coast. After a time mountains appeared on the horizon, the river disappeared in low hills, and only the slender road wound westward.

They rose slowly higher and higher as the mountains pushed up into the sky. It was like flying, Raphael thought, over a rumpled comforter on a gigantic bed. Clouds gathered about them, masses of cold, moist vapor shutting out the earth below, smothering the mountains in their soft folds, shutting them off into another world with the sun and the blue sky.

At signal from Empyrean, all the eagles dove through the clouds and, swooping in a great circle, lit on top of a mountain which overhung a broad valley that stretched westward as far as Raphael could see. Through the center of this valley flowed a broad river.

All the eagles gathered about Empyrean.

‘Does the Sorcerer live down there?’ asked Raphael, pointing.

The eagle nodded: ‘To the west, there is a great city called Mechana.’

The boy said nothing for a moment. He could make out distant lakes like pools of melted lead. Almost at his feet the road they had been following

wormed through the mountain range and disappeared into the forest. It was cold on the mountain. In spite of his feather suit, Raphael shivered.

‘Does that road lead to Mechana?’ he asked.

‘Yes,’ answered the bird.

Raphael felt a sudden desire to run, to feel the earth under his feet, to smell the clean forest smell. Flying was fun, but....

‘Empyrean, would it be all right if I ran along the road a little way to get warm?’ begged the boy. ‘I’m frozen.’

The eagle nodded. ‘Follow the road,’ he ordered curtly, ‘and when you reach the outskirts of the city, wait for me. I shall join you there.’

Raphael scrambled eagerly down the mountain to the road. Then, because the sun was warm and the air crisp, he called upon the powers of the antelope, and leapt forward in easy, tireless strides.

The road led from the cedar-dotted uplands into a valley of spruce. Logs covered with green moss and moulding yellow leaves lay tangled in the undergrowth. In the trees chickadees fluted and chirped, and a hen partridge scuttled across the road with her tiny yellow brood. Raphael politely said ‘Good-morning,’ but they only fluttered and stared at him out of brown, curious eyes.



‘DOES THAT ROAD LEAD TO MECHANA?’

Raphael ran on. Half an hour later, as he turned a sharp corner in the road, he nearly stumbled over a large black bear and her cub. The bear rose on her hind legs, her ears laid flat and the lips of her tan muzzle drawn back showing large white teeth.

Raphael stopped.

‘Good-morning,’ he said as pleasantly as he could, though his voice shook.

The bear dropped back to the road with a soft thud.

‘Who are you?’ she grunted.

‘I am Raphael,’ he replied, ‘Commander of the Elements under Gæa, the Earth Mother.’

By this time the cub had ambled forward to inspect this strange creature dressed in black feathers who smelt so queerly.

‘You are welcome then,’ growled the bear surlily, and she sat back on her furry rump showing the leather soles of her hind feet. ‘It will be a hot day.’

Raphael seated himself on a dry log at the side of the road.

‘It is going to be a hot day,’ he repeated. ‘How far is it to Mechana, the city of the Sorcerer?’

‘What Sorcerer?’

Then he told the bear about Mechanus, and how he had stolen his sister Cassandra. Meanwhile the cub snuffled about Raphael’s feet until, becoming bored, he ambled off to root in a rotten tree for grubs.

When Raphael stopped talking, the she bear said: ‘I have heard of this Sorcerer. It is said that he is like a man, and that there is a city a long way to the west. But life is hard in the woods. I find it difficult enough to feed my children, and so I do not bother about what does not concern me.’

‘But that’s just it,’ argued Raphael. ‘It does concern you. To-day you have a forest to live in and pools to drink from. But to-morrow the Sorcerer may cut down this forest, the pools will dry, the berries will disappear; you will find nothing to feed on, and then how will your children live?’



RAPHAEL SEATED HIMSELF ON A DRY LOG

The bear looked at him out of cunning little eyes. 'When that time comes, I shall move elsewhere to other forests.' And she wrinkled her long nose in a yawn.

'I am sorry for your sister,' she added. 'I know how I should feel if a cub of mine were stolen. But, after all, life in the forest is one danger following another. We must eat. We must find food, and that is difficult enough. Meanwhile the Earth Mother who has always cared for us will look after her people. There is no use in worrying about to-morrow. For many years men have hunted us, and yet we live.'

Raphael muttered, 'The Sorcerer will be more terrible than man.'

The bear stirred restlessly. 'Well, perhaps as you say, some day we may go. It is quite true that life is growing harder for us. But then we do not expect to live forever.'

Here the little cub broke in with a whimper, 'Mamma, I'm hungry. You promised me a log with fat slugs in it.'

'I'm sorry I can't help you,' the bear said to Raphael, 'but a mother's life is a hard one. Yes, Lawrence, I'll be right with you.'

Raphael watched them out of sight, and then ran on down the road. Down through the valley it wound until it reached the river, where it followed the river-bank. Having been granted the powers of an antelope, Raphael stopped every now and then to nibble at the green buds and tender shoots of late spring. In this way the day passed.

Toward evening he came suddenly upon a clearing hewn out of the forest. In the evening light the white-topped stumps of freshly cut trees looked like the gravestones of a bleak cemetery. Raphael moved forward very slowly. The road left the river and climbed a steep hill, and, as the boy reached the top, he saw the city itself below him.

'There you are,' said a familiar voice as a shadow passed over his head, and Empyrean lit on the ground beside him. 'I have been following you for the last hour. What do you think of it?'

Raphael stood and said nothing.



CHAPTER IX

THE COUNCIL OF THE ANIMALS

THE hill on which they stood dropped sharply away into a plain surrounded by high hills. To the south the river ran under pine bluffs. But what amazed Raphael was the strange city that lay before him. A thousand white skyscrapers towered up from the plain in square masses of marble and concrete, a city of giant cubes one rising above the other. Overhead three aeroplanes droned like black bees sharply outlined against the evening sky.

As the twilight deepened, lights appeared in the windows of the massive buildings. Raphael could hear the roar of swiftly moving machinery like the murmur of a far-off waterfall. Somewhere in a huge skyscraper among those canyons of concrete, Cassandra and the Sorcerer were hidden.

‘How shall I ever find her in that great city?’ thought Raphael, awed.

‘What shall we do?’ he asked Emphyrean.

‘First of all we must prevent the Sorcerer from escaping us,’ answered the eagle.

‘But how can we?’

‘Set a guard about the city.’

‘If we called a council of the animals, they would help us,’ suggested Raphael.

The eagle gave the order to his lieutenants, and then turned to Raphael.

‘My boy, to-morrow we shall test the power of this Sorcerer. In the meantime you had better sleep. The animals should arrive at dawn. Good-night.’ And Emphyrean flew up into the branches of a tall dead tree.

Raphael hunted for a dry spot to sleep. When he had found an overhanging rock with pine needles at the base, he curled up and lay down.

Overhead the stars were very bright. Raphael was too excited to sleep immediately. Instead he lay and thought about Cassandra. Where was she?

What was she doing? Was the Sorcerer kind to her? What was the Sorcerer? Was he so very dangerous that Gæa should be forced to give him power over all the elements? Who was Gæa? All the animals knew her and yet none save Empyrean had ever talked of her. She was a woman. The Mother of all living things. Perhaps she was like Aunt Mary, only more beautiful.

Thinking these things, he drifted into a troubled sleep. He dreamt that he had been running very fast and that suddenly he came to a little house of logs in the woods. Over the door hung an old board on which was burnt in rough letters, *The House of Life*. He walked right in without knocking and looked around. It was a bigger house than he had thought. In one corner stood a woman washing. She was large. Her arms were red, and her hair was quite gray. She wore a faded gray blouse and skirt. 'Hello,' said Raphael, 'I—I didn't know you were here.' The woman turned and smiled. She had a pleasant face like the woman who washed clothes for Aunt Mary and gave him cookies from the cooky jar. 'Who are you?' asked Raphael in the dream. 'I am Gæa,' said the woman and smiled again. Raphael liked her smile and her quiet gray eyes. 'You will save Cassie, won't you?' he asked anxiously. Then Raphael heard a scratching noise, and Gæa went to the door and opened it. In waddled two wolf cubs. They were very young and soft. Gæa picked them up and dipped them carefully in her washtub. Raphael started. The water in the tub was bright red. It was the color of blood. Gæa dried the cubs carefully and then set them down. In a moment there was more scratching at the door, and two ungainly fawns trotted in. In this way cubs and fawns and numberless wild babies arrived and were dipped until the house was filled with them. Gæa gently continued her work of baptism in spite of the frightened protests of the young animals. At last there was no place to stand at all. Raphael was suddenly afraid, afraid of the house, afraid of the animals which filled it. 'Gæa, Gæa,' he called desperately and scrambled toward her. 'Yes, dearie,' she answered reassuringly and opened her arms. He was just able to reach their shelter and bury his head in her blouse when he woke, his face pressed into the leaves on which he lay. It was gray in the forest about him. It was morning.

Raphael rose and shook himself. He noticed quite suddenly that the woods about him were filled with moving things. He could hear the rustle of leaves and the occasional snap of a twig. Mice scurried through the underbrush. A rabbit hopped in sight and looked curiously about. A deer peered at him

from a thicket. He walked thoughtfully to the top of the hill which overlooked the city and sat down upon a rock. Here Emphyrean joined him.

The larger beasts arrived slowly—the moose, the elk, the mountain lion and the grizzly bear, the wolves and coyotes. Raphael, as he saw the animals crowding about him, some frightened and impatient, others bold and curious, realized that much more than Cassandra's liberty was wrapped in the defeat of the Sorcerer. The Earth people had come to help him at the bidding of Gæa, their mother. With the Sorcerer destroyed they would be saved from extermination, perhaps forever.

When the meeting had been called together by Emphyrean, Raphael spoke:

'Brothers,' he said and pointed down the valley, 'your home is being destroyed by the same Sorcerer who has stolen my sister. You know what his terrible engines have done to your forests and your rivers and your children. While he lives, you cannot hope to inherit the Earth, for his people multiply and spread all over the world. The time has come for us to attack him, attack to save the places we live in and in which our ancestors lived.'

The animals made assent each in his own tongue and pressed closer, the deer timid and trembling, the moose shoulder to shoulder with the elk, the great bears and the mountain lions, the wolves and the coyotes, brothers in one common purpose.

Then Raphael called for scouts to discover if possible where the Sorcerer lived and where Cassandra was. All the animals volunteered to go with one voice.

'Let me go,' said a mouse. 'I'm small. No one would pay much attention to a mouse.'

'Of what use would a mouse be?' hissed a snake scornfully.

The rest of the animals said nothing.

'I think,' said Raphael, after a pause, 'that a mouse might be able to find out more than any of the rest of us. He is small and his eyes are sharp. Go quickly, Mouse, and return to us.'

The little mouse, quite excited over the honor done him, scurried off. Meanwhile the animals lay in a circle about the clearing, the larger ones crowding among the firs at the edge, the smaller ones finding shelter in the

grass and bushes. Raphael sat on the council rock and looked out over the city.

In an hour or two the mouse returned, hurried and out of breath. The animals, who were the first to hear him, rose and pressed about Raphael to hear what was said.

‘Master,’ squeaked the mouse, ‘the way was long and I have hurried. I went down through the fields to a desert of stone with high cliffs on all sides. Great boxes on wheels and many silent walking things passed me. And so I came away. Truly what could live in such a place?’



‘A MOUSE MIGHT BE ABLE TO FIND OUT MORE THAN ANY OF THE REST OF US’

‘What sort of silent walking things?’ asked Raphael.

‘Creatures like yourself but bigger. They smelt of oil and frightened me.’

‘What else did you discover?’

‘No more, Master. What is there to learn from such a waste of stone, and creatures that do not talk?’

Raphael was bitterly disappointed at this lack of news, and again called for volunteers. This time a crow cawed louder than the others: ‘Let me go, Master. I can fly over the city, and who would suspect a black thief of a crow? Now a proud eagle or a hawk might be killed by our enemy. And,’ he concluded, slyly looking at Emphyrean, ‘what is more cunning than a crow?’

So it was decided that he should go.

When the crow returned, he said that he had flown a great way, but that he had little to report. ‘I saw,’ he said, ‘a great city below me with streets many miles in length, and on each side of them huge buildings that took up many acres of ground. In one place only I saw trees and green growing things. By the river there is a tower surrounded by a walled garden.’

‘Do you think Cassandra might be there?’ asked Raphael, excited.

‘Perhaps,’ agreed the crow.

‘There is nothing so cunning as a crow,’ said Emphyrean sarcastically, stretching the talons of his foot.

‘I wonder if we could reach the tower by the river,’ Raphael mused aloud.

‘I’m afraid not, Mr. Raphael,’ spoke up a voice. The company parted about the speaker and Raphael saw the sleek body of an otter with his dark snake-like head. ‘I was down in the river among the trout,’ he confessed, ‘and I know the river is dammed in many places so that one cannot pass to and fro.’

‘Thank you,’ said Raphael. ‘In that case the river would be out of the question.’

‘Yes,’ replied the otter. ‘I hunt and see strange things. I have watched the river turn great wheels.’

‘It is those wheels,’ explained Raphael, ‘which make electricity for lights and heaters and for running power motors.’

‘That may well be,’ said the otter. ‘As for me, I do not understand man things. They are best left to men.’

‘I agree with you,’ squeaked the mouse in a flash of spirit. ‘I do not like boxes that run on wheels.’

‘Nor,’ joined in the birds, ‘great insects that fly through the air.’

‘We have been caught in traps and poisoned,’ bayed the wolves.

‘We are shot at with bullets for our horns,’ belled the moose.

All the animals began to cry out in their languages.

‘Peace,’ said Raphael. ‘We must spy out the city of the Sorcerer if we are to destroy him and bring back my sister.’

‘You had better go,’ counseled Empyrean. ‘These creatures are fools. We shall wait here for you.’

‘I’ll go,’ agreed Raphael. ‘Perhaps that will be best. People of the Woods, will you circle the city of the Sorcerer so that he may not slip away from us? I shall spy on him myself.’

‘We will,’ came back the answer. ‘We are of one mind in this.’

‘I may be gone a week. Will you guard faithfully?’

‘If we do this, Mr. Raphael,’ said a hare timidly, ‘who will save us from the wolves and the foxes?’

‘You need not worry,’ said Raphael confidently. ‘We are here for one purpose, the freedom of all from the Sorcerer and his creatures, and so have declared a universal truce.’

‘A truce! A truce!’ shouted the animals. ‘Death to the Sorcerer. Freedom forever.’

The hare looked nervous, but said nothing. Then Raphael called together the leaders of the wolves, the eagles, the bears, the wild cats, the moose, the

elk, and all the others, and urged them to keep the peace for seven days. He sent this word by the otter to the trout and salmon in the river. Then he once more cautioned the animals to keep faith, saying that on them rested the success of the expedition. After that Raphael made his way to the city.



CHAPTER X

THE CAPTURE OF RAPHAEL

RAPHAEL walked down the hill toward the city of the Sorcerer, and came shortly to a macadam road which he followed cautiously, ready to hide if anything should pass. He had not gone far when a truck clattered by with two strange creatures on the driving seat. They were not men, though curiously like them in figure.

They were tall, and were dressed in dark gray jumpers. Their hands were covered with what appeared to be black gloves, and their feet were cased in metal shoes. But the heads of these creatures astonished Raphael most: the faces were gray with two glassy eyes set under round projecting foreheads, the noses were thick and short, the chins dropped away rapidly below the mouth. They appeared to have no ears, but each wore a matting of rope hair. These evidently were the servants of the Sorcerer.

Raphael tried to hide as the truck lumbered by, but the creatures drove past without looking at him. This encouraged the boy and he walked more boldly. Gæa would look after him.

On each side of the highway rose large billboards shutting out the view of the plain. *Welcome to Mechana*, stood out in large letters beside the portrait of a mechanical man, and there were others: *Mechanicos Drink Mozzo Oil, the Health Fluid. Keeps Out Rust, the Enemy of Long Life*. While a few bore the more terrifying legend, *Does the Repair Shop Frighten You? Use U-Kant-Beat-It on the Joints*. Below this the following letter was painted in red, *'I have used U-Kant-Beat-It for ten years and can still kiss my big toe.'* It was signed *Mechanus, the Giant Sorcerer*.

Why, thought Raphael, this is just like Uniontown.

He was entering the city now where there were sidewalks. Tall buildings rose on each side casting their shadows over the thoroughfare which teemed with automobiles and heavy trucks. Mechanical men passed him in a steady stream. If they only knew that I had come to destroy them, they might look at me, mused the boy.

He began to grow confused. Streets ran every which-way. The tall skyscrapers shut out the afternoon sun. It must be late, thought Raphael. I wonder where I am? He could ask no one. Probably no one would understand him.

Raphael was worried and walked faster. Turning a corner suddenly, he nearly bumped into four mechanical men who were blocking the sidewalk. One of them was much larger than the others. Raphael gasped, went pale, and half turned to run. Before him stood the creature that had stolen Cassandra—the Giant Sorcerer.

‘Hello, there,’ called the Sorcerer. ‘Don’t run. It won’t do any good. I’ve been waiting for you the last ten minutes. Come here, I won’t hurt you.’

To gain time Raphael asked rather weakly, ‘Are you the Giant Sorcerer?’

‘Yes,’ said the Sorcerer easily. ‘Mechanus is my name. These are my mechanicos.’ And he motioned to the other three.

‘Where,’ faltered Raphael, ‘is Cassie?’ He passed his tongue over his dry lips.

‘So you want to see Cassandra, eh?’ remarked the Sorcerer. ‘She is safe enough. You may go,’ he said, turning to his three mechanicos. ‘I don’t think Raphael will be so foolish as to try to escape.’

Cassandra is safe, thought Raphael. He could fly. He was about to run and jump as high as he could in the air when he heard the thrum of a motor overhead. Above him floated a cigar-shaped balloon around which an aeroplane flew in graceful circles. There would be no use in trying to escape by flight.

Well, thought Raphael, I shall go home with him and find out where Cassandra is hidden. The Sorcerer evidently did not mean to harm him. Raphael began to take heart.

‘Promise me that you won’t try to escape,’ said the Sorcerer. ‘I don’t want to tie you.’

‘I promise I won’t try to escape now,’ answered Raphael.

The Sorcerer beckoned to a white limousine driven by a mechanico which stood at the curb.

‘The Tower,’ said Mechanus when he and Raphael, aided by the footman, had climbed in.

With a shriek of the horn, the white car made off like a wild thing. It rocked over the city streets, skimming through the traffic. As they flew along, lines of great trucks stopped for them, mechanicos dove out of their path, while mechanical police waved them on.

Raphael sat silent, terrified at the frightful speed.

‘Well, my boy,’ said the Sorcerer genially, ‘how do you like it?’

‘I hate it,’ said Raphael bitterly.

‘This is civilization,’ was the Sorcerer’s only comment.

‘Wait until I show you the town,’ he went on after a pause. ‘It is a beautiful sight. Avenues any city might be proud of, no waste, no silly parks cluttering up the place. I detest inefficiency.’

‘Why do you drive so fast?’ asked Raphael sullenly as they skidded round a corner.

‘To save time, of course. Time is money. Money is success. That is why we are successful.’

‘Then I don’t want to be successful,’ said Raphael.

‘Pshaw. Nerves. You suffer from nerves. Now my mechanicos have no nerves. It is one of my great inventions.’

‘Why did you steal Cassandra?’ asked Raphael suddenly.

‘Why did I steal Cassandra? Because I wanted a daughter, a human child to live with me.’

‘I don’t believe you,’ said Raphael rudely. ‘I don’t believe you ever wanted a daughter.’

Soon after this they stopped in front of a high wall with a gate of bronze. The Sorcerer got out and Raphael followed him. Spinning a dial set in one of the bronze panels, the Sorcerer opened the door and nodded to Raphael to enter.

‘I change the combination every day,’ he said dryly. ‘I shouldn’t bother to learn it, if I were you.’

They passed through the gate into the brightest garden Raphael had ever seen. Millions of flowers grew in great beds, laid out in squares. The walks were broad and made of asphalt. In the distance the boy could make out a little pond. Overshadowing this garden of red and yellow and green, Raphael saw a huge round tower of gray brick.

‘This is where I live,’ said the Sorcerer. ‘Cassandra lives with me.’

‘Is Cassie here?’ asked Raphael eagerly.

‘Oh, Cassandra,’ called the Sorcerer.

At his summons a little girl dressed in white walked slowly from the other side of a large bush in one corner of the garden.

‘Yes,’ she said listlessly. ‘What do you want?’

‘Cassandra, your brother Raphael is here.’

‘Cassie!’ shouted Raphael, running toward her.

The little girl raised her eyes slowly. ‘Hello, Raphael,’ she said dully.

Raphael stopped as though he had been struck.

‘Cassie!’ was all he could say. ‘Cassie, what’s the matter?’

‘Nothing. Nothing at all.’

Raphael was puzzled. There was something wrong.

‘Well, children,’ said Mechanus, ‘it must be nearly supper-time. Show Raphael to his room, Cassandra.’

Cassandra led the way through the stone-flagged hall of the tower to an elevator. They stepped in, and Cassandra pushed a button. The elevator rose swiftly.

‘Aren’t you well, Cassie?’ whispered Raphael. ‘You look sort of pale.’

‘Oh, I’m all right,’ said Cassandra. ‘Here’s our room.’

But Raphael wasn’t satisfied.

The elevator stopped with a jerk, and Cassandra opened the door.

It was a room full of light. Around the pale yellow walls ran a band of pictures representing fire engines, and trucks, and steam shovels, and automobiles.

Raphael went to the western window and looked out. The tower overlooked the garden and beyond that Raphael could see the river winding under distant pine bluffs. He was a captive.

Several knocks shook at the door, and a mechanico entered bearing a suit of clothes.

‘The Master wishes you to change, Mr. Raphael,’ said the mechanico.

‘I won’t,’ said Raphael. ‘I prefer my feather suit.’

‘The Master said he wanted no magic nonsense. You must change, Mr. Raphael.’

So the Sorcerer would take away his suit. Would the power of Gæa go with it? Raphael was afraid of this.

‘I won’t,’ he repeated stubbornly.

‘Sorry, Sir,’ replied the mechanico politely. And then before Raphael could scream or cry out, he was seized and his feather suit stripped from him. He burst into angry tears.

‘Let my brother alone,’ spoke up Cassandra sharply and flew at the mechanico. But he was gone, and the door shut behind him. Raphael, angry though he was, noticed that his sister’s eyes were brighter and that her cheeks were touched with pink.

The boy, trembling with rage, put on the clothes the Sorcerer had given him.

Just then a bell rang.

‘What is that?’ he asked.

‘Supper,’ said Cassandra.

‘I won’t go. I don’t want anything to eat,’ stormed the boy.

‘Come on, Raff, dear,’ urged Cassandra. ‘To please me.’

‘Why should I please you? You weren’t glad to see me a bit,’ said Raphael bitterly.

‘Oh, Raff,’ wailed Cassandra, flinging her arms round Raphael’s neck. ‘I’m so sorry. I was glad to see you. But—but I feel as if I had just waked up.’

Ten minutes later they went down to the dining-room. Two places were set, one on either side of the table.

‘Children,’ said Mechanus, ‘you are ten minutes late.’

The children said nothing, but sat down.

‘I’ve had this porridge cooked especially for you,’ said the Sorcerer proudly. ‘We mechanicos use only one type of fuel.’

The Sorcerer sat down between them.

While Raphael and Cassandra ate their supper out of silver porridge bowls, the Sorcerer was brought a large golden tankard. Throwing back his head he poured at least a gallon of brown fluid down his throat.

‘What is that?’ asked Raphael, forgetting his anger in his curiosity.

‘That, my boy,’ said the Sorcerer, ‘is mineral oil. It is all we mechanicos need in the way of food and quite easy to take.’



CHAPTER XI

THE GARDEN OF THE SORCERER

THAT night Raphael dropped into a dreamless sleep. When he woke in the morning, he thought he was in Uniontown at home. There was Cassandra's bed, and Cassandra's black head upon the pillow. But the nursery walls were different. They were yellow. Then he remembered everything. He lay half asleep looking across the room at the pictures in silhouette. Cassandra had told him the whole story of her capture. She had waked in the Sorcerer's aeroplane and had been taken to a castle with no windows. From this she had been carried to a strange boat which also had no windows. Then they had driven over a long road in a racing automobile to the tower in the city.

Cassandra was very vague about the details. She had been sleepy. She had only really waked when he, Raphael, had come. Well, there she was, Cassandra, his sister.

'Cassie,' he called softly to see if she were awake.

'Yes,' said Cassandra, opening her eyes.

'Let's get up. What time is it?'

'I don't know.'

Raphael got out of bed. Running over he pulled the bedclothes off Cassandra with a jerk, shouting, 'Ya, ya. Sleepy head. Going to stay all day in bed.' Cassandra hit at him with a pillow. Then Raphael remembered the Sorcerer. As the Emissary of Gæa he should behave with more dignity. He walked over to the bathroom and slipped on his new clothes.

When Cassandra and he went down to breakfast, they found the Sorcerer seated in a chair reading a magazine.

'Well,' said he, 'how did you sleep?'

'Fine,' said Raphael. 'Did you sleep well?'

‘My dear boy,’ answered the Sorcerer, ‘I don’t ever sleep. What use is sleep? It is a waste of valuable time.’

Raphael glanced at the magazine that the Sorcerer had been reading. It was lying open on the table. As far as Raphael could see it was made up of advertisements. *Use Flip Flop Arches for Flat Feet. A Masterpiece of Mechanical Machinery. Is Your Personality Red Hot? The Mechanico Wearing Our Asbestos Underwear Is Correctly Garbed For All Occasions.* And there was a picture of a mechanico standing on his head, underneath which Raphael read, *Do you know better? Make your manners mechanical.*

‘Aren’t there any stories in the magazine?’ Raphael asked.

‘Oh dear no,’ answered Mechanus. ‘This is the Mechanico Journal Post. It is the last word in magazine-making. We have left out all unnecessary matter.’ And he showed Raphael the cover on which was printed the picture of a mechanico with his mouth open. This was done handsomely in several colors.

After breakfast Raphael and Cassandra went out into the garden to play. It was a wonderful garden. There were all sorts of flowers growing in it, flowers much bigger than Raphael had ever seen before. Brick-red zinnias, crimson dahlias, blue corn flowers, columbine, roses, and tall sunflowers. There were also many other flowers Raphael could not name.

‘Why, I didn’t know all these flowers bloomed so early in the spring,’ he said to Cassandra.

‘I guess they don’t, Raff. Anyhow, these are fakes.’

Raphael bent over to pick one. It was true. They were not flowers at all, but beautifully made imitations.

‘What shall we play?’ asked Raphael.

‘Let’s play trains.’

‘But we haven’t any.’

‘Mechanus said,’ answered Cassandra, ‘that all we had to do was to clap our hands, and a mechanico would bring us anything we wanted.’

They both clapped their hands, and a mechanico appeared.

‘Please,’ said Cassandra, ‘we want to play trains.’



THE MECHANICO DISAPPEARED AND SUMMONED A LARGE GANG OF OTHER MECHANICOS

The mechanico disappeared and returned in a moment bringing a large box which he carried on his head. When the box was opened, Raphael gave a cry of delight. Inside it were real trains that ran by steam and were fired by tiny chips of coal. They had electric lights in all the carriages. There were also sections of track, and the mechanico brought switches and drawbridges and stations and a roundhouse with a turntable.

They laid the track through the jungle of the false flowers, and played happily together for an hour or two. Then Raphael got up and stretched.

‘I wish,’ he said, ‘I had a larger train with an engine that I could run myself.’

He clapped his hands. ‘Is there a bigger engine about? An engine large enough for me to ride in?’

The mechanico disappeared and summoned a large gang of other mechanicos. They laid steel tracks about the garden, and down the walks. ‘This is the life,’ said Raphael, delighted. ‘Come on, Cassie, let’s run the big engine.’

They spent another two hours playing with the big engine the mechanicos had brought them. They rode round and round the garden, throwing the switches, backing for loads of stones they tossed into the dump cars, and blowing the whistle.

‘Let’s never go back to Uniontown,’ said Raphael as he stopped the train by the concrete pond. ‘Let’s stay here and play forever.’

‘Raff,’ broke in Cassandra, ‘it’s my turn. Let me drive.’

‘It’s not your turn,’ answered Raphael. ‘Besides, you don’t know how to run an engine. You’d break it.’

‘Yes I do, too,’ argued Cassandra. ‘You’ve run the train for hours.’

‘Well, it’s mine, isn’t it? I asked for it.’

‘You wouldn’t have thought of it if I hadn’t told you what the Sorcerer said.’ And Cassandra made a grab for the driving throttle.

‘Let go, Cassie, or I’ll push you off the train,’ said Raphael, angrily seizing her hand.

Cassandra burst into tears. Raphael suddenly realized that they were quarreling the first day they were together, fighting when they could have anything they wanted. He was ashamed.

‘All right, Cassie,’ he said. ‘You can run the old engine.’

Cassandra brightened up. ‘Thank you, Raff,’ she said sweetly.

After lunch the Sorcerer took them to a room Cassie had never seen before which held an enormous doll’s house. It was a wonderful house. Each room had its small furnishings. In the bedrooms were bureaus and beds and rugs and electric lights that turned on and off. In the dining-room a miniature mechanico plied a vacuum cleaner, in the kitchen a cook was cooking food on a little electric range, while in the front parlor sat a mechanical man listening to a radio machine from which issued strange infinitesimal squeaks and noises. ‘Just like the radio at home,’ laughed Cassandra joyfully.

When they had grown tired of the doll’s house, they returned to the garden and ordered two small racing automobiles. They drove these up and down the asphalt paths, stopping every once in a while to change the tires for the fun of it.

Toward the end of the afternoon Raphael suddenly thought, ‘I should like an aeroplane.’ And he clapped his hands.

But this time he was denied. ‘The Master said you were not to have an aeroplane,’ explained the mechanico. ‘He was afraid you might try to escape.’

Escape! What nonsense! He was having far too good a time to escape.

‘All right,’ he said petulantly. ‘If I can’t, I suppose that’s all there is to it.’ Raphael had forgotten Gæa and the animals and Aunt Mary.

‘Cassie,’ he called, ‘I’ll race you round the garden.’

That evening after supper, Mechanus took them to a little theater in the tower, and showed them moving pictures. Raphael and Cassandra were very much excited when the lights were shut off and the title, *A Miss Is As Good*

As A Mile; A Mechanical Comedy, by the Mechanico Motion Picture Studio, flickered on the screen. Aunt Mary seldom took them to the movies. She said they were vulgar.

First there appeared a tall office building into which a mechanico hurried, dressed in a silk hat and carrying an oil tankard in one hand. He was shown falling into the elevator which took him up many flights. On the way up he stepped in the tankard. When the elevator stopped, he tripped out and fell through an office door, knocking off his silk hat. The subtitle read, *Oil Can*.

In the office a second mechanico actor rose from the desk at which he was working and calmly kicked his visitor through the window, tankard and all. The first mechanico lit on his head in the street amidst a splatter of glass with the battered tankard in one hand. He rose and ran to an automobile standing near and got in. The whole machine fell apart, the wheels careening off in various directions. The subtitle to this was, *Only a Motor Car*. There was much more of this kind of fun.

‘Children, don’t you think that is funny?’ asked the Sorcerer when the reel had come to an end.

‘Not very,’ said Raphael doubtfully. ‘What was it all about?’

‘That was modeled from the very best moving picture comedies,’ answered the Sorcerer, ‘keeping the funniest features in each.’

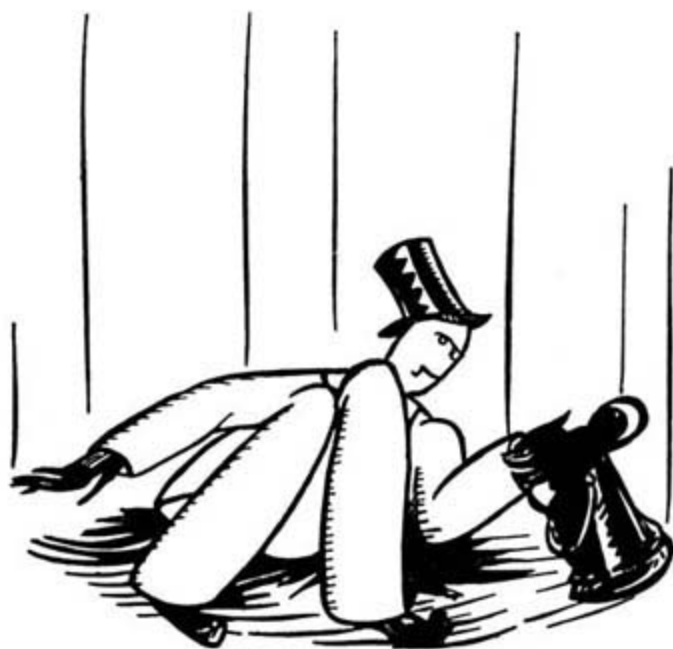
‘Yes,’ agreed Raphael politely.

‘Would you like to see a melodrama?’ went on the Sorcerer.

‘No—no, thank you.’

‘Do you want to see one, Cassandra?’

But Cassandra had already fallen asleep.



CHAPTER XII

MECHANA

THE next afternoon the Sorcerer told Raphael and Cassandra that he would show them the wonders of his city.

‘Then you will observe,’ he said pleasantly, ‘how much more cheaply we can live than man. When you have seen my wonderful mechanicos, you will never want to return to Uniontown.’

They left the tower and walked slowly through the city. Cassandra skipped gayly along beside Raphael, who tried to keep step with Mechanus. They soon became accustomed to the noise of the automobiles and trucks which rushed up and down the streets, the screaming brake bands, and the racing motors. With the high buildings leaning above them, it was like walking in the bottom of a deep river canyon.

At last they came to a skyscraper, taller than the rest, which had carved in stone over its mammoth doors, *Big Business Building*. Into this the Sorcerer turned followed by Raphael and Cassandra. The great marble hallway was decorated with colored pictures of lumps of coal and tins of oil, while over the elevator shafts which faced the door there hung a life-size portrait of the Sorcerer himself done in oils. They walked to one of the elevators and stepped in. A mechanico sat on a stool in one corner, his hand on the starting lever.

‘Go-Getter or Will-to-Power, sales or production?’ he asked.

‘What does that mean?’ asked Raphael.

‘The Executive Offices,’ commanded the Sorcerer. Then he explained to Raphael that Mechanico Limited was divided into two large groups, those that manufactured and those that sold what was manufactured, Go-Getters sold and Will-to-Powers produced.

‘Oh,’ said Raphael. Cassandra did not bother to listen.



CASSANDRA SKIPPED GAYLY ALONG BESIDE RAPHAEL WHO TRIED TO KEEP STEP WITH MECHANUS

In the meantime the elevator flew to the top of the building thirty stories high and returned twenty-nine. The elevator man opened the door and pointed to the right, 'First door on your left.'

They stepped out. Before them stretched a corridor of doors with pearl-gray glass panels which bore the words *Millions Ltd* in raised gilt letters, while below it was traced the slogan, *The Go-Getter Gets*. Raphael wondered what the Go-Getter got, but the Sorcerer had opened the door and they walked in.

As they entered, a hundred mechanical clerks seated before a hundred flat-topped desks whirled in a hundred revolving chairs and stared at them and then whirled back again. Goodness, thought Raphael, they must do a lot of business. For on each desk were ten shiny black telephones.

'Wait here a moment,' said the Sorcerer, and disappeared behind a door marked *Private*.

'Please,' said Raphael to one of the nearest clerks, 'what are you doing?'

'I'm figuring production and sales.'

'Production of what?'

'Why, mechanicos, of course.'

'Are you a Will-to-Power?'

'No. I'm the sales department.'

'Then you're a Go-Getter.'

'The Go-Getter gets,' began the figure automatically. 'He increases his personal efficiency. No man is bigger and better than his sales. That's what keeps me busy—bigger and better.' And he continued cranking the adding machine in front of him.

Just then the Sorcerer beckoned to them from a door in the wall. There were three doors lettered *Very Private*, *Really Very Private*, and *Not So Very Private*. Through this last one they followed Mechanus.

‘Raphael and Cassandra, these are the Executives. They plan the work and are responsible for its success.’

At this ten mechanicos with immense bulging foreheads rose and bowed. ‘Pleased to see you,’ they said with one voice. ‘Pleased indeed.’

‘Gentlemen,’ went on the Sorcerer, ‘here are the children I have spoken about. They are young and fairly adaptable. Study them. Our working mechanicos can be improved. For instance, these children feel pain. It is a wise provision of nature. If our mechanicos felt pain they would do themselves less injury, and there would be less work for the repair shop. A repair shop is a sign of inefficiency.

‘Gentlemen, I repeat that much may be learned from this boy and girl.’

‘If only,’ breathed an Executive softly, ‘mechanicos could create other mechanicos as the animals give birth to other animals, it would save a great deal of raw material.’

‘Some day, perhaps, we may manage that,’ answered the Sorcerer casually. Then he turned to the children. ‘Come on, Raphael and Cassandra, I want to show you the rest of the city before dark.’

They all bowed politely to one another.

Mechanus, Raphael, and Cassandra left *Big Business Building* and took a taxicab for the outskirts of the city. While they were being jerked along at a tremendous speed, Raphael asked the Sorcerer if they made any child mechanicos.

‘Goodness, no,’ answered Mechanus. ‘Childhood is nothing but waste. A child mechanico could not do the work of a man, and he would drink almost as much oil.’

‘Don’t mechanicos have any fun at all?’

‘A mechanico,’ said Mechanus, ‘doesn’t know what fun is.’

‘I’m glad I’m not a mechanico,’ said Cassandra.

‘Are you, my dear?’ said Mechanus and gave her a queer look.

The taxicab stopped with a jerk outside of a huge factory of concrete and glass on the side of which was painted in gold letters, *Mechanico Mammoth*

Machine Works. The Sorcerer opened a side door and Raphael and Cassandra followed him inside. As the door shut behind them the roar of machinery sounded like an angry waterfall.

‘Wait a moment here,’ said the Sorcerer, ‘while I look for the Superintendent. You may go through that door there, if you want to.’ And he pointed to a steel door on which was painted, *For Employees Only.*

Raphael and Cassandra went and peeked through. As they opened the door the noise of revolving machinery became louder, almost deafening them. Inside at a work bench stood two mechanicos adjusting artificial arms and hands.

‘If you don’t produce better goods, twenty thousand fifty-one, the Master will take you apart,’ one was saying to the other. ‘The last lot were a little stiff at the elbow.’

Raphael could not imagine what they were talking about.

‘Well, it isn’t my fault, two thousand fifty-six. The Master ordered clerks and I gave him clerks. Then what do you suppose he did? Slapped those arms right onto workers. Of course, they couldn’t stand the strain. They weren’t built for it.’

‘Well, you want to watch out or you will land in the repair shop.’

The men continued passing metal arms onto a moving band that ran slowly by. Raphael suddenly realized that they were making parts to mechanical men. The men were made and put together like automobiles.

‘It’s curious,’ twenty thousand fifty-one went on, ‘how sometimes things seem to go wrong. I remember a painter who took to putting spots on a building when he should have been painting stripes. He said it looked prettier that way, and called it art or something. Of course the Master took him apart. Sent his head back to the factory with a complaint. They fixed it, and now that fellow paints as good stripes as any one. Three thousand and seven, I think his number was.’

Just then the Sorcerer appeared and motioned Raphael and Cassandra to follow him. They walked down a long corridor, following the belt, on which lay thousands of arms. As they drew near the end of the concrete

passageway, the noise of moving wheels and pounding hammers grew deafening.

‘What do you think of this?’ shouted the Sorcerer as they entered a huge room covered with a dirty glass roof.

Raphael, holding Cassandra’s hand, stared in wonder at the broad belts which passed endlessly along, and at the great wheels that revolved in this gloomy cavern. Hundreds of mechanicos bent over complicated machinery. Daylight filtered dimly through the glass roof and windows, and was made more hideous by electric lights, which shone hard and blue over the moving chaos.



THE THING CAME SUDDENLY TO LIFE MARCHING OFF IN COMPANY WITH FIFTY OTHERS

As he grew used to the seeming disorder, Raphael saw that heads, legs, bodies, and arms were being brought by lesser belts to a great central one, where workmen were busy putting the pieces together.

‘We can make ten thousand mechanicos a day in this one room alone,’ shouted the Sorcerer, ‘and there are a hundred rooms bigger than this within the city.’

It reminded Raphael of an automobile factory he had seen in Uniontown.

When the parts were all assembled, numbers were engraved on the back of each figure and a letter indicating the type of work the mechanico was suited for. Then the lifeless body was encased in a gray uniform and stood on its feet. Other mechanicos poured oil down its throat, shook it violently, and the thing came suddenly to life, marching off in company with fifty others to take up the burden of work. Over all these Mechanus was master.

‘Come,’ said Mechanus, ‘I have something more to show you.’ Again Raphael and Cassandra followed him from the room down a corridor lit by electric lights.

‘Do mechanicos ever die?’ asked Raphael in the comparative quiet.

‘No,’ said Mechanus. ‘But every mechanico has so many motions he can make and no more. Then he has to go to the repair shop and be remade. If there is a mistake in his assembly, then he may have to go sooner.’

They came in a few moments to an unlit passageway which branched off at right angles.

‘What is down there?’ asked Raphael.

‘That is the repair shop,’ said the Sorcerer.

‘Oh,’ said Cassandra, ‘I don’t want to go there.’

It looked very dark down that corridor.

They walked on about a hundred yards to a door which the Sorcerer unlocked. When they stepped inside, they were in a gigantic warehouse full

of metal cylinders and complicated electrical machines. The Sorcerer stopped, and they stood looking about them.

‘What are these things?’ asked Raphael.

‘These,’ said the Sorcerer proudly, ‘are what I particularly wished to show you. They are poison gas and death-ray machines.’

‘Oh,’ said Raphael, awed.

‘I have here,’ went on the Sorcerer, ‘enough gas and sufficiently powerful death-ray machines to destroy all the living things on this earth. A man invented me. I have invented these. The time is close at hand. Already I have fifty million mechanicos to people the earth, when every living thing is gone.’

‘Then what do you want Cassie and me for?’ asked Raphael, frightened by the terrible seriousness of the Sorcerer.

Mechanus smiled. ‘There are still a few imperfections in our mechanicos. There are certain qualities possessed by man with which we wish to equip our mechanical men. When we kill the living, we shall lose our useful models unless precautions are taken. This is the reason I stole your sister—to study her. This is also why I haven’t killed you. You have been a nuisance, but now I think I have rather clipped your wings, eh?’

Raphael shuddered. Mechanus would wipe out every living thing: Aunt Mary, Uniontown, the animals. Cassandra began to cry.

‘You had better join me and the mechanicos,’ said the Sorcerer slowly. ‘Together we shall rule the world.’



CHAPTER XIII

TO SAVE THE WORLD

THAT night Raphael lay in bed and thought for a long time. Mechanicos. The Sorcerer was building over ten thousand a day. Already he had built fifty million. More than Raphael could imagine. When he had many more, he would spread the poison gas and shoot the death-ray round the world. Raphael, Cassie, Aunt Mary, and all mankind would be killed. There would be no living thing upon the earth.

‘There are still a few imperfections in our mechanical men,’ the Sorcerer had said; ‘that is the reason I stole your sister—to study her. You had better join me and the mechanicos. Together we shall rule the world.’

Raphael was sick of mechanical life. He was afraid. He remembered the animals waiting patiently outside the city. They had trusted him and he had failed them.

‘Cassie,’ whispered the boy, ‘are you awake?’

‘Yes,’ whispered Cassandra.

Raphael got out of bed and went over and perched himself on Cassandra’s counterpane.

‘Cassie,’ said Raphael, very low, ‘do you want to go home?’

‘Yes,’ whispered Cassandra, sitting upright.

‘Well, I’m going back to join the animals. We shall destroy the Sorcerer and his city, and then you can go home with me.’

‘Oh, Raff,’ wailed Cassandra, ‘don’t leave me here. Take me with you.’

‘I’m afraid I can’t, Cassie. Gæa hasn’t given you any power at all, and I don’t see how I could get you out of the tower and over the wall.’

‘But, Raff,’ sniffled Cassandra, ‘if you destroy the city, you may kill me doing it.’

‘I’ve been thinking of that, Cassie. There is a cellar in the tower. When the attack comes, hide there. It’s the only chance.’

‘Oh, Raff, I shall be so scared.’

‘I know, Cassie, but if I don’t go, how can I save you? Besides, I promised the animals I would help them.’

‘But, Raff, why not let Gæa help them?’

‘She does, Cassie, through me. I don’t see how she can do any more unless she destroys the city herself. I am her messenger. I must not fail her. The animals alone can’t fight the Sorcerer. He would kill them with the death-ray or his poison gas.’

‘Raff, do you think there is such a person as Gæa?’

Raphael was startled. Sometimes he had wondered. The Mother of All Things. Well, he could fly—he had never been able to do that before. He remembered suddenly, with panic, that his feather suit had been taken away. Could he still fly? The Sorcerer evidently didn’t think so. He must take the chance. It was their only hope.

‘Yes,’ he answered Cassandra after a pause. ‘I believe in Gæa. I can fly and live underneath the sea. I could never do that before.’ Cassandra was half convinced.

‘Cassie,’ said Raphael, ‘I must go now.’

‘Oh,’ said Cassandra faintly. She looked pale and frightened with her dark hair falling down about her face. Raphael was frightened himself.

‘If you’ve got to go, Raff,’ said Cassandra bravely, trying to keep her mouth from trembling and the tears out of her eyes, ‘come back soon.’ And she threw her arms about his neck.

Raphael kissed his sister and then stole to the window. Could he fly in these white pajamas? They belonged to the Sorcerer. Was Gæa still looking after him or had he lost her friendship through his lack of faith?

‘My dear boy,’ said a voice in the doorway, ‘come away from that window and climb into bed. You’ll catch your death of cold.’ It was Mechanus himself.

Raphael gave a startled cry and dove head first through the window. He was very frightened and beat the air frantically with his hands. Slowly he checked his fall and righted himself. He could fly. Gæa still watched over him.

He heard laughter from the window and the voice of the Sorcerer. 'Bravely done. When you get tired of your animals, come back. We shall expect you in a day.'

He had escaped. The Sorcerer had let him go. Raphael wondered why. He felt vaguely uncomfortable.

In his clumsy fashion Raphael flew across the city of Mechana to the fields nearest the hill on which he had left the animals. He lit heavily and walked on in the moonlight as rapidly as he could. The smell of green things and rich earth refreshed him. Suddenly a rabbit scurried across his path.

'Hullo,' said Raphael. But the rabbit did not stop. Raphael was more troubled when he saw a fox slink from behind a bush and drift into the woods.

The boy hurried on, anxious to reach the meeting hill. He was almost at the summit when he heard the snarl of wolves fighting. The path led through a spruce thicket and then out to the open crown of the hill. There the sight that met his eyes made him cry out.

Ten or twelve gray wolves stood crowding and jostling about something that lay still upon the ground.

'Stop it! Stop it, I tell you!' shouted Raphael as he ran forward. 'You curs! You beastly curs!'

At the sound of his voice the wolves drew back eyeing him cunningly. They still panted from the chase, and saliva dripped from their red, jerking tongues. Only one glance was necessary to see that the deer they quarreled over was dead. It lay tongue out, staring up at Raphael out of unseeing eyes. Blood ran in thin streams down its neck, dropping slowly on the leaves below. The slim legs were bent and limp.

'Oh, you fools! You fools!' the boy almost cried. 'How can you conquer the Sorcerer if you murder one another?'

'We were hungry,' said the leader of the pack. 'We must eat.'

‘Where are the eagles?’ demanded Raphael.

‘They are asleep.’

‘Summon them,’ ordered Raphael contemptuously. ‘Summon all the animals.’

The wolves left gladly. They were ashamed at being caught and glad to get away.

Raphael sat down on a rock, chin in hand. The animals had failed him. They had not kept faith. But he had not kept faith either. Betrayer. Betrayed. The Sorcerer had known this. That was why he had allowed him to escape so easily.

Slowly the clearing filled. The animals approached furtively: the deer, the rabbits, the field mice, the porcupines, and the snakes. But the wolves did not appear, nor the mountain lions, nor the bears, nor the weasels. Suddenly the eagles landed, dropping down like shadows out of the moonlight.

‘Where are the others?’ Raphael asked Empyrean sternly.

‘They have gone, Raphael,’ said the eagle in a cracked voice.

The boy sat bowed with unhappiness. Then he said slowly, ‘There has been hunting. The truce has been broken.’

‘That is life,’ answered Empyrean. ‘They thought you were never coming back. They were hungry. They must live.’

‘Then whom can I trust?’ asked Raphael. ‘Whom can I trust, if we defeat this Sorcerer?’

Chief of All the Eagles in the Sky said nothing.

Raphael rose slowly. He would return to Cassandra and the Sorcerer and stay with them forever. Then he saw again the mechanicos marching to work. Right, left. Right, left. He heard the grinding of a million wheels. He saw a battery of buzz saws gnawing down the forest. He remembered the cold streets, the tall buildings. Bigger and better. The Go-Getter gets. Gets nothing. It would be better to be dead. He would save the world in spite of everything. He would save Cassie and himself.

‘Dismiss the council,’ he ordered Emphyrean. ‘I shall destroy the city myself.’

CHAPTER XIV

THE BATTLE OF THE CITY

RAPHAEL raised his right hand and called upon the storm. As he did this, thunder was heard and black clouds formed in the west. For a moment silence brooded over the plain, broken only by the deep roar of the machine city. The light failed rapidly and a saffron glare shadowed the hills and turned the fields to yellow-green. Great thunder-clouds rolled up like monstrous sulphur ships and advanced on the city of the Sorcerer.

At first a gentle wind rustled the still leaves of the forest and bent the grass in rippling waves as it swept forward in gusts across the plain. All the animals crept away in terror to their lairs and forms in the thickets until the boy was left alone with the eagles.

A blue-white flash of lightning forked across the sky and split into shreds of thunder, as the storm burst over the city. The trees that skirted the fields in a thin fringe bent like tassels in the wind. Lightning flashed in swift, stabbing spasms, ripping the clouds apart, while the noise of thunder deafened Raphael with the weight of crackling, tumbling sound. Although the clouds hid the sun, the whole plain was lit by the shivering glare of lightning. Rain fell in slanting, driven sheets.

But the Sorcerer had not planned idly. At the first thunderbolt the whole city awoke to swarming activity. The skyscrapers suddenly bristled with metal spines. From where he stood, Raphael could make out armies of mechanicos swarming like black ants over the roofs, covering them with twisted metal nets, which caught the lightning and wove it into baskets of fire. Lightning crackled up and down the sides of the great buildings in great loops and whorls, while molten metal splashed through the air in white-hot showers as it fell hissing to the ground below.

The wind howled in angry gusts, sweeping the great skyscrapers clean of their mechanical men, uprooting trees, tearing down steel sign-boards like scraps of paper, while the river rose and swept foaming and yellow across the plain, bearing on its surface trees and stumps and broken branches.

The whole city will be swept away, thought Raphael, and the Sorcerer will surrender. I hope Cassie is safe. But he was frightened for all that and shivered where he stood. Would the river wash away the garden walls? So be it.

Then Raphael saw an army of mechanicos appear upon the banks of the river, followed by tractors towing strange engines. Plows and steam shovels seemed to rise out of the tortured earth in companies. To Raphael watching on the hill, ditches and canals formed as though dug by magic. Through the rain, the boy could see a huge wall rising slowly, pushing back the river from the city, which loomed up like a craggy island in a yellow sea.

The sound of mighty conflict came as the mechanicos labored. The roar of steam engines and beating hammers offset the throaty growl of the river. Fast though the water flooded down upon them, the city walls rose faster. Great ditches drained off the river. The mechanicos would save Mechana.

Raphael was appalled. The Sorcerer would win. He would never save Cassandra. The Sorcerer would destroy the living world. It was no use, he would go down to the plain and surrender, he would beg Mechanus for the life of his sister, he would exchange, give himself up. But what use would that be? The Sorcerer could now take them both. Raphael commanded the storm to cease. 'I won't give up! I won't give up! I'll make other plans.' Raphael walked desperately up and down. 'Gæa, Gæa,' he muttered; 'help me.'

Then an idea came to him. He would call upon the earthquake and the volcano, and so overturn the city.

Raphael raised his right hand fiercely and called once more upon Gæa.

Almost instantly plumes of smoke rose from the hills which circled the city of the Sorcerer and the whole earth shuddered. A light haze drifted lazily up from the city. Then with a sudden roar the top of the highest hill of all burst in a cloud of black smoke, and ashes began to fall silently, carried by the light breeze. They shrouded the sun, and twilight deepened into a thicker darkness. In the gloom, Raphael could see the mountain pouring out fire and smoke like a huge blast furnace.

Raphael looked about. All the animals had deserted him save the eagles, who clustered behind him, feathers drooping.

‘This ought to destroy the city,’ he said to Emphyrean.

‘We shall see,’ answered the bird.

Everything was still. After the thunder, it seemed that the world was dead. No sound came from the city. The great machines were silent. In the half light ashes continued to fall swiftly like snow.

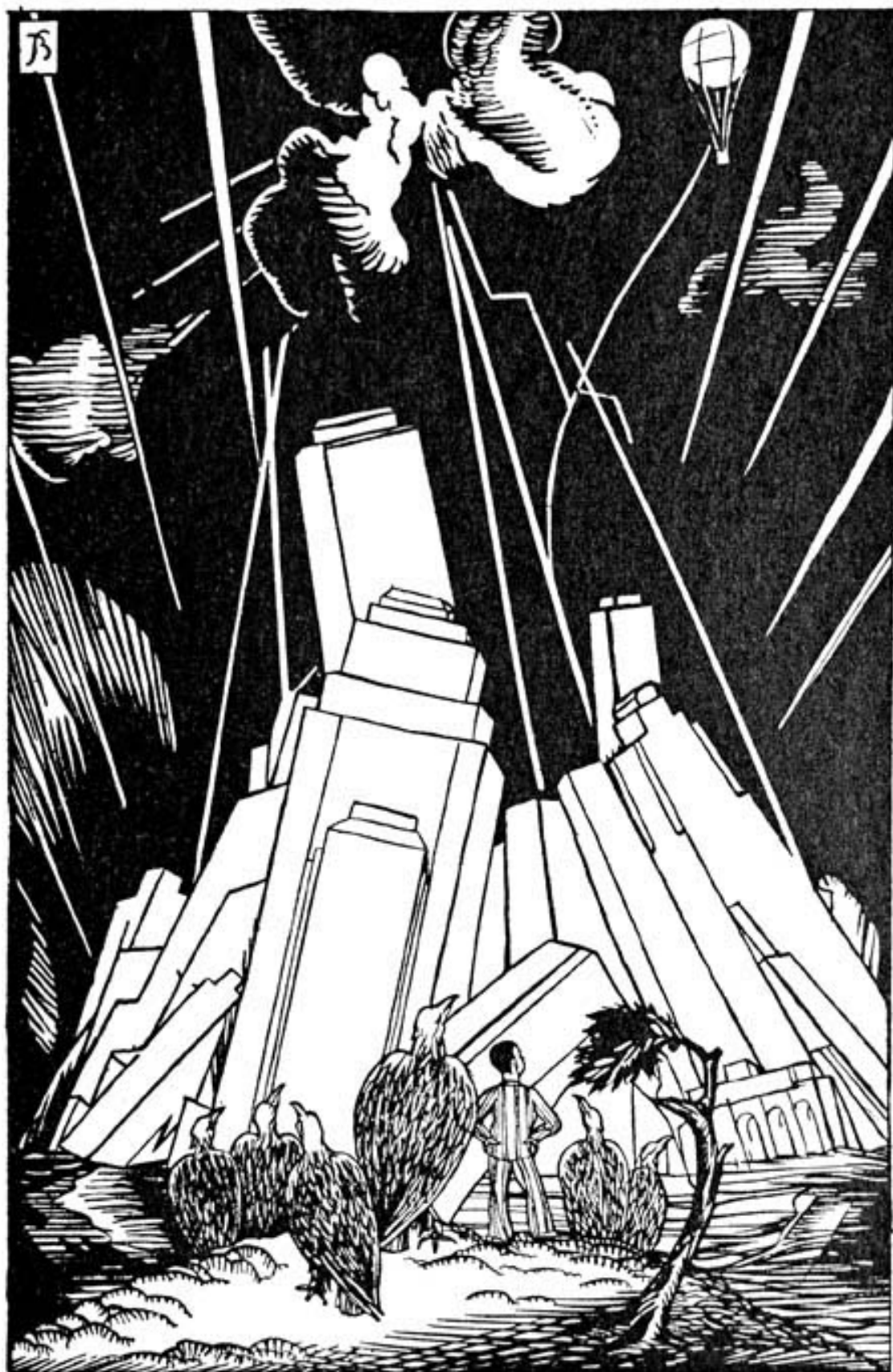
‘Look!’ suddenly screamed an eagle. Raphael looked.

A great wall of black lava was spreading from the hills toward the city. It rolled down from the mountain as molasses rolls over a colony of ants. It oozed up from the bowels of the earth like sap welling from a frightful gash. The boy heard for the first time the awful hiss of steam.

Slowly the lava struck the edge of the city and welled over it, wiping the great buildings from sight. Leveling, swallowing, drowning everything in its terrible path, it advanced toward the heart of the city.

As though at a signal a terrible confusion of noise broke out in Mechana. Bells tolled, whistles blew, searchlights groped blindly through the falling ash. There was a frenzy of activity. An earthquake rippled over the plain which opened in livid fissures. Raphael heard the dull crash of masonry as it toppled and fell.

‘The walls of the city!’ screamed the eagles exultantly. Raphael could hear the shriek of straining machinery as steam shovels, tractors, trains, and giant engines labored trying to restore order out of chaos. But steadily, silently the lava flowed on, the ashes fell.



THE WAR WAS OVER

Raphael began to worry about Cassandra. 'I can stop this volcano,' he tried to reassure himself, 'by raising my hand. But how long would the Sorcerer hold out? Until he and Cassandra were buried in the awful ruin of the city?' The boy began to walk nervously up and down, up and down. The eagles huddled behind him.

A quarter of an hour passed. There was still no sign of surrender, though the noise of conflict in the city was dying away. Now and then a powerful explosion would shake the plain. And a strange smell filled the air. Raphael thought with sudden horror of the poison gas. Had the tanks exploded? Was this the end? The destruction of everything? Instead of saving Cassandra and the world, had he hurried on the fate which hung over them? At any rate, the Sorcerer would never rule. The boy stamped to and fro, muttering, 'Surrender, surrender.' He began to feel sick. Was he dizzy? He stopped and looked intently at the river. No, he wasn't dizzy yet. Gas. Poison gas. How terrible!

A puff of wind sprang up, and drove the ashes in eddying clouds. Raphael suddenly saw above the city a great white balloon floating. How long had it been there? What was it doing? Then he knew. The Sorcerer had surrendered. It was the white flag of failure. The ashes blew back again and settled over the city. Was he too late? Had he seen in time? Raphael raised his hand and commanded the volcano to cease.

The war was over.

Immediately the volcano was still. The earth ceased to rumble, the ashes fell no more, and overhead the sun broke through the clouds in a sudden golden flame over the desolation below.



CHAPTER XV

VICTORY AND DEFEAT

RAPHAEL ran down the hill to the plain followed by the eagles, who trailed him in great fluttering hops. Ruin spread before them: blackened walls smouldered under the bright sky; no sound broke the stillness except the hiss of escaping steam; white smoke drifted up like summer mist from a lake.

They came to broad rivers of lava which they flew across. In the thick stream was caught wreckage; automobiles and trucks with bent and twisted wheels lay upside down like dead insects. Steam engines and steam shovels, railroad and fire engines, crumpled and cast aside, lay scattered here and there, dried currants in a monstrous pudding.

When they reached the center of the city after an hour's toil, walking became impossible. Heaps of broken brick and torn steel girders blocked every avenue, while empty chasms of concrete that had once been cellars made pits that were deep and dangerous. The subway lay open like a raided mole's burrow. Only the tower of the Sorcerer surrounded by its gray wall frowned down upon the waste land.

Then Raphael saw the Sorcerer and Cassandra standing by the gate of bronze. Cassandra was waving excitedly to him.

'Oh, Raff,' she cried as she ran forward and threw her arms around his neck, 'I've been so scared!' The Sorcerer said nothing.

Raphael tried to look as dignified as he could. Pushing Cassandra gently to one side, he walked toward his enemy.

'Do you surrender?' he demanded, his heart beating very fast.

'I surrender,' said the Sorcerer.

Surrender! Now that the war was over, Raphael did not know what to do. The Sorcerer was in his power. And yet he knew of no prison in which he could shut him forever. Nor did he particularly wish to kill him; in fact, he

was not at all sure he could. Then Raphael realized bitterly that lasting victory is not won by war. If he were my friend, I might persuade him to stop making mechanicos, thought the boy.

The eagles, who had formed in line behind Raphael, glared at their enemy out of hungry eyes.

‘Well, what are you going to do?’ asked the Sorcerer easily. ‘Cut off my head? Put me in prison? Let the animals rule the earth?’

Raphael frowned. All the animals, with the exception of the eagles, had left him.

‘Look here, Raphael,’ continued the Sorcerer, ‘you must realize that the animals are not fit to run things. In the first place, most of them live by eating one another. And in the second place, not one of them is unselfish enough to help another species for the general good. Where are your allies now?’ The eagles stirred angrily. ‘You have won this fight and I have lost. If you destroy me, who will take my place in the world?’

‘And,’ countered Raphael, ‘if I let you live, what will become of the forests and the fields and the rivers and the ocean and all the peoples who live in them? You will build machines to kill them all and man as well.’

‘Kill him!’ screamed the eagles.

‘Perhaps it would be better,’ said Raphael, ‘if Cassandra and I took you apart.’

‘You have Cassandra and you have destroyed my city,’ said the Sorcerer calmly, ‘isn’t that enough? I promise never to harm you.’

‘I don’t trust you,’ replied Raphael. ‘A machine doesn’t keep its promises. You might build another city.’

‘Perhaps,’ agreed the Sorcerer amiably. ‘But, Raphael, consider. If you destroy me, man might invent a more terrible machine, greater even than I.’ The Sorcerer paused. ‘And then, Raphael, do you realize what I do for you and your people? I harness the wind and make electricity to light your houses and run your mills. I build machines that cook food and weave cloth. I do this and much more.’

‘I build boats to cross the ocean and bring food from all the corners of the earth so that your people do not die of hunger in the cities. I make telegraphs and telephones and engines of all sorts. I build aeroplanes and automobiles. I print books and build theaters and photograph moving pictures, and make all kinds of toys. Can your animals X-ray you when you are sick and broken? Without me you would live by killing and in fear of being killed, eating roots and raw flesh in the jungle.’

As the Sorcerer talked, a black cloud rose behind the mountain that frowned over the fallen city, rain began to fall gently, and a rainbow arched across the sky. Was it a sign from Gæa?

Raphael stood a long time in thought, so long that Cassandra stirred uneasily.

‘If,’ said the boy at last, ‘you will give me your word not to build another city of mechanicos, and if you will not kill the animals or injure my people, I will let you live.’

When the eagles heard this, they screamed angrily, and rising, disappeared into the black cloud which had formed overhead in the shape of a woman. Only Empyrean, Chief of All the Eagles in the Sky, remained. He stood silent with bowed head.

‘Well,’ said the Sorcerer, ‘in that case there is no further need for talk. I accept your terms. Good-bye, Cassandra.’ And without another word or glance the Sorcerer turned and walked away.

Raphael and Cassandra said nothing, but stood hand in hand and watched his great figure until it was lost among the ruins. The boy was relieved to see him go, but felt downcast and depressed. Why, he did not know.

‘It is time I took you all home,’ said Empyrean from behind them. The children jumped.

‘Where are the others?’ asked Raphael, who noticed for the first time that the eagles had gone.

‘The war is over, and they have flown away,’ answered the eagle sadly. ‘What more could they do?’

An almost overwhelming wave of affection for Empyrean surged over Raphael. The war was over, Cassie had been saved.

‘Hurry,’ said Empyrean. ‘Both of you climb on my back. It will be night soon.’

Raphael looked up. The sun was setting, angry and red over the mountains in the west, and night was closing in.

‘Come on,’ said Raphael to his sister, and helped her to scramble onto the eagle’s back.

When they were seated between the great wings, night was already on them, and stars appeared in the curtain of the sky. The eagle leapt into the air, and soon they were flying rapidly through the darkness.

I never knew night to come so fast, thought Raphael. Moving through the night air made him yawn. He felt very sleepy. No one spoke. There was only the vague feeling of moving through space.

Raphael scarcely remembered when the sun rose pale in the east. The eagle set his wings and coasted down through the air. In a few moments it was quite bright and Raphael blinked with the intensity of light. He realized with a start that they were home again. Below the porch on which they lit was the apple orchard, and to the west lay the barn.

The two children crawled through the window into the nursery. Cassandra was still very sleepy and stumbled over to her bed which lay white and inviting with the covers turned back. Raphael tucked her in, kissed her, and then turned to thank Empyrean, their friend. But Chief of All the Eagles in the Sky had gone.

Raphael, bewildered, rubbed his eyes. There was Aunt Mary. She would be waiting anxiously. He turned and rushed down the corridor to tell her that he was back and that he had brought Cassandra with him.

‘Aunt Mary! Aunt Mary!’ He burst into her room. ‘I’ve brought Cassie home.’ He felt very proud and excited.

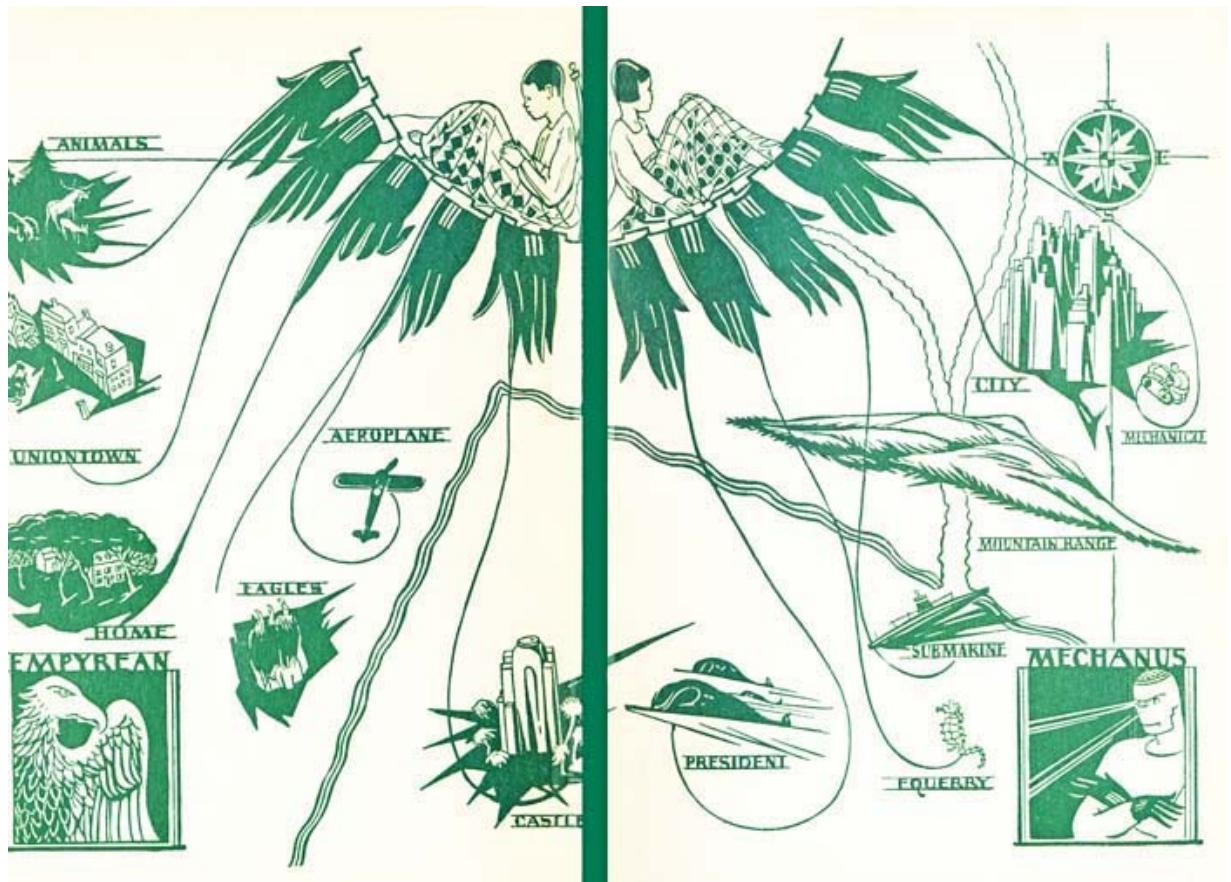
‘What!’ said Aunt Mary sharply, rising to the surface of the bedclothes like an angry seal.

‘I’ve brought Cassie back,’ shouted Raphael. ‘I’ve defeated the Sorcerer. I’ve destroyed his whole city.’

Was he not wearing the white pajamas the Sorcerer had forced upon him?

‘Raphael,’ said his Aunt, ‘you are talking absolute nonsense. Go right back to bed. Don’t you realize it’s only six o’clock?’





TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES:

Obvious typographical errors have been corrected.

Archaic or variant spelling has been retained.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE GIANT
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