

Table of Contents

[INTRODUCTION](#)

[VENGEANCE BY PROXY \(1940\)](#)

[Book Information](#)

VENGEANCE BY PROXY

from THE BEST OF JOHN WYNDHAM

John Wyndham

SPHERE BOOKS

Published 1973

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INTRODUCTION

AT a very tender age my latent passion for all forms of fantasy stories, having been sparked by the Brothers Grimm and the more unusual offerings in the children's comics and later the boy's adventure papers, was encouraged in the early 1930s by the occasional exciting find on the shelves of the public library with Burroughs and Thorne Smith varying the staple diet of Wells and Verne.

But the decisive factor in establishing that exhilarating 'sense of wonder' in my youthful imagination was the discovery about that time of back numbers of American science fiction magazines to be bought quite cheaply in stores like Woolworths. The happy chain of economic circumstances by which American newstand returns, sometimes sadly with the magic cover removed or mutilated, ballasted cargo ships returning to English ports and the colonies, must have been the mainspring of many an enthusiastic hobby devoted to reading, discussing, perhaps collecting and even writing, science fiction – or 'scientifiction' as Hugo Gernsback coined the tag in his early *Amazing Stories* magazine.

Gernsback was a great believer in reader participation; in 1936 I became a teenage member of the Science Fiction League sponsored by his *Wonder Stories*. Earlier he had run a competition in its fore-runner *Air Wonder Stories* to find a suitable banner slogan, offering the prize of 'One Hundred Dollars in Gold' with true yankee braggadocio. Discovering the result some years later in, I think, the September 1930 issue of *Wonder Stories* seized upon from the bargain-bin of a chain store, was akin to finding a message in a bottle cast adrift by some distant Robinson Crusoe, and I well remember the surge of jingoistic pride (an educational trait well-nurtured in pre-war Britain) in noting that the winner was an Englishman, John Beynon Harris.

I had not the slightest anticipation then that I would later meet, and acknowledge as a good friend and mentor, this contest winner who, as John Wyndham, was to become one of the greatest English story-tellers in the idiom. The fact that he never actually got paid in gold was a disappointment, he once told me, that must have accounted for the element of philosophical dubiety in some of his work.

Certainly his winning slogan '*Future Flying Fiction*', although too late to save the magazine from foundering on the rock of economic depression (it had already been amalgamated with its stable-mate *Science Wonder Stories* to become just plain, if that is the right word, *Wonder Stories*), presaged the firm stamp of credibility combined with imaginative flair that characterized JBH's writings.

John Wyndham Parkes Lucas Beynon Harris (the abundance of fore-names conveniently supplied his various aliases) emerged in the 1950s as an important contemporary influence on speculative fiction, particularly in the exploration of the theme of realistic global catastrophe, with books such as *The Day of the Triffids* and *The Kraken Wakes*, and enjoyed a popularity, which continued after his sad death in 1969, comparable to that of his illustrious predecessor as master of the scientific romance, H. G. Wells.

However, he was to serve his writing apprenticeship in those same pulp magazines of the thirties, competing successfully with their native American contributors, and it is the purpose of this present collection to highlight the chronological development of his short stories from those early beginnings to the later urbane and polished style of John Wyndham.

'The Lost Machine' was his second published story, appearing in *Amazing Stories*, and was possibly the prototype of the sentient robot later developed by such writers as Isaac Asimov. He used a variety of plots during this early American period particularly favouring time travel, and the best of these was undoubtedly 'The Man From Beyond' in which the poignancy of a man's realisation, caged in a zoo on Venus, that far from being abandoned by his fellow-explorers, he is the victim of a far stranger fate, is remarkably outlined for its time. Some themes had dealt with war, such as 'The Trojan Beam', and he had strong views to express on its futility. Soon his own induction into the Army in 1940 produced a period of creative inactivity corresponding to World War II. He had, however, previously established himself in England as a prominent science fiction writer with serials in major periodicals, subsequently reprinted in hard covers, and he even had a detective novel published. He had been well represented too – 'Perfect Creature' is an amusing example – in the various magazines stemming from fan activity, despite the vicissitudes of their pre- and immediate post-war publishing insecurity.

But after the war and into the fifties the level of science fiction writing in general had increased considerably, and John rose to the challenge by selling successfully to the American market again. In England his polished style proved popular and a predilection for the paradoxes of time travel as a source of private amusement was perfectly exemplified in 'Pawley's Peepholes', in which the gawping tourists from the future are routed by vulgar tactics. This story was later successfully adapted for radio and broadcast by the B.B.C.

About this time his first post-war novel burst upon an unsuspecting world, and by utilizing a couple of unoriginal ideas with his Gernsback-trained attention to logically based explanatory detail and realistic background, together with his now strongly developed narrative style, 'The Day of the Triffids' became one of the classics of modern speculative fiction, surviving even a mediocre movie treatment. It was the fore-runner of a series of equally impressive and enjoyable novels including 'The Chrysalids' and 'The Midwich Cuckoos' which was successfully filmed as 'Village of the Damned'. (A sequel 'Children of the Damned' was markedly inferior, and John was careful to disclaim any responsibility for the writing.)

I was soon to begin an enjoyable association with John Wyndham that had its origins in the early days of the *New Worlds* magazine-publishing venture, and was later to result in much kindly and essential assistance enabling me to become a specialist dealer in the genre. This was at the Fantasy Book Centre in Bloomsbury, an area of suitably associated literary activities where John lived for many years, and which provided many pleasurable meetings at a renowned local coffee establishment, Cawardine's,

where we were often joined by such personalities as John Carnell, John Christopher and Arthur C. Clarke.

In between the novels two collections of his now widely published short stories were issued as 'The Seeds of Time' and 'Consider Her Ways'; others are re-printed here for the first time. He was never too grand to refuse material for our own *New Worlds* and in 1958 wrote a series of four novellas about the Troon family's contribution to space exploration – a kind of Forsyte saga of the solar system later collected under the title 'The Outward Urge'. His fictitious collaborator 'Lucas Parkes' was a subtle ploy in the book version to explain Wyndham's apparent deviation into solid science-based fiction. The last story in this collection 'The Emptiness of Space' was written as a kind of post-script to that series, especially for the 100th anniversary issue of *New Worlds*.

John Wyndham's last novel was *Chocky*, published in 1968. It was an expansion of a short story following a theme similar to *The Chrysalids* and *The Midwich Cuckoos*. It was a theme peculiarly appropriate for him in his advancing maturity. When, with characteristic reticence and modesty, he announced to a few of his friends that he was marrying his beloved Grace and moving to the countryside, we all felt that this was a well-deserved retirement for them both.

But ironically time – always a fascinating subject for speculation by him – was running out for this typical English gentleman. Amiable, erudite, astri-gently humorous on occasion, he was, in the same way that the gentle Boris Karloff portrayed his film monsters, able to depict the night-mares of humanity with frightening realism, made the more deadly by his masterly precision of detail. To his great gift for story-telling he brought a lively intellect and a fertile imagination.

I am glad to be numbered among the many, many thousands of his readers whose 'sense of wonder' has been satisfactorily indulged by a writer whose gift to posterity is the compulsive readability of his stories of which this present volume is an essential part.

— LESLIE FLOOD

VENGEANCE BY PROXY (1940)

As far as Dr. Linton was concerned it began with the arrival of the messenger boy.

Telegram from Walter Fisson, Hotel Princip, Beograd (Belgrade), Yugo-Slavia, to Dr. Leslie Linton, 84 Nelson Court, London, W.I.:

CAN YOU RECOMMEND MENTAL SPECIALIST BELGRADE LETTER FOLLOWS

WALTER

Telegram from Dr. Leslie Linton, London, to Walter Fisson, Beograd:

IF ESSENTIAL DOCTOR BLJEDOLJE BUT WHY NOT COME HOME

LESLIE

Letter from Walter Fisson to Dr. Linton, by Air Mail:

Hotel Princip,

Beograd,

Yugo-Slavia.

3rd May, 193-

Dear Leslie:

Sorry if I alarmed you with the telegram, but something had to be done quickly. It's about Elaine. Shock, I think. I wanted to get her back home at once, of course, and booked seats on a plane, but she refused and still refuses to leave here. I can't understand it at all and am worried to death about her. The only thing seemed to be to get a professional opinion at once.

She's — well, I hardly know how to put it — but she's not herself. I don't mean that in the usual sense of the phrase. It's something much more literal than that. Heaven knows what's happened to her, poor darling, but it frightens me. And I'm cut off from her, too. I can't even talk to her properly and try to understand what the trouble is, nor she to me beyond a few essentials. She can grasp only the simplest sentences, spoken slowly and carefully, and she herself replies only with *afew words in broken English*.

Leslie, it doesn't seem possible. I have heard of rare cases of loss of memory making one forget his own language. But this is worse than that — it's taught her another! Honestly, there have been times in the last few days when I have wondered whether she was not all right and I was going mad. I'd better tell you the whole thing and see what you make of it.

It was last Tuesday that it happened. We'd come from Venice via Trieste and Fiume right down the Dalmatian coast to Dubrovnik. Instead of continuing along the coast into Greece, we decided to go up through the mountains to Sarajevo, on to Belgrade and on along the Danube towards Bucharest, giving Greece a miss altogether.

The journey wasn't too bad, except for the roads, and we got along finely until just when we were some ten miles short of a place called Valejo, about sixty miles from Belgrade itself.

We came round a blind corner. We weren't going fast, but the road was loose-surfaced and steep, and to make it worse there had been a light shower just before. Just round that corner was a man crawling on all fours almost in the middle of the road. I braked and pulled across.

I think I'd have cleared him on a decent road, but as it was the back of the car swung round and hit him. Why we didn't turn over on a slope like that I don't know, but we didn't, and I was just pulling out of the skid when the front offside wheel fetched up smack on a mighty boulder.

We got out and ran back to the man. He was lying sprawled out now, on his face. Between us we turned him over and found he was in a nasty mess, poor chap.

His clothes were rough and covered with mud, but he was clearly a cut above the usual peasant, and his face, what we could see of it for his beard, was intelli-gent, but those were things we only noticed after-wards. What we saw first was a gash on his fore-head from which the blood had run down into his eyes, and another patch of blood which had spread about the front of his shirt and coat.

None of that was our fault. The blood from his head had already dried and caked, and that on his clothing had soaked in for some time.

Elaine ran to the car and came back with a flask and a bottle of water. While she bathed his head with a wet handkerchief I started loosening his clothes. Suddenly she gave an exclamation which made me look up. She was staring down at his forehead.

The wiping away of the blood had revealed no ragged gash, but a shallow cut which had now ceased to bleed. The thing was neat and clean. It reminded me of a Greek lambda more than anything. No one could have had a moment's doubt that it had been done deliberately.

"That's queer," Elaine said uncertainly.

It was. I guessed what was in her mind. The vendetta still exists in those parts. Almost instinctively I raised my head to see if there were anyone around watching us. I hadn't any wish to get involved in a business of that sort, but at the same time we weren't going to let a man die before our eyes if I could help it. I ripped open the man's shirt.

We wiped off the mess, and found the blood still welling slowly from a bullet wound in the chest, one which had missed the heart by a narrow margin, I'd say.

Elaine fetched a shirt of mine out of the car and we tore it up to make a bandage. When we'd got it fixed we gave the man a shot of brandy.

It was a minute or more before anything happened, then his eyes opened slowly. At first they seemed blank and almost unconscious, but after a second or two they met mine and came suddenly alive.

That was a most extraordinary sensation. I felt somehow as if they had fastened on mine. Almost as though our mutual gazes formed physical rods linking us together. More than that, it seemed that the rods were being tugged, pulling me down to him.

That sounds fanciful, but it was really a most uncanny sensation though it lasted only a few moments. It snapped abruptly, as his face contorted with a twist of agony and his eyes closed again.

Between us we got him to the side of the road and laid him on a rug. Then there was the problem of what to do next. The car was out of commission with the steering rod gone and the front axle badly bent. Either we had to wait until someone should come along, or one of us would have to go for help.

The last hamlet was miles away behind us, and hopeless at that. The obvious course was for me to start walking on in the direction of Valejo. I didn't relish the idea of leaving Elaine in a lonely spot like that, but we could scarcely leave the man unattended in the state he was, and that settled it.

I had to walk all the ten miles into Valejo before I could find a car. I managed to hire a machine and, with the help of my bad German and the equally bad German of a native, make the driver understand what was wanted. By a series of miracles we got to the place where I had left Elaine.

I could see her as we came up the road. The man still lay where we had put him. She was kneeling beside him, looking down. It was odd that she didn't look up as we rattled into view. As soon as we stopped I got out and hurried across to her. She might have been a statue.

"Elaine!" I said.

The man on the rug turned his head. For a moment his eyes met mine. This time there was something

desperate and pathetic in them. Then they closed, his head rolled and his mouth fell open. Unmistakably that was the end.

“Elaine!” I repeated.

She did not move until I touched her shoulder. Then it was to look up at me with a bewildered, uncomprehending expression. I took hold of her arm and helped her to her feet.

“He's dead,” I said.

She nodded, but said nothing. I led her to the hired car and then set about fetching our cases from our own. Finally when they were all aboard, I explained to the driver by signs that we must take the dead man as well. He wasn't pleased. I could understand that, but one couldn't leave the poor chap's body out on the road like that, and he reluctantly agreed.

We went over together to carry him, but a couple of yards short of the corpse the driver stopped dead. I walked on, got ready to take the man under the arm-pits and looked to him to take the feet. He was standing frozen, with an expression of veritable terror on his face. As I bent down he called suddenly.

“*Ne,*” and again. “*Ne,ne .*”

Rapidly, he crossed himself in the manner of the Greek church. Then he stepped forward, caught my arm and dragged me back. He was jabbering excitedly. Of course I couldn't understand a word of it. But he was pointing vehemently at the mark on the dead man's forehead and he was as genuinely scared stiff as a man could be.

Nothing I could do would bring him to touch that corpse, and I believe he would have fought me rather than let me handle it. There was no budging him. In the end I gave in, and we set off in his car back to Valejo. It was my determination that our first call there would be on the police to clear things up. I had no wish to find myself accused of the murder of an unknown Yugoslavian.

All the way Elaine said nothing. Mostly she sat staring ahead, though once I caught her glancing side-long at me in an odd manner, and twice I saw her look down at her hand, flexing the fingers and examining it as if it somehow surprised her. I asked her what was the matter for she was somehow unlike herself and made me feel uneasy, but she shook her head without replying.

At the police station my driver held forth to the man in charge with what appeared to be a wealth of passionate detail while I stood by unable to understand a word. There were successions of concern, incredulity and alarm on the police-man's face.

Eventually he went to fetch another man in uniform to whom I was able to give my version in stumbling German. Not until the man was asking me the name of the dead man did Elaine take any part of the conversation.

“Kristor Vlanec,” she said suddenly.

The man turned and asked in German how she knew. Then the thing happened which took my breath away. She answered him fluently in Serbo-Croat.

My astonishment must have been ludicrous to anyone who saw it. I stared at her, open-mouthed and speechless.

Leslie, I swear by anything you like that that very morning Elaine had not known three words of Serbo-Croat, and now she was talking it like a native.

That must have puzzled the police as well. They asked for our pass-ports. While they looked at them I demanded of Elaine what it meant — why she hadn't told me she knew the language.

She looked at me as if trying hard to follow my words and when she answered it was with such a thick foreign accent that I could scarcely understand what she said.

What it amounted to was for me not to make a fuss in front of the police, and that she would explain later.

Of course, she hasn't explained. She hasn't even attempted to. Anyway, how can you explain a thing like that?

When we'd finished with the police, I gave instructions for the car to be towed in and repaired, and we came on here by tram. That was two days ago, and I'm more bewildered now than I was then.

I can scarcely talk to her. She deliberately restricts all our conversation to necessities. But she talks to other people, jabbering away to them in this Serbo-Croat as if she had known it all her life.

Another thing, Leslie, Elaine's changed in herself. Little characteristic habits she had are gone. And the way she dresses and holds herself is different. I can't describe just how, but it is. She's not Elaine any longer in the things that matter. It's like being with a stranger.

I can understand the shock of seeing that man die, but this language business gets me. I just don't know what to make of it. Of course, I wanted to bring her back to London at once, but she refused to move. There was no argument, just a flat refusal.

By the time you get this I shall have had your answer to my telegram, and I shall, I hope have got some medical opinion — if she will consent to visit the doctor.

As it is, I'm half-crazy with worry over her, but, worse than that, Leslie, I'm scared. This is queer. Nothing out of the text books. It's uncanny. I'll let you know any developments as soon as I can.

Yours ever,

Walter.

Memo from Captain of Police, Valejo to Chief of Police, Beograd. (Translation).

English tourists, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Fisson, today reported finding man, Kristor Vlanec, shot ten miles out on Sarajevo road. Inquiries and circumstances confirm their statements as made to us. Nevertheless there is something unusual about the woman, who speaks Serbo-Croat fluently. They left here for Hotel Princip, Beograd. Suggest inquiries at the British Consulate.

Memo from Chief of Police, Beograd, to Captain of Police, Valejo. (Translation).

Consulate vouches for Mr. and Mrs. Fisson. All in order. We have no information regarding Kristor Vlanec.

Letter from Dr. Leslie Linton, London, to Dr. Frederick Wilcox, Paste Restante, Budapest, Hungary.

Dear Fred:

Sorry to butt in on your holiday like this, but look upon the enclosed copy of a letter from Walter Fisson. Is he cracked, or is Elaine? How could a sane person make that mistake about languages? What can it be but a mistake?

I wondered if you, being fairly handy to the place, could drop in and see them. You meant to go on towards Belgrade any-way, didn't you? And if either of them has been to see Dr. Bljedolje there, can you get a word with Mm? I expect Walter used my name as an introduction.

I hope you won't curse too steadily at having this wished upon you, but you must admit that it looks as if one of them needed a bit of investigation. One doesn't like to see friends of one's youth headed straight for the nut-house.

Yours fraternally,

Leslie.

Memo from Captain of Police, Valejo to Chief of Police, Beograd.

Understand that there was a feud between deceased Kristor Vlanec and Beograd man called Petro Zanja.

Memo from Chief of Police, Beograd, to Captain of Police, Valejo.

Petro Zanja and brother, Mikla Zanja, found shot here. Investigation proceeding.

Letter from Dr. Frederic Wilcox, Hotel Princip, Beograd, to Dr. Leslie Linton, London.

Dear Leslie:

Lord knows what you've let me in for, blast you. Every-body in this business seems to be pretty rocky except me —and I'm beginning to wonder if I've been hearing right.

To begin with, you didn't put us out. Mary wanted to come here any-way.

It was quite clear from the start that the hotel people think there's something odd about the Fissons from the look which the man at the desk gave us when I asked about them. And right away I want you to know that all that Walter said in his letter is, as far as I can tell, abso-lutely true.

Elaine is as fluent as a native in this local lingo; and to all appearances she knows only a few words of English, of which her pronunciation is execrable. Walter is worried to death. He looks as if he'd put on years in a few days. He's scared, too. I may be wrong, Leslie, but I distinctly got the impression that what-ever may have been his state when he wrote that letter, he is now not so much scared for her as scared of her.

Elaine did not recognize me or Mary, but Mary did her best to have a kind of 'all girls together' with her in spite of that and the language difficulty. She thought that out of one of those showing-one-another-clothes affairs it might be possible to get something.

Walter was about as much help as an oyster. He seemed annoyed that I'd read your copy of his letter, and he just wouldn't talk much about it. I did discover, however, that he'd been to see that doctor about it, but he hadn't been able to get Elaine to go. However, I thought it worth while to go around to see what the doctor had made of him. What an interview!

Doctor Bljedolje may have earned all the letters he has after his name, but if you ask me he's as crazy as a coot. The man's medieval. What do you think he lectured me on? Transferred personality!

Of course I thought he was getting at divided personality, Jekyll and Hyde stuff at first, but not he. That, it appears is elementary, kid's stuff, to him. He seems seriously to believe that there are personalities of such hypnotic and dominating power that they can in certain circumstances project themselves into other minds — can actually drive out the former occupant of a body, so to speak.

According to him, this man who was shot, Krister Vlanec, must have had such a personality. It is, Bljedolje says, the nearest thing to immortality. That personality may have inhabited a dozen or more bodies before that of Vlanec. The points he makes about this case in particular are these. (He had, by the way, got much more out of Walter than there was in the letter.)

Firstly, Elaine is not just suffering from loss of memory or obsessions. She had become a different person with different mannerisms and different language. That many of her mannerisms were now masculine.

That I can confirm from my own observation. Elaine has a kind of uncertainty of movement and gesture which can easily be interpreted as a conflict of conscious intentions with unconscious physical habits. It is rather as though she has to watch and study herself the whole time — akin perhaps to the very active self-regulation of a tight-rope walker.

Secondly, Bljedolje figures Vlanec was evidently a man of disturbing and unusual personality. As evidence of this he points to the cut made on the man's forehead by his assailants, and the car driver's fear when he saw it. It was undoubtedly, he says a sign formerly much used in these parts to ward off the evil eye and discourage witch-craft in general. Something in Vlanec's nature must have caused the attackers to put it there. Otherwise, its presence is senseless.

Thirdly, he is of the opinion that Vlanec first attempted to transfer his personality to Walter himself — you remember Walter's own description of the strange, hypnotic effect — but that was interrupted by his own physical pain. • Later on, still according to Bljedolje, the man must have rallied again and have succeeded in forcing his spirit from his dying body into the only person on hand, Elaine.

Fourthly, he makes some play with this. You recall that Walter says that as he came back he spoke to Elaine and that she took no notice, but the dying man did. Well, Bljedolje maintains that, though it was Vlanec's body which lay by the road, it was Elaine who actually died at that moment. Vlanec is alive, in Elaine's form!

Now what do you make of that? From a man, mind you, with high degrees from Vienna, Berlin and New York. He must have seen pretty clearly how I felt about it, but he didn't take offence.

"All right," he said with a smile. "Then you try a little test. Sometime when she is at ease, quite unsuspecting, you understand, address her suddenly as 'Kristor' and watch her very carefully, my friend."

Leslie, I did that later on. And she responded to the name! It was several seconds before she recovered herself.

Look here, this must be all rot, mustn't it? But, rot or not, I can't see what there is to be done about it.

We have decided to hang on here a few days on the chance that we may be of some use. I don't at all like the way Walter's got the wind up. It looks as though there's something more he's afraid of and has held back from you and from Bljedolje.

I'll let you know the moment there's anything more to tell.

Yours in a baffled condition,

Fred.

P.S. I think Mary is arriving at some-thing like the same conclusion on her own. She keeps saying in a puzzled kind of way that Elaine doesn't seem to know how to wear clothes any longer and that she looks to her like a man dressed up.

Report Chief of Detective Bureau, Beograd to Chief of Police, Beograd. (Translation).

Marthe Kanjiki was taken to lounge of Hotel Princip as suggested, and there identified the English tourist, Mrs. Fisson, as the woman she saw leaving the Zanzas' house at the approximate time of the murder of Petro and Mikla Zanja. Identification is positive.

Telephone conversation between Dr. Frederic Wilcox, Hotel Princip, Beograd and Dr. Leslie Linton, 84, Nelson Court, London, W.I.

"Hullo, Leslie? This is Fred speaking from Beograd —Belgrade, to you. You got my letter?"

"Yes. What's happened now?"

"The police arrested Elaine, right here in the hotel."

"What on earth for?" demanded Linton.

“Well, it seems that some chaps called Zanja whom the police suspected of bumping off this Kristor Vlanec were bumped off them-selves two or three days later, and the police prove Elaine did the shooting.”

“But why in God's name should she?”

“She wouldn't, of course. It's absurd unless—”

“Unless what?”

“Unless Dr. Bljedolje was right.”

“Good God, Fred, you don't really believe that transferred personality stuff? Vlanec taking his revenge on them in Elaine's body. You must be crazy.”

“It — well — oh, damn it, then I am crazy! Why else should Elaine — I mean, they don't arrest foreign tourists on a charge like that without good evidence.”

“You mean you think she did do it?”

“Well, physically, yes. What's more I think Walter knew. That's why he was so windy.”

“Where's he now?”

“Vanished. Cleared out.”

“And left Elaine — like that?”

“He — well, old boy, I don't think he is Walter any longer.”

“What the devil are you talking about?”

“Well, I was in the lounge when they brought Elaine down. The moment she saw me and Mary she tore herself free from the police and ran across to us. And she spoke in English as good as yours or mine. She said: ‘Fred, for God's sake get me out of this. Get Dr. Bljedolje, he'll under-stand.’ That's all she could manage before they came up and took her away.”

“Did you manage to get hold of Bljedolje?”

“Yes. That's why I called you. He thinks Vlanec's done it again, and got away with it.”

“Meaning just what?”

“To put it simply: just as Vlanec, when his own body was in trouble, forced Elaine's spirit to change places with his; so, now that he's got Elaine's body into trouble he's forced another trans-ference and taken over Walter's body. In fact, that if we do find what appears to be Walter, it will actually be an individual who talks Serbo-Croat and knows only a few words of English.”

“And the consciousness now in Elaine's body—”

“Is Walter's.”

“Good Lord! There must be some-thing about those parts that sends you all crazy, if that's what you think.”

“Well, what the hell else is there to think? They're exe-cu-ting Elaine in the morning,”

BOOK INFORMATION

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