

By the author of the *New York Times* bestseller
THE CAT WHO WALKS THROUGH WALLS

STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND

Robert A.
HEINLEIN

THE
MOST FAMOUS
SCIENCE FICTION
NOVEL
EVER WRITTEN

Robert A. Heinlein

NOTICE: All men, gods; and planets in this story are imaginary, Any coincidence of names is regretted.

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Preface

IF YOU THINK that this book appears to be thicker and contain more words than you found in the first published edition of *Stranger in a Strange Land*, your observation is correct. This edition is the original one-the way Robert Heinlein first conceived it, and put it down on paper. The earlier edition contained a few words over 160,000, while this one runs around 220,000 words. Robert's manuscript copy usually contained about 250 to 300 words per page, depending on the amount of dialogue on the pages. So, taking an average of about 275 words, with the manuscript running 800 pages, we get a total of 220,000 words, perhaps a bit more. This book was so different from what was being sold to the general public, or to the science fiction reading public in 1961 when it was published, that the editors required some cutting and removal of a few scenes that might then have been offensive to public taste.

The November 1948 issue of *Astounding Science Fiction* contained a letter to the editor suggesting titles for the issue of a year hence. Among the titles was to be a story by Robert A. Heinlein-"Gulf." In a long conversation between that editor, John W. Campbell, Jr., and Robert, it was decided that there would be sufficient lead time to allow all the stories that the fan had titled to be written, and the magazine to come out in time for the November 1949 date. Robert promised to deliver a short story to go with the title. Most of the other authors also went along with the gag. This issue came to be known as the "Time Travel" issue. Robert's problem, then, was to find a story to fit the title assigned to him. So we held a "brainstorming" session. Among other unsuitable notions, I suggested a story about a human infant, raised by an alien race. The idea was just too big for a short story, Robert said, but he made a note about it. That night he went into his study, and wrote some lengthy notes, and set them aside. For the title "Gulf" he wrote quite a different story. The notes sat in a file for several years, at which time Robert began to write what was to be *Stranger in a Strange Land*. Somehow, the story didn't quite jell, and he set it aside. He returned to the

manuscript a few times, but it was not finished until 1960: this was the version you now hold in your hands. In the context of 1960, *Stranger in a Strange Land* was a book that his publishers feared-it was too far off the beaten path. So, in order to minimize possible losses, Robert was asked to cut the manuscript down to 150,000 words-a loss of about 70,000 words. Other changes were also requested, before the editor was willing to take a chance on publication. To take out about a quarter of a long, complicated book was close to an impossible task. But, over the course of some months, Robert accomplished it. The final word count came out at 160,087 words. Robert was convinced that it was impossible to cut out any more, and the book was accepted at that length. For 28 years it remained in print in that form. In 1976, Congress passed a new Copyright Law, which said, in part, that in the event an author died, and the widow or widower renewed the copyright, all old contracts were cancelled. Robert died in 1988, and the following year the copyright for *Stranger in a Strange Land* came up for renewal. Unlike many other authors, Robert had kept a copy of the original typescript, as submitted for publication, on file at the library of the University of California at Santa Cruz, his archivists. I asked for a copy of that manuscript, and read that and the published versions side by side. And I came to the conclusion that it had been a mistake to cut the book. So I sent a copy of the typescript to Eleanor Wood, Robert's agent. Eleanor also read the two versions together, and agreed with my verdict. So, after the notification to the publisher, she presented them with a copy of the new/old version.

No one remembered the fact that such drastic cutting had been done on this book; over the course of years all the editors and senior officers at the publishing house had changed. So this version was a complete surprise to them. They decided to publish the original version, agreeing that it was better than the cut one. You now have in your hands the original version of *Stranger in a Strange Land*, as written by Robert Anson Heinlein. The given names of the chief characters have great importance to the plot. They were carefully selected: Jubal means "the father of all," Michael stands for "Who is like God?" I leave it for the reader to find out what the other names mean. -Virginia Heinlein Carmel, California

Part one HIS MACULATE ORIGIN

I

ONCE UPON A TIME when the world was young there was a Martian named

Smith. Valentine Michael Smith was as real as taxes but he was a race of one. The first human expedition from Terra to Mars was selected on the theory that the greatest danger to man in space was man himself. At that time, only eight Terran years after the founding of the first human colony on Luna, any interplanetary trip made by humans necessarily had to be made in weary free-fall orbits, doubly tangent semi-ellipses--from Terra to Mars, two hundred fifty-eight days, the same for the return journey, plus four hundred fifty-five days waiting at Mars while the two planets crawled slowly back into relative positions which would permit shaping the doubly-tangent orbit-a total of almost three Earth years. Besides its wearing length, the trip was very chancy. Only by refueling at a space station, then tacking back almost into Earth's atmosphere, could this primitive flying coffin, the Envoy, make the trip at all. Once at Mars she might be able to return-if she did not crash in landing, if water could be found on Mars to fill her reaction-mass tanks, if some sort of food could be found on Mars, if a thousand other things did not go wrong. But the physical danger was judged to be less important than the psychological stresses. Eight humans, crowded together like monkeys for almost three Terran years, had better get along much better than humans usually did. An all-male crew had been vetoed as unhealthy and socially unstable from lessons learned earlier. A ship's company of four married couples had been decided on as optimum, if the necessary specialties could be found in such a combination. The University of Edinburgh, prime contractor, sub-contracted crew selection to the Institute for Social Studies. After discarding the chaff of volunteers useless through age, health, mentality, training, or temperament, the Institute still had over nine thousand candidates to work from, each sound in mind and body and having at least one of the necessary special skills. It was expected that the Institute would report several acceptable four-couple crews. No such crew was found. The major skills needed were astrogator, medical doctor, cook, machinist, ship's commander, semantician, chemical engineer, electronics engineer, physicist, geologist, biochemist, biologist, atomics engineer, photographer, hydroponicist, rocket engineer. Each crew member would have to possess more than one skill, or be able to acquire extra skills in time. There were hundreds of possible combinations of eight people possessing these skills; there turned up three combinations of four married couples possessing them, plus health and intelligence.-but in all three cases the group-dynamicists who evaluated the temperament factors for compatibility threw up their hands in horror. The prime contractor suggested lowering the compatibility figure-of-merit; the Institute stiffly offered to return its one dollar fee. In the meantime a computer programmer whose name was not recorded had the machines hunt for three-

couple rump crews. She found several dozen compatible combinations, each of which defined by its own characteristics the couple needed to complete it. In the meantime the machines continued to review the data changing through deaths, withdrawals, new volunteers, etc. Captain Michael Brant, M.S., Cmdr. D. F. Reserve, pilot (unlimited license), and veteran at thirty of the Moon run, seems to have had an inside track at the Institute, someone who was willing to look up for him the names of single female volunteers who might (with him) complete a crew, and then pair his name with these to run trial problems through the machines to determine whether or not a possible combination would be acceptable. This would account for his action in jetting to Australia and proposing marriage to Doctor Winifred Coburn, a horse-faced spinster semantician nine years his senior. The Carlsbad Archives pictured her with an expression of quiet good humor but otherwise lacking in attractiveness. Or Brant may have acted without inside information, solely through that trait of intuitive audacity necessary to command an exploration. In any case lights blinked, punched cards popped out, and a crew for the Envoy had been found: Captain Michael Brant, commanding-pilot, astrogator, relief cook, relief photographer, rocketry engineer; Dr. Winifred Coburn Brant, forty-one, semantician, practical nurse, stores officer, historian; Mr. Francis X. Seeney, twenty-eight, executive officer, second pilot, astrogator, astrophysicist, photographer; Dr. Olga Kovalic Seeney, twenty-nine, cook, biochemist, hydroponicist; Dr. Ward Smith, forty-five, physician and surgeon, biologist; Dr. Mary Jane Lyle Smith, twenty-six, atomics engineer, electronics and power technician; Mr. Sergei Rimsky, thirty-five, electronics engineer, chemical engineer, practical machinist & instrumentation man, cryologist; Mrs. Eleanora Alvarez Rimsky, thirty-two, geologist and selenologist, hydroponicist. The crew had a well-rounded group of skills, although in some cases their secondary skills had been acquired by intensive coaching during the last weeks before blast-off. More important, they were mutually compatible in their temperaments. Too compatible, perhaps. The Envoy departed on schedule with no mishaps. During the early part of the voyage her daily reports were picked up with ease by private listeners. As she drew away and signals became fainter, they were picked up and rebroadcast by Earth's radio satellites. The crew seemed to be both healthy and happy. An epidemic of ringworm was the worst that Dr. Smith had to cope with-the crew adapted to free fall quickly and no antinausea drugs were used after the first week. If Captain Brant had any disciplinary problems, he did not choose to report them to Earth. The Envoy achieved a parking orbit just inside the orbit of Phobos and spent two weeks in photographic survey. Then Captain Brant radioed: "We will attempt a landing at 1200 tomorrow GST just south of Lacus

Soli." No further message was ever received.

II

IT WAS A QUARTER of an Earth century before Mars was again visited by humans. Six years after the Envoy was silent, the drone probe *Zombie*, sponsored jointly by the Geographic Society and La Soci   Astronautique Internationale, bridged the void and took up an orbit for the waiting period, then returned. The photographs taken by the robot vehicle showed a land unattractive by human standards; her recording instruments confirmed the thinness and unsuitability of the Aerean atmosphere to human life. But the *Zombie's* pictures showed clearly that the "canals" were engineering works of some sort and there were other details which could only be interpreted as ruins of cities. A manned expedition on a major scale and without delay surely would have been mounted had not World War III intervened. But the war and the delay resulted eventually in a much stronger, safer expedition than that of the lost *En my*. The Federation Ship *Champion*, manned by an all-male crew of eighteen experienced spacemen and carrying more than that number of male pioneers, made the crossing under Lyle Drive in only nineteen days. The *Champion* landed just south of *Lacus Soli*, as Captain van Tromp intended to search for the *Envoy*. The second expedition reported to Earth by radio daily, but three despatches were of more than scientific interest. The first was: "Rocket Ship *Envoy* located. No survivors." The second worldshaker was: "Mars is inhabited." The third was: "Correction to despatch 23-105: One survivor of *Envoy* located."

III

CAPTAIN WILLEM VAN TROMP was a man of humanity and good sense. He radioed ahead: "My passenger must not, repeat, must not be subjected to the strain of a public reception. Provide low-gee shuttle, stretcher and ambulance service, and armed guard." He sent his ship's surgeon Dr. Nelson along to make sure that Valentine Michael Smith was installed in a suite in Bethesda Medical Center, transferred gently into a hydraulic bed, and protected from outside contact by marine guards. Van Tromp himself went to an extraordinary session of the Federation High Council. At the moment when Valentine Michael Smith was being lifted into bed, the High Minister for Science was saying testily, "Granted, Captain, that your authority as military commander of what was nevertheless primarily a scientific expedition gives you the right to order unusual medical service to protect a person temporarily in your charge, I do not see why

you now presume to interfere with the proper functions of my department. Why, Smith is a veritable treasure trove of scientific information!" "Yes. I suppose he is, sir." "Then why-" The science minister broke off and turned to the High Minister for Peace and Military Security. "David? This matter is obviously now in my jurisdiction. Will you issue the necessary instructions to your people? After all, one can't keep persons of the caliber of Professor Kennedy and Doctor Okajima, to mention just two, cooling their heels indefinitely. They won't stand for it." The peace minister did not answer but glanced inquiringly at Captain van Tromp. The captain shook his head. "No, sir." "Why not?" demanded the science minister. "You have admitted that he isn't sick." "Give the captain a chance to explain, Pierre," the peace minister advised. "Well, Captain?" "Smith isn't sick, sir," Captain van Tromp said to the peace minister, "but he isn't well, either. He has never before been in a one-gravity field. He now weighs more than two and one half times what he is used to and his muscles aren't up to it. He's not used to Earth-normal air pressure. He's not used to anything and the strain is likely to be too much for him. Hell's bells, gentlemen, I'm dog tired myself just from being at one-gee again-and I was born on this planet." The science minister looked contemptuous. "If acceleration fatigue is all that is worrying you, let me assure you, my dear Captain, that we had anticipated that. His respiration and heart action will be watched carefully. We are not entirely without imagination and forethought. After all, I've been out myself. I know how it feels. This man Smith must-" Captain van Tromp decided that it was time to throw a tantrum. He could excuse it by his own fatigue-very real fatigue, he felt as if he had just landed on Jupiter-and he was smugly aware that even a high councilor could not afford to take too stiff a line with the commander of the first successful Martian expedition. So he interrupted with a snort of disgust. "link! 'This man Smith-' This 'man!' Can't you see that that is just what he is not?" "Eh?" "Smith ... is . . . not . . . a . . . man." "Huh? Explain yourself, Captain." "Smith is not a man. He is an intelligent creature with the genes and ancestry of a man, but he is not a man. He's more a Martian than a man. Until we came along he had never laid eyes on a human being. He thinks like a Martian, he feels like a Martian. He's been brought up by a race which has nothing in common with us. Why, they don't even have sex. Smith has never laid eyes on a woman-still hasn't if my orders have been carried out. He's a man by ancestry, a Martian by environment. Now, if you want to drive him crazy and waste that 'treasure trove of scientific information,' call in your fat-headed professors and let them badger him. Don't give him a chance to get well and strong and used to this madhouse planet. Just go ahead and squeeze him like an orange. It's no skin off me; I've done my job!" The ensuing silence was broken smoothly by Secretary General Douglas

himself. "And a good job, too, Captain. Your advice will be weighed, and be assured that we will not do anything hastily. If this man, or manMartian, Smith, needs a few days to get adjusted, I'm sure that science can wait-so take it easy, Pete. Let's table this part of the discussion, gentlemen, and get on to other matters. Captain van Tromp is tired." "One thing won't wait," said the Minister for Public Information. "Eh, Jock?" "If we don't show the Man from Mars in the stereo tanks pretty shortly, you'll have riots on your hands, Mr. Secretary." "Hmm- You exaggerate, Jock. Mars stuff in the news, of course. Me decorating the captain and his brave crew-tomorrow, that had better be. Captain van Tromp telling of his experiences-after a night's rest of course, Captain." The minister shook his head. "No good, Jock?" "The public expected the expedition to bring back at least one real live Martian for them to gawk at. Since they didn't, we need Smith and need him badly." "Live Martians?" "Secretary General Douglas turned to Captain van Tromp. "You have movies of Martians, haven't you?" "Thousands of feet." "There's your answer, Jock. When the live stuff gets thin, trot on the movies of Martians. The people will love it. Now, Captain, about this possibility of extraterritoriality: you say the Martians were not opposed to it?" "Well, no, sir-but they were not for it, either." "I don't follow you?" Captain van Tromp chewed his lip. "Sir, I don't know just how to explain it. Talking with a Martian is something like talking with an echo. You don't get any argument but you don't get results either." "Semantic difficulty? Perhaps you should have brought what's-hisname, your semantician, with you today. Or is he waiting outside?" "Mahmoud, sir. No, Doctor Mahmoud is not well. A-a slight nervous breakdown, sir." Van Tromp reflected that being dead drunk was the moral equivalent thereof. "Space happy?" "A little, perhaps." These damned groundhogs! "Well, fetch him around when he's feeling himself. young man Smith should be of help as an interpreter." "Perhaps," van Tromp said doubtfully.

This young man Smith was busy at that moment just staying alive. His body, unbearably compressed and weakened by the strange shape of space in this unbelievable place, was at last somewhat relieved by the softness of the nest in which these others had placed him. He dropped the effort of sustaining it, and turned his third level to his respiration and heart beat. He saw at once that he was about to consume himself. His lungs were beating almost as hard as they did at home, his heart was racing to distribute the influx, ail in an attempt to cope with the squeezing of space-and this in a situation in which he was smothered by a poisonously rich and dangerously hot atmosphere. He took immediate steps. When his heart rate was down to twenty per minute and his respiration almost

imperceptible, he set them at that and watched himself long enough to assure himself that he would not inadvertently disincorporate while his attention was elsewhere. When he was satisfied that they were running properly, he set a tiny portion of his second level on guard and withdrew the rest of himself. It was necessary to review the configurations of these many new events in order to fit them to himself, then cherish and praise them-lest they swallow him up. Where should he start? When he had left home, enfolding these others who were now his own nestlings? Or simply at his arrival in this crushed space? He was suddenly assaulted by the lights and sounds of that arrival, feeling it again with mind-shaking pain. No, he was not yet ready to cherish and embrace that configuration-back! back! back beyond his first sight of these others who were now his own. Back even before the healing which had followed his first grokking of the fact that he was not as his nestling brothers . . . back to the nest itself. None of his thinkings had been in Earth symbols. Simple English he had freshly learned to speak, but much less easily than a Hindu uses it to trade with a Turk. Smith used English as one might use a code book, with tedious and imperfect translation for each symbol. Now his thoughts, pure Martian abstractions from half a million years of wildly alien culture, traveled so far from any human experience as to be utterly untranslatable. In the adjoining room an intern, Dr. "Tad" Thaddeus, was playing cribbage with Tom Meechum, Smith's special nurse. Thaddeus had one eye on his dials and meters and both eyes on his cards; nevertheless he noted every heart beat of his patient. When a flickering light changed from ninety-two pulsations per minute to less than twenty, he pushed the cards aside, jumped to his feet, and hurried into Smith's room with Meechum at his heels. The patient floated in the flexible skin of the hydraulic bed. He appeared to be dead. Thaddeus swore briefly and snapped, "Get Doctor Nelson!" Meechum said, "Yessir!" and added, "How about the shock gear, Doc? He's far gone." "Get Doctor Nelson!" The nurse rushed out. The interne examined the patient as closely as possible but refrained from touching him. He was still doing so when an older doctor came in, walking with the labored awkwardness of a man long in space and not yet adjusted to high gravity. "Well, Doctor?" "Patient's respiration, temperature, and pulse dropped suddenly, uh, about two minutes ago, sir." "What have you done for him, or to him?" "Nothing, sir. Your instructions-" "Good." Nelson looked Smith over briefly, then studied the instruments back of the bed, twins of those in the watch room. "Let me know if there is any change." He started to leave. Thaddeus looked startled. "But, Doctor-" He broke off. Nelson said grimly, "Go ahead, Doctor. What is your diagnosis?" "Uh, I don't wish to sound off about your patient, sir." "Never mind. I asked for your diagnosis." "Very well, sir. Shock-atypical,

perhaps," he hedged, "but shock, leading to termination." Nelson nodded. "Reasonable enough. But this isn't a reasonable case. Relax, son. I've seen this patient in this condition half a dozen times during the trip back. It doesn't mean a thing. Watch." Nelson lifted the patient's right arm, let it go. It stayed where he had left it. "Catalepsy?" asked Thaddeus. "Call it that if you like. Calling a tail a leg doesn't make it one. Don't worry about it, Doctor. There is nothing typical about this case. Just keep him from being bothered and call me if there is any change." He replaced Smith's arm. When Nelson had left, Thaddeus took one more look at the patient, shook his head and joined Meechum in the watch room. Meechum picked up his cards and said, "Crib?" "No." Meechum waited, then added, "Doc, if you ask me, that one in there is a case for the basket before morning." "No one asked you." "My mistake." "Go out and have a cigarette with the guards. I want to think." Meechum shrugged and left. Thaddeus opened a bottom drawer, took out a bottle and poured himself a dose intended to help his thinking. Meechum joined the guards in the corridor; they straightened up, then saw who it was and relaxed. The taller marine said, "Howdy, pal. What was the excitement just now?" "Nothing much. The patient just had quintuplets and we were arguing about what to name them. Which one of you monkeys has got a butt? And a light?" The other marine dug a pack of cigarettes out of a pocket. "How're you fixed for Suction?" he asked bleakly. "Just middlin'. Thanks." Meechum stuck the cigarette in his face and talked around it. "Honest to God, gentlemen, I don't know anything about this patient. I wish I did." "What's the idea of these orders about 'Absolutely No Women'? Is he some kind of a sex maniac?" "Not that I know of. All that I know is that they brought him in from the Champion and said that he was to have absolute quiet." "'The Champion!' "the first marine said. "Of course! That accounts for it." "Accounts for what?" "It stands to reason. He ain't had any, he ain't seen any, he ain't touched any-for months. And he's sick, see? If he was to lay hands on any, they're afraid he'd kill himself." He blinked and blew out a deep breath. "I'll bet I would, under similar circumstances. No wonder they don't want no bims around him."

Smith had been aware of the visit by the doctors but he had grokked at once that their intentions were benign; it was not necessary for the major part of him to be jerked back from where he was. At the hour in the morning when human nurses slap patient's faces with cold, wet cloths under the pretense of washing them, Smith returned from his journey. He speeded up his heart, increased his respiration, and again took note of his surroundings, viewing them with serenity. He looked the room over, noting without discrimination and with praise all its details, both important and unimportant. He was, in fact, seeing it for the first