



Black Eyes and the Daily Grind
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About Marlowe:

Stephen Marlowe (born Milton Lesser, 7 August 1928 in Brooklyn, NY, died 22 February 2008, in Williamsburg, Virginia) was an American author of science fiction, mystery novels, and fictional autobiographies of Christopher Columbus, Spanish author Miguel de Cervantes, and Edgar Allan Poe. He is best known for his detective character Chester Drum, whom he created in the 1955 novel *The Second Longest Night*. Lesser also wrote under the pseudonyms Adam Chase, Andrew Frazer, C.H. Thames, Jason Ridgway and Ellery Queen. He was awarded the French Prix Gutenberg du Livre in 1988, and in 1997 he was awarded the "Life Achievement Award" by the Private Eye Writers of America. He lived with his wife Ann in Williamsburg, Virginia.

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HE LIKED the flat cracking sound of the gun. He liked the way it slapped back against his shoulder when he fired. Somehow it did not seem a part of the dank, steaming Venusian jungle. Probably, he realized with a smile, it was the only old-fashioned recoil rifle on the entire planet. As if anyone else would want to use one of those old bone-cracking relics today! But they all failed to realize it made sport much more interesting.

"I haven't seen anything for a while," his wife said. She had a young, pretty face and a strong young body. If you have money these days, you could really keep a thirty-five-year-old woman looking trim.

Not on Venus, of course. Venus was an outpost, a frontier, a hot, wet, evil-smelling place that beckoned only the big-game hunter. He said, "That's true. Yesterday we could bag them one after the other, as fast as I could fire this contraption. Today, if there's anything bigger than a mouse, it's hiding in a hole somewhere. You know what I think, Lindy?"

"What?"

"I think there's a reason for it. A lot of the early Venusian hunters said there were days like this. An area filled with big lizards and cats and everything else the day before suddenly seems to clear out, for no reason. It doesn't make sense."

"Why not? Why couldn't they all just decide to make tracks for someplace else on the same day?"

He slapped at an insect that was buzzing around his right ear, then mopped his sweating brow with a handkerchief. His name was Judd Whitney, and people said he had a lot of money. Now he laughed, patting his wife's trim shoulder under the white tunic. "No, Lindy. It just doesn't work that way. Not on Earth and not on Venus, either. You think there's a pied-piper or something which calls all the animals away?"

"Maybe. I don't know much about those things."

"No. I don't think they went anyplace. They're just quiet. They didn't come out of their holes or hovels or down from the trees. But why?"

"Well, let's forget it. Let's go back to camp. We can try again tomorrow—look! Look, there's something!"

Judd followed her pointing finger with his eyes. Half-hidden by the creepers and vines clinging to an old tree-stump, something was watching them. It wasn't very big and it seemed in no hurry to get away.

"What is it?" Lindy wanted to know.

"Don't know. Never saw anything like it before. Venus is still an unknown frontier; the books only name a couple dozen of the biggest animals. But hell, Lindy, that's not *game*. I don't think it weighs five pounds."

"It's cute, and it has a lovely skin."

Judd couldn't argue with that. Squatting on its haunches, the creature was about twenty inches tall. It had a pointed snout and two thin, long ears. Its eyes were very big and very round and quite black. They looked something like the eyes of an Earthian tarsier, but the tarsier were bloody little beasts. The skin was short and stiff and was a kind of silvery white. Under the sheen, however, it seemed to glow. A diamond is colorless, Judd thought, but when you see it under light a whole rainbow of colors sparkle deep within it. This creature's skin was like that, Judd decided.

"If we could get enough of them," Lindy was saying, "I'd have the most unusual coat! Do you think we could find enough, Judd?"

"I doubt it. Never saw anything like it before, never heard of anything like it. You'd need fifty of 'em, anyway. Let's forget about it—too small to shoot, anyway."

"No, Judd. I want it."

"Well, I'm not going to stalk a five-pound—hey, wait a minute! I taught you how to use this rifle, so why don't you bag it?"

Lindy grinned. "That's a fine idea. I was a little scared of some of those big lizards and cats and everything, but now I'm going to take you up on it. Here, give me your gun."

Judd removed the leather thong from his shoulder and handed the weapon to her. She looked at it a little uncertainly, then took the clip of shells which Judd offered and slammed it into the chamber. The little creature sat unmoving.

"Isn't it peculiar that it doesn't run away, Judd?"

"Sure is. Nothing formidable about that animal, so unless it has a hidden poison somewhere, just about anything in this swamp could do it in. To survive it would have to be fast as hell and it would have to keep running all the time. Beats me, Lindy."

"Well, I'm going to get myself one pelt toward that coat, anyway. Watch, Judd: is this the way?" She lifted the rifle to her shoulder and squinted down the sights toward the shining creature.

"Yeah, that's the way. Only relax. Relax. Shoulder's so tense you're liable to dislocate it with the kick. There—that's better."

Now Lindy's finger was wrapped around the trigger and she remembered Judd had told her to squeeze it, not to pull it. If you pulled the trigger you jerked the rifle and spoiled your aim. You had to squeeze it slowly... .

The animal seemed politely interested.

Suddenly, a delicious languor stole over Lindy. It possessed her all at once and she had no idea where it came from. Her legs had been stiff and tired from the all-morning trek through the swamp, but now they felt fine. Her whole body was suffused in a warm, satisfied glow of well-being. And laziness. It was an utterly new sensation and she could even feel it tingling at the roots of her hair. She sighed and lowered the rifle.

"I don't want to shoot it," she said.

"You just told me you did."

"I know, but I changed my mind. What's the matter, can't I change my mind?"

"Of course you can change your mind. But I thought you wanted a coat of those things."

"Yes, I suppose I do. But I don't want to shoot it, that's all."

Judd snorted. "I think you have a streak of softness someplace in that pretty head of yours!"

"Maybe. I don't know. But I'd still like the pelt. Funny, isn't it?"

"Okay, okay! But don't ask to use the gun again." Judd snatched it from her hands. "If you don't want to shoot it, then I will. Maybe we can make you a pair of gloves or something from the pelt."

And Judd pointed his ancient rifle at the little animal preparing to snap off a quick shot. It would be a cinch at this distance. Even Lindy wouldn't have missed, if she hadn't changed her mind.

Judd yawned. He'd failed to realize he was so tired. Not an aching kind of tiredness, but the kind that makes you feel good all over. He yawned again and lowered the rifle. "Changed my mind," he said. "I don't want to shoot it, either. What say we head back for camp?"

Lindy gripped his hand impulsively. "All right, Judd—but I had a brainstorm! I want it for a pet!"

"A pet?"

"Yes. I think it would be the cutest thing. Everyone would look and wonder and I'll adore it!"

"We don't know anything about it. Maybe Earth would be too cold, or too dry, or maybe we don't have anything it can eat. There are liable to be a hundred different strains of bacteria that can kill it."

"I said I want it for a pet. See? Look at it! We can call it Black Eyes."

"Black Eyes—" Judd groaned.

"Yes, Black Eyes. If you don't do this one thing for me, Judd—"

"Okay—okay. But I'm not going to do anything. You want it, you take it."

Lindy frowned, looked at him crossly, then sloshed across the swamp toward Black Eyes. The creature waited on its stump until she came quite close, and then, with a playful little bound, it hopped onto her shoulder, still squatting on its haunches. Lindy squealed excitedly and began to stroke its silvery fur.

A MONTH LATER, they returned to Earth. Judd and Lindy and Black Eyes. The hunting trip had been a success—Judd's trophies were on their way home on a slow freighter, and he'd have some fine heads and skins for his study-room. Even Black Eyes had been no trouble at all. It ate scraps from their table, forever sitting on its haunches and staring at them with its big black eyes. Judd thought it would make one helluva lousy pet, but he didn't tell Lindy. Trouble was, it never did anything. It merely sat still, or occasionally it would bounce down to the floor and mince along on its hind-legs for a scrap of food. It never uttered a sound. It did not frolic and it did not gambol. Most of the time it could have been carved from stone. But Lindy was happy and Judd said nothing.

They had a little trouble with the customs officials. This because nothing unknown could be brought to Earth without a thorough examination.

At the customs office, a bespectacled official stared at Black Eyes, scratching his head. "Never seen one like that before."

"Neither have I," Judd admitted.

"Well, I'll look in the book." The man did, but there are no thorough tomes on Venusian fauna. "Not here."

"I could have told you."

"Well, we'll have to quarantine it and study it. That means you and your wife go into quarantine, too. It could have something that's catching."

"Absurd!" Lindy cried.

"Sorry, lady. I only work here."

"You and your bright ideas," Judd told his wife acidly. "We may be quarantined a month until they satisfy themselves about Black Eyes."

The customs official shrugged his bony shoulders, and Judd removed a twenty-credit note from his pocket and handed it to the man. "Will this change your mind?"

"I should say not! You can't bribe me, Mr. Whitney! You can't—" The man yawned, stretched languidly, smiled. "No, sir, you can keep your money, Mr. Whitney. Guess we don't have to examine your pet after all. Mighty cute little feller. Well, have fun with it. Come on, move along now." And, as they were departing with Black Eyes, still not believing their ears: "Darn this weather! Makes a man so lazy... ."

It was after the affair at the customs office, that Black Eyes uttered its first sound. City life hasn't changed much in the last fifty years. Jet-cars still streak around the circumferential highways, their whistles blaring. Factories still belch smoke and steam, although the new atomic power plants have lessened that to a certain extent. Crowds still throng the streets, noisy, hurrying, ill-mannered. It's one of those things that can't be helped. A city has to live, and it has to make noise.

But it seemed to frighten Lindy's new pet. It stared through the jet-car window on the way from the spaceport to the Whitneys' suburban home, its black eyes welling with tears.

"Look!" Judd exclaimed. "Black Eyes can cry!"

"A crying pet, Judd. I knew there would be something unusual about Black Eyes, I just knew it!"

The tears in the big black eyes overflowed and tumbled out, rolling down Black Eyes' silvery cheeks. And then Black Eyes whimpered. It was only a brief whimper, but both Judd and Lindy heard it, and even the driver turned around for a moment and stared at the animal.

The driver stopped the jet. He yawned and rested his head comfortably on the cushioned seat. He went quietly to sleep.

A MAN NAMED Merrywinkle owned the Merrywinkle Shipping Service. That, in itself, was not unusual. But at precisely the moment that Black Eyes unleashed its mild whimper, Mr. Merrywinkle—uptown and five miles away—called an emergency conference of the board of directors and declared:

"Gentlemen, we have all been working too hard, and I, for one, am going to take a vacation. I don't know when I'll be back, but it won't be before six months."

"But C.M.," someone protested. "There's the Parker deal and the Gillette contract and a dozen other things. You're needed!"

Mr. Merrywinkle shook his bald head. "What's more, you're all taking vacations, with pay. Six months, each of you. We're closing down Merrywinkle Shipping for half a year. Give the competition a break, eh?"

"But C.M.! We're about ready to squeeze out Chambers Parcel Co.! They'll get back on their feet in six months."

"Never mind. Notify all departments of the shut-down, effective immediately. Vacations for all."

"WHO SHUT off the assembly belt?" the foreman asked mildly. He was not a mild man and he usually stormed and ranted at the slightest provocation. This was at Clewson Jetcraft, and you couldn't produce a single jet-plane without the assembly belt, naturally.

A plump little man said, "I did."

"But why?" the foreman asked him, smiling blandly.

"I don't know. I just did."

The foreman was still smiling. "I don't blame you."

Two days later, Clewson Jetcraft had to lay off all its help. They put ads in all the papers seeking new personnel but no one showed up. Clewson was forced to shut down.

THE CRACK Boston to New York pneumo-tube commuter's special pulled to a bone-jarring stop immediately outside the New York station. Some angry commuters pried open the conductor's cab, and found the man snoozing quite contentedly. They awakened him, but he refused to drive the train any further. All the commuters had to leave the pneumo-train and edge their way along three miles of catwalk to the

station. No one was very happy about it, but the feeling of well-being which came over them all nipped any possible protest in the bud.

BLACK EYES whimpered again when Judd and Lindy reached home but after that it was quiet. It just sat on its haunches near the window and stared out at the city.

The quiet city.

Nothing moved in the streets. Nothing stirred. People remained at home watching local video or the new space-video from Mars. At first it was a good joke, and the newspapers could have had a field day with it, had the newspapers remained in circulation. After four days, however, they suspended publication. On the fifth day, there was a shortage of food in the city, great stores of it spoiling in the warehouses. Heat and light failed after a week, and the fire department ignored all alarms a day later.

But everything did not stop. School teachers still taught their classes; clerks still sold whatever goods were left on local shelves. Librarians were still at their desks.

Conservatives said it was a liberal plot to undermine capital and demand higher wages; liberals said big business could afford the temporary layoff and wanted to squeeze out the small businessman and labor unions.

Scientists pondered and city officials made speeches over video.

"Something," one of them observed, "has hit our city. Work that requires anything above a modicum of sound has become impossible; in regards to such work people have become lazy. No one can offer any valid suggestions concerning the malady. It merely exists. However, if a stop is not put to it—and soon—our fair city will disintegrate. Something is making us lazy, and that laziness can spell doom, being a compulsive lack of desire to create any noise or disturbance. If anyone believes he has the solution, he should contact the Department of Science at once. If you can't use the video-phone, come in person. But come! Every hour which passes adds to the city's woes."

Nothing but scatter-brained ideas for a week, none of them worth consideration. Then the bespectacled customs official who had bypassed quarantine for Black Eyes, got in touch with the authorities. He had always been a conscientious man—except for that one lapse. Maybe the queer little beast had nothing to do with this crisis. But then again, the

customs official had never before—or since—had that strange feeling of lassitude. Could there be some connection?

A staff of experts on extra-terrestrial fauna was dispatched to the Whitney residence, although, indeed, the chairman of the Department of Science secretly considered the whole idea ridiculous.

The staff of experts introduced themselves. Then, ignoring the protests of Lindy, went to work on Black Eyes. At first Judd thought the animal would object, but apparently it did not. While conditions all about them in the city worsened, the experts spent three days studying Black Eyes.

They found nothing out of the ordinary.

Black Eyes merely stared back at them, and but for an accident, they would have departed without a lead. On the third day, a huge mongrel dog which belonged to the Whitneys' next-door neighbors somehow slipped its leash. It was a fierce and ugly animal, and it was known to attack anything smaller than itself. It jumped the fence and landed in Judd Whitney's yard. A few loping bounds took it through an open window, ground level. Inside, it spied Black Eyes and made for the creature at once, howling furiously.

Black Eyes didn't budge.

And the mongrel changed its mind! The slavering tongue withdrew inside the chops, the howling stopped. The mongrel lay down on the floor and whined. Presently it lost all interest, got to its feet, and left as it had come.

Other animals were brought to the Whitney home. Cats. Dogs. A lion from the city zoo, starved for two days and brought in a special mobile cage by its keeper. Black Eyes was thrust into the cage and the lion gave forth with a hideous yowling. Soon it stopped, rolled over, and slept.

THE SCIENTISTS correlated their reports, returned with them to the Whitney house. The leader, whose name was Jamison, said: "As closely as we can tell, Black Eyes is the culprit."

"What?" Lindy demanded.

"Yes, Mrs. Whitney. Your pet, Black Eyes."

"Oh, I don't believe it!"

But Judd said, "Go ahead, Dr. Jamison. I'm listening."

"Well, how does an animal—any animal—protect itself?"

"Why, in any number of ways. If it has claws or a strong jaw and long teeth, it can fight. If it is fleet of foot, it can run. If it is big and has a tough hide, most other animals can't hurt it anyway. Umm-mm, doesn't that about cover it?"

"You left out protective coloration, defensive odors, and things like that. Actually, those are most important from our point of view, for Black Eyes' ability is a further ramification of that sort of thing. Your pet is not fast. It isn't strong. It can't change color and it has no offensive odor to chase off predatory enemies. It has no armor. In short, can you think of a more helpless creature to put down in those Venusian swamps?"

After Judd had shaken his head, Dr. Jamison continued: "Very well, Black Eyes should not be able to survive on Venus—and yet, obviously the creature did. We can assume there are more of the breed, too. Anyway, Black Eyes survives. And I'll tell you why.

"Black Eyes has a very uncommon ability to sense danger when it approaches. And sensing danger, Black Eyes can thwart it. Your creature sends out certain emanations—I won't pretend to know what they are—which stamp aggression out of any predatory creatures. Neither of you could fire upon it—right?"

"Umm-mm, that's true," Judd said.

Lindy nodded.

"Well, that's one half of it. There's so much about life we don't understand. Black Eyes uses energy of an unknown intensity, and the result maintains Black Eyes' life. Now, although that is the case, your animal did not live a comfortable life in the Venusian swamp. Because no animal would attack it, it could not be harmed. Still, from what you tell me about that swamp ...

"Anyhow, Black Eyes was glad to come away with you, and everything went well until you landed in New York. The noises, the clattering, the continual bustle of a great city—all this frightened the creature. It was being attacked—or, at least that's what it must have figured. Result: it struck back the only way it knew how. Have you ever heard about sub-sonic sound-waves, Mr. Whitney, waves of sound so low that our ears cannot pick them up—waves of sound which can nevertheless stir our emotions? Such things exist, and, as a working hypothesis, I would say Black Eyes' strange powers rest along those lines. The whole city is idle because Black Eyes is afraid!"

In his exploration of Mars, of Venus, of the Jovian moons, Judd Whitney had seen enough of extra-terrestrial life to know that virtually anything was possible, and Black Eyes would be no exception to that rule.

"What do you propose to do?" Judd demanded.

"Do? Why, we'll have to kill your creature, naturally. You can set a value on it and we will meet it, but Black Eyes must die."

"No!" Lindy cried. "You can't be sure, you're only guessing, and it isn't fair!"

"My dear woman, don't you realize this is a serious situation? The city's people will starve in time. No one can even bring food in because the trucks make too much noise! As an alternative, we could evacuate, but is your pet more valuable than the life of a great city?"

"N-no... ."

"Then, please! Listen to reason!"

"Kill it," Judd said. "Go ahead."

Dr. Jamison withdrew from his pocket a small blasting pistol used by the Department of Domestic Animals for elimination of injured creatures. He advanced on Black Eyes, who sat on its haunches in the center of the room, surveying the scientist.

Dr. Jamison put his blaster away. "I can't," he said. "I don't want to."

Judd smiled. "I know it. No one—no *thing*—can kill Black Eyes. You said so yourself. It was a waste of time to try it. In that case—"

"In that case," Dr. Jamison finished for him, "we're helpless. There isn't a man—or an animal—on Earth that will destroy this thing. Wait a minute—does it sleep, Mr. Whitney?"

"I don't think so. At least, I never saw it sleep. And your team of scientists, did they report anything?"

"No. As far as they could see, the creature never slept. We can't catch it unawares."

"Could you anesthetize it?"

"How? It can sense danger, and long before you could do that, it would stop you. It's only made one mistake, Mr. Whitney: it believes the noises of the city represent a danger. And that's only a negative mistake. Noise won't hurt Black Eyes, of course. It simply makes the animal unnecessarily cautious. But we cannot anesthetize it any more than we can kill it."

"I could take it back to Venus."

"Could you? Could you? I hadn't thought of that."

Judd shook his head. "I can't."

"What do you mean you can't?"

"It won't let me. Somehow it can sense our thoughts when we think something it doesn't want. I can't take it to Venus! No man could, because it doesn't want to go."

"My dear Mr. Whitney—do you mean to say you believe it can *think*?"

"Uh-uh. Didn't say that. It can sense our thoughts, and that's something else again."

Dr. Jamison threw his hands up over his head in a dramatic gesture. "It's hopeless," he said.

THINGS GREW worse. New York crawled along to a standstill. People began to move from the city. In trickles, at first, but the trickles became torrents, as New York's ten million people began to depart for saner places. It might take months—it might even take years, but the exodus had begun. Nothing could stop it. Because of a harmless little beast with the eyes of a tarsier, the life of a great city was coming to an end.

Word spread. Scientists all over the world studied reports on Black Eyes. No one had any ideas. Everyone was stumped. Black Eyes had no particular desire to go outside. Black Eyes merely remained in the Whitney house, contemplating nothing in particular, and stopping everything.

Dr. Jamison, however, was a persistent man. Judd got a letter from him one day, and the following afternoon he kept his appointment with the scientist.

"It's good to get out," Judd said, after a three hour walk to the Department of Science Building. "I can go crazy just staring at that thing."

"I have it, Whitney."

"You have what? Not the way to destroy Black Eyes? I don't believe it!"

"It's true. Consider. Everyone in the world does not yet know of your pet, correct?"

"I suppose there are a few people who don't—"

"There are many. Among them, are the crew of a jet-bomber which has been on maneuvers in Egypt. We have arranged everything."

"Yes? How?"

"At noon tomorrow, the bomber will appear over your home with one of the ancient, high-explosive missiles. Your neighbors will be removed from the vicinity, and, precisely at twelve-o-three in the afternoon, the bomb will be dropped. Your home will be destroyed. Black Eyes will be destroyed with it."

Judd looked uncomfortable. "I dunno," he said. "Sounds too easy."

"Too easy? I doubt if the animal will ever sense what is going on—not when the crew of the bomber doesn't know, either. They'll consider it a mighty peculiar order, to destroy one harmless, rather large and rather elaborate suburban home. But they'll do it. See you tomorrow, Whitney, after this mess is behind us."

"Yeah," Judd said. "Yeah." But somehow, the scientist had failed to instill any of his confidence in Judd.

WITH LINDY, he left home at eleven the following morning, after making a thorough list of all their properties which the City had promised to duplicate. Judd did not look at Black Eyes as he left, and the animal remained where it was, seated on its haunches under the dining room table, nibbling crumbs. Judd could almost feel the big round eyes boring a pair of twin holes in his back, and he dared not turn around to face them... .

They were a mile away at eleven forty-five, making their way through the nearly deserted streets. Judd stopped walking. He looked at Lindy. Lindy looked at him.

"They're going to destroy it," he said.

"I know."

"Do you want them to?"

"I—I—"

Judd knew that something had to be done with Black Eyes. He didn't like the little beast, and, anyway, that had nothing to do with it. Black Eyes was a menace. And yet, something whispered in Judd's ear, *Don't let them, don't let them ...* It wasn't Judd and it wasn't Judd's subconscious. It was Black Eyes, and he knew it. But he couldn't do a thing about it—

"I'm going to stay right here and let them bomb the place," he said aloud. But as he spoke, he was running back the way he had come.

Fifteen minutes.

He sprinted part of the time, then rested, then sprinted again. He was somewhat on the beefy side and he could not run fast, but he made it. Just.

He heard the jet streaking through the sky overhead, looked up once and saw it circling. Two blocks from his house he was met by a policeman. The entire area had been roped off, and the officer shook his head when Judd tried to get through.

"But I live there!"

"Can't help it, Mister. Orders is orders."

Judd hit him. Judd didn't want to, but nevertheless, he grunted with satisfaction when he felt the blow to be a good one, catching the stocky officer on the point of his chin and tumbling him over backwards. Then Judd was ducking under the rope and running.

He reached his house, plummeted in through the front door. He found Black Eyes under the kitchen table, squatting on its haunches. He scooped the animal up, ran outside. Then he was running again, and before he reached the barrier, something rocked him. A loud series of explosions ripped through his brain, and instinctively—Black Eyes' instincts, not his—he folded his arms over the animal, protecting it. Something shuddered and began to fall behind him, and debris scattered in all directions. Something struck Judd's head and he felt the ground slapping up crazily at his face—

He was as good as new a few days later.

And so was Black Eyes.

"I have it," Judd said to his nurse.

"You have what, sir?"

"It's so simple, so ridiculously simple, maybe that's why no one ever thought of it. Get me Dr. Jamison!"

Jamison came a few moments later, breathless. "Well?"

"I have the solution."

"You ... do?" Not much hope in the answer. Dr. Jamison was a tired, defeated man.

"Sure. Black Eyes doesn't like the city. Fine. Take him out. I can't take him to Venus. He doesn't like Venus and he won't go. No one can take him anywhere he doesn't want to go, just as no one can hurt him in any way. But he doesn't like the city. It's too noisy. All right: have someone take him far from the city, far far away—where there's no noise at all. Someplace out in the sticks where it won't matter much if Black Eyes puts a stop to any disturbing noises."

"Who will take him? You, Mr. Whitney?"

Judd shook his head. "That's your job, not mine. I've given you the answer. Now use it."

Lindy had arrived, and Lindy said: "Judd, you're right. That *is* the answer. And you're wonderful—"

No one volunteered to spend his life in exile with Black Eyes, but then Dr. Jamison pointed out that while no one knew the creature's life-span, it certainly couldn't be expected to match man's. Just a few years and the beast would die, and ... Dr. Jamison's arguments were so logical that he convinced himself. He took Black Eyes with him into the Canadian Northwoods, and there they live.

J UDD was right—almost.

This was the obvious answer which escaped everyone.

But scientists continued their examinations of Black Eyes, and they discovered something. Black Eyes' fears had not been for herself alone. She is going to have babies. The estimate is for thirty-five little tarsier-eyed creatures. No doctor in the world will be able to do anything but deliver the litter.

THE END

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It's seldom that the fate of a shipful of men literally hangs by a thread—but it's also seldom that a device, every part of which has been thoroughly tested, won't work....

Makers, Cory Doctorow

Perry and Lester invent things—seashell robots that make toast, Boogie Woogie Elmo dolls that drive cars. They also invent entirely new economic systems, like the “New Work,” a New Deal for the technological era. Barefoot bankers cross the nation, microinvesting in high-tech communal mini-startups like Perry and Lester’s. Together, they transform the country, and Andrea Fleeks, a journo-turned-blogger, is there to document it.

Then it slides into collapse. The New Work bust puts the dot.combomb to shame. Perry and Lester build a network of interactive rides in abandoned Wal-Marts across the land. As their rides, which commemorate the New Work’s glory days, gain in popularity, a rogue Disney executive grows jealous, and convinces the police that Perry and Lester’s 3D printers are being used to run off AK-47s.

Hordes of goths descend on the shantytown built by the New Workers, joining the cult. Lawsuits multiply as venture capitalists take on a new investment strategy: backing litigation against companies like Disney. Lester and Perry’s friendship falls to pieces when Lester gets the ‘fatkins’ treatment, turning him into a sybaritic gigolo.

Then things get really interesting.



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