



The Hands
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Transcriber's Note:

This etext was produced from *Amazing Stories* Oct.-Nov. 1953. Extensive research did not uncover any evidence that the U.S. copyright on this publication was renewed. Minor spelling and typographical errors have been corrected without note.

He was a gigantic figure, sitting there atop the mountain. He could have leaned over and dammed the river below with a finger. He sat on top of the mountain, and his beard in the wind was a white flag.

Across the plains, as he watched, there were fires glowing, and the mountain under him trembled from explosions a thousand miles away. He bent his head, and a muffled cry reverberated down the hillside and through the valley.

A smaller figure appeared beside him, looking sad.

"Try again, father," the smaller one said.

The old one shook his head. "It would be the same."

"Give them another chance."

"They would do it again."

"Just once more."

The old one shook his head again, and for a while they sat, and they watched the destruction. The fires burned higher, and the explosions shook their mountain more roughly.

At last, at the end, the old one reached down and scooped up some clay from the bank of the river. He held it in a huge, gentle hand, and the younger one smiled.

"You are good to give them another chance, father."

"Not them," said the old one.

"What do you mean?" the son asked, wonderingly.

"Something else," the majestic figure answered, starting to knead the clay. "What shall it be?"

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After space, there was always one more river to cross ... the far side of hatred and murder!

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The Valor of Cappen Varra

We have said that there are many and strange shadows, memories surviving from dim pasts, in this FANTASTIC UNIVERSE of ours. Poul Anderson turns to a legend from the Northern countries, countries where even today the pagan past seems only like yesterday, and tells the story of Cappen Varra, who came to Norren a long, long time ago.

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"Why don't you find yourself some nice little American girl," his father had often repeated. But George was on Venus ... and he loved pale green skin ... and globular heads and most of all, George loved Gistla.

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The Hand of Ethelberta

At the beginning of the book, we are told that Ethelberta was raised in humble circumstances but, through her work as a governess, married well at the age of eighteen. Her husband died two weeks after the wedding and, now twenty-one, Ethelberta lives with her mother-in-law, Lady Petherwin. In the three years that

have elapsed since the deaths of both her husband and father-in-law, Ethelberta has been treated to foreign travel and further privilege by her benefactress, but restricted from seeing her poor family.

The events of the story concern Ethelberta's career as a famous poetess and storyteller as she struggles to support her family and conceal her secret -- that her father is a butler. Beautiful, clever, and rational, she easily attracts four very persistent suitors (Mr Julian, Mr Neigh, Mr Ladywell, and Lord Mountclere), but is reluctant to give her much-coveted hand.

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