Maxwell and the girl started their weekend on Thursday, in Venice.

Friday they went to Paris, Saturday to Nice, and on Sunday they were

bored. Alice pouted at him across the breakfast table. "Vernon, let's

go someplace else," she said.

"Sure," said Maxwell, not too graciously. "Don't you want your bug

eggs?"

Alice pushed them away. "If I ever did, I don't now. Why do you have to

be so unpleasant in the morning?"

The eggs were insect eggs, all right, but they were on the menu as

\_oeufs Procyon Thibault\_, and three of the half-inch brown spheres

cost about one thousand times their value in calories. Maxwell was

well paid as a script-writer for the North American Unit Ministry of

Information--he bossed a gang of six gagmen on the Cosmic Cocktail

show--but he was beginning to hate to think about what these five days

were costing him.

"Where do you want to go?" asked Maxwell. Their coffee came out of the

conveyer, steaming and fragrant, and he sipped his moodily. "Want to

run over to Algiers? Or up to Stockholm?"

"No," said Alice. She leaned forward across the table and put up one

long white hand to keep her honey-colored hair out of her eyes. "You

don't know what I mean. I mean, let's go to some other planet."

Maxwell choked slightly and spilled coffee on the tabletop. "Europe is

all right," Alice was saying with disdain, "but it's all getting to be

just like Chicago. Let's go someplace different for once."

"And be back by tomorrow noon?" Maxwell demanded. "It's ten hours even

to Proxima; we'd have just time to turn around and get back on the

liner."

Alice dropped her long lashes, contriving to look inviting and

sullen at the same time. Not bad at that, Maxwell thought, for ten

o'clock in the morning. "You couldn't get Monday off, I suppose,"

she said, giving him her A-number-One smile. "We could have so much

fun--together...."

\* \* \* \* \*

They took the liner to Gamma Tauri IV, the clearing point for the

system, then transferred to the interplanet shuttle for Three. Three

was an almost undeveloped planet; there were perhaps a hundred cities

near the equator, and some mines and plantations in the temperate

zones--the rest was nothing but scenery. Maxwell had heard about it

from people at the Ministry; he'd been warned to go within a year or

so if he went at all--after that it would be as full of tourists as

Proxima II.