

# THE THREE WORLDS OF NULL-A:

## A Comparative Study of The 1945, 1948, and 1970 Texts of A.E. van Vogt's *The World of Null-A*

by Isaac Wilcott

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## INTRODUCTION

The 1940s were the "Golden Age" of science fiction, the decade when the most influential authors wrote their most influential works. A.E. van Vogt was one such author, and perhaps his most influential work was a novel entitled *World of A* serialized in three parts in the magazine *Astounding Science Fiction*, edited by John W. Campbell, Jr. This novel had an enormous impact on other SF authors, most notably Philip K. Dick and Frank Herbert. Imitated many times, over many decades, it is the indirect source of many story ideas even to this day.

However good the original was, in 1948 van Vogt revised the novel for its first book publication. This was basically a total rewrite, and varies from the original in many important respects. Thus, the question arises, *why was this new version created?* There were two men who heavily influenced this 1948 rewrite: Damon Knight and Jack Goodman.

Knight's exact influence is somewhat clouded — there are conflicting versions of events, but here are the basic facts: At the time Knight was not the famous critic he is best known as today, but just another SF fan. After reading the serial version, he sharpened his teeth on it in a scathing book review he wrote in a 1945 issue of the fanzine *Destiny's Child*. This fanzine had very small circulation, perhaps a hundred copies. Later, in 1956, he wrote an expanded and altered review (included in *In Search of Wonder*) which accounted for the alterations van Vogt did in the 1948 book version.

The importance of the original *Destiny's Child* review seems to have been greatly exaggerated in retrospect. Algis Budrys said — and others obligingly echo this sentiment — that it helped create Knight's reputation in the field as a fiercely opinionated critic (generally considered the beginning of his career) and brought about van Vogt's "destruction" as a writer. Van Vogt's response to Knight's review was later published in the same fanzine, and he predicted a fine career ahead for Knight. So clearly this review did influence the 1948 rewrite, but in his introduction to the 1970 revision of *World*, van Vogt states quite clearly that he is "now" (1970) making alterations because of Knight's criticisms. Yet things do not quite add up here: Since the 1970 revision merely added three minor passages, his rationalization that he was doing this in response to Knight's criticisms doesn't make much sense. If this introduction were written about the 1948 version there would be no problem, so perhaps van Vogt was referring to the post-magazine version(s) in general.

Jack Goodman, on the other hand, was editor of Simon & Schuster, and it was his decision to publish *World* as the first hardback SF novel printed by a major publisher after the Second World War, and as such was for many in the general public the first SF novel they ever read. Jack Goodman had been an English major in college and as a result requested many changes in the writing style from the original magazine version. Van Vogt followed these suggestions, and also took this opportunity to do some alterations of his own in re-

sponse to Knight's criticisms. The 1948 version is therefore very different than the serial in three major respects: plot, style, and characterization.

I will discuss these differences shortly, but first must address the third version of the novel. Van Vogt again revised the novel in 1970, but this was in essence only a slightly corrected version of the 1948 edition, adding two short scenes and slightly expanding the climactic final scene.

Hence the title of this study: *The Three Worlds of Null-A*. Rather than being a study of the Null-A trilogy — *The World of Null-A*, *The Players of Null-A*, and *Null-A Three* — it sets out to analyze and compare the three versions of the first novel in the series.

The 1945 version has never been reprinted, so first-hand knowledge of the original text is extremely rare. For over 50 years historians of the genre, as well as critics and readers, have relied almost entirely on Knight's youthful expression of contempt for the serialized version to characterize this novel — perhaps the most significant SF novel of the 1940s. There have been other voices, including Philip K. Dick, who felt Knight had missed the point because he was looking at the novel like a "building inspector." Unfortunately, Knight's description of van Vogt as "a pygmy writer at giant typewriter," and Algis Budry's trumpeting of Knight's single-handed "destruction" of van Vogt have firmly entered into sci-fi mythology.

The majority of *Astounding* readers admired the book — though some found it slightly confusing, largely due to the then-revolutionary lack of explaining everything at the end and tying up all the loose ends. Campbell even went so far as to call it a "once-in-a-decade classic." The 1948 version was even more popular — it won the 1948 Manuscripters' Club Award, and is credited with "single-handedly creating the French science fiction market" — for quite a while he was the most popular and often-reprinted SF author in France. Count Alfred Korzybski, the originator of General Semantics (which featured so heavily in *World*) permitted himself to be photographed reading the novel, and the Institute still offers for sale the first two Null-A novels, which helped draw attention to Korzybski's work.

For years I've been collecting various editions of van Vogt's books, as well as buying some issues of these old magazines. I've had the issues containing the three installments of the serial for quite some time, and have always wanted to do a careful plot comparison of the three versions — the original 1945 serial, the 1948 rewrite, and the 1970 revision. I shortly realized that such a project would be of great value to other readers of van Vogt who are unable to acquire the serial for themselves, as well as being valuable to SF historians and textual analysts.

## NOTES ON EDITIONS

One of van Vogt's most popular novels, *The World of Null-A* has been printed in about ten different editions in English, and in over a dozen foreign languages. Below is a list of the English-language editions.

### **1 — Simon & Schuster — 1948, hardcover — at least 3 printings**

Printed as *The World of Â*

This was the first edition of the rewritten version, as well as having the noble distinction of being the first SF hardcover put out by a major publisher after the Second World War. It includes the special Â character throughout. Arabic numerals are used for chapter numbers.

### **2 — Grosset and Dunlap — 1950, hardcover — 1 printing?**

Printed as *The World of Â*

The first British edition, it reproduces the 1948 Simon & Schuster text exactly. Also contains a foreword by Groff Conklin.

### **3 — Ace Double — 1953, paperback — 1 printing?**

Printed as *The World of Null-A*

Dos-a-dos with *The Universe Maker*

Contains the 1948 text, but eliminates Â from the title as well as from the main text, using -A instead. Special characters cost extra to produce, and Donald Wolheim decided on substitution as a cost-saving measure. Arabic numerals are used for chapter numbers.

### **4 — Simon & Schuster — 1959, in the omnibus *Triad* — 1 printing?**

Printed as *The World of Â*

Omnibus, printed with *The Voyage of the Space Beagle* and *Slan*

Reproduces the 1948 Simon & Schuster text exactly.

### **5 — Ace — 1964, paperback — 1 printing?**

Printed as *The World of Null-A*

Contains the 1948 text, but *not* identical to the 1953 Ace edition: it uses

*null-A* instead of *-A*, and uses Roman numerals instead of Arabic for the chapter numbers. There are also a few different but minor formatting conventions.

**6 — Dobson — 1970, hardback — 1 printing?**

Printed as *The World of Null-A*

The second British edition, I believe this to have been printed from the Grosset and Dunlap plates, but have been unable to confirm this. Contains the same foreword by Groff Conklin.

**7 — Berkley — 1970, paperback — 8 printings, some under the Medallion imprint**

Printed as *The World of Null-A*

This contains a slight revision of the 1948 version and adds an introduction by van Vogt.

**8 — Sphere — 1971, paperback — at least 6 printings**

Printed as *The World of Null-A*

This is the first British paperback edition. I have been unable to determine which text this reproduces, but it is most likely the 1970 text.

**9 — Easton Press — 1988, hardcover — several printings**

Printed as *The World of Null-A*

This contains the 1948 Simon & Schuster text, along with an introduction by James Gunn unique to this edition.

**10 — Ariel — 1990, softcover — unknown number of printings**

Printed as *The World of Null-A*

This is the 1970 text, and reproduces the introduction from the Berkley edition. Best known as the edition sold most often by the Institute of General Semantics.

**11 — Orb / Tor — 2002, softcover — at least 1 printing**

Printed as *The World of Null-A*

Oddly, this is an exact duplicate of the 1948 Simon & Schuster text, right down to the typos, though it has been set in a new typeface. So don't expect to find the description of the terraforming of Venus in this edition.

## PLOT SECTIONS

Since a significant part of the rewrite was the division of the text into a larger number of smaller chapters, to ease side-by-side comparison I have divided the plot of the novel into 25 Plot Sections. Below is a chart showing which chapters constitute which Sections in both Text 45 (left column) and Text 48/70 (right column). While the Section number often coincides with the same-numbered chapter in the serial, this is not always the case.

Throughout this document, Roman numerals (I, II, III, etc.) are used to specifically refer to chapters in the 1945 serial, and Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.) to specifically refer to chapters in the 1948/70 revision. The term "Section" is used to refer to a plot segment, regardless of the respective versions' actual chapter divisions.

### SECTION — TEXT 45 CHAPTER . . . . .TEXT 48/70 CHAPTER

#1 — I . . . . .	1
#2 — II . . . . .	2
#3 — III . . . . .	3
#4 — IV . . . . .	4
#5 — V . . . . .	5
#6 — VI . . . . .	6, 7, (start 8)
#7 — VII . . . . .	(end 8), 9
#8 — VIII . . . . .	10
#9 — (Part 2 summary), (start IX) . . . . .	11
#10 — (end IX) . . . . .	12, 13, 14
#11 — X, XI . . . . .	15, 16, 17
#12 — XII . . . . .	18, 19
#13 — XIII . . . . .	20
#14 — XIV . . . . .	21
#15 — XV . . . . .	22
#16 — (Part 3 summary), XVI . . . . .	23, 24
#17 — XVII . . . . .	25
#18 — (start XVIII) . . . . .	(start 26)
#19 — (end XVIII) . . . . .	27
#20 — (start XIX) . . . . .	(—)
#21 — (end XIX), XX . . . . .	(end 26), 28, 29, (start 30)
#22 — (start XXI) . . . . .	(end 30), 31
#23 — (end XXI) . . . . .	32
#24 — (—) . . . . .	33
#25 — XXII . . . . .	34, 35

## WORD-COUNTS

### 1945 SERIAL TEXT

The magazine version is appreciably longer than the revised versions. Below is the length of each chapter in the serial, along with scene breakdowns.

The word count represents the actual number of words — not calculated, as periodicals usually do, as 6.5 letters and/or spaces equaling one word. In Chapter IX, for example, there are 5,104 words and 28,851 characters. That means that van Vogt's words are about 5.7 characters long (including spaces); or looked at from the standard of 6.5 characters equal one word, the chapter would only be 4,439 words long.

Included in the word count are the titles "Synopsis" (twice); the introductory quotations; initials count as words (H.W. is two words).

Not counted as words are dashes; the Roman numeral chapter titles; "[Part II]" or "Part III"; or the editorial copy before each installment.

Van Vogt's use of scenes may represent "compositional" units at least as much as reading units. In the book versions, all scene divisions are gone. If revision can eliminate scenes, that's an indication that scenes may represent van Vogt's initial writing out of his ideas — what he wrote in one session when he sat at the typewriter. (The no-look-back prose styling evident in places is also an indication of straight from the typewriter, unrevised copy.) There may be another reason the scene breaks are gone, but elimination of breaks is consistent with the merging of paragraphs in the revision.

1945 ASF Serial  
Total word count: **78,370**

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Words</u>	<u>Scenes</u>	<u>Scene Counts</u>
I —	2,354	3 scenes	/865/858/631/
II —	2,950	3 scenes	/1422/731/797/
III —	4,027	6 scenes	/595/416/769/778/684/785/
IV —	4,557	7 scenes	/855/706/775/576/463/563/619/
V —	1,817	2 scenes	/851/966/
VI —	4,873	5 scenes	/863/918/830/1230/1032/
VII —	3,684	5 scenes	/723/1022/723/554/662/

VIII —	3,622	7 scenes	/601/797/225/117/693/736/453/
Synopsis 1 —	649		
IX —	5,104	8 scenes	/885/640/398/504/909/360/643/765/
X —	1,972	3 scenes	/741/238/993/
XI —	5,294	8 scenes	/948/591/1003/809/479/314/124/1026/
XII —	2,673	5 scenes	/591/323/738/613/408/
XIII —	3,661	5 scenes	/818/552/524/972/795/
XIV —	2,074	3 scenes	/492/667/915/
XV —	1,491	2 scenes	/762/729/
Synopsis 2 —	1,057		
XVI —	4,169	3 scenes	/707/1895/1567/
XVII —	3,335	5 scenes	/699/813/877/390/556/
XVIII —	4,919	7 scenes	/813/894/1667/507/179/161/698/
XIX —	3,115	6 scenes	/421/522/457/573/378/764/
XX —	4,537	5 scenes	/723/744/994/1263/813/
XXI —	2,193	3 scenes	/716/770/707/
XXII —	4,243	6 scenes	/806/741/213/814/812/857/

107 scenes in 22 chapters + two synopses (1,706 words)

76,664 words in the scenes (average of 716 words per scene)

$$76,664 / 107 = 716.48598131$$

The average scene length of 716 words is 10.5% short of van Vogt's "magical" 800 word scene.

## 1948 / 1970 TEXT

The rewrite has been trimmed considerably. Although scene breaks have been eliminated, the novel has been split into a greater number of shorter chapters.

The same criteria for counting words in the serial has been used here.

The 1970 Berkley edition has 351 words more than the 1948 S&S — this includes new material, as well as the deletion of one sentence

1948 S&S Text  
Total word count: **63,852**

1970 Berkley Text  
Total word count: **64,203**

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Berkley Word-count</u>	<u>[Simon &amp; Schuster Word-count]</u>
1 —	2,113	
2 —	3,028	
3 —	3,383	[S&S = 3,400]
4 —	3,366	
5 —	1,770	
6 —	2,070	
7 —	1,226	
8 —	2,328	
9 —	1,283	
10 —	2,056	[S&S = 1,957]
11 —	1,343	
12 —	2,647	
13 —	1,346	
14 —	1,247	
15 —	2,402	
16 —	1,707	
17 —	1,759	
18 —	986	
19 —	1,216	
20 —	2,113	
21 —	1,737	
22 —	1,257	
23 —	2,346	
24 —	830	[S&S = 714]
25 —	2,643	
26 —	2,385	
27 —	841	

28 —	1,466	
29 —	2,619	
30 —	807	
31 —	1,340	
32 —	933	
33 —	2,056	
34 —	1,794	
35 —	1,752	[S&S = 1,599]

Adding the 35 chapter totals together yields 64,195 words.

The title and author's name (*The World of Null-A*, A. E. van Vogt) equals eight more words; so the super grand total would actually be 64,203.

That compares with 76,664 words in the 22 chapters of the serial. (that's not counting the two synopses, or the title and author's name.)

There are 12,469 fewer words in Berkley than ASF (not counting the Berkley intro, or the ASF synopses):

$$76,664 - 64,195 = 12,469$$

That's a reduction of 16 percent:

$$12,469 / 76,664 = 0.1626447$$

## OVERVIEW

As discussed above, the two main texts are the original 1945 serial and the 1948 Simon & Schuster edition, which in this study are referred to as **Text 45** and **Text 48**, respectively, for the sake of convenience. The 1970 version — which differs so little from Text 48 that they can generally be considered the same — is herein referred to as **Text 70**.

The variations between the three versions are rather interesting. I have outlined below, in general terms, the major differences. For an exhaustively detailed, side-by-side comparison of the three versions' plots, consult the synopses which constitute the bulk of this study.

### POINT OF VIEW

Both versions — Text 45 and Text 48/70 — are narrated in the third person from Gosseyn's point of view. All but one short scene (Section #19) are shown through Gosseyn's eyes, and present facts that have been directly communicated to him.

### WRITING STYLE

The serial is longer than the rewrite by several thousand words, due mainly to the greater amount of descriptive detail. Text 45 takes its time in describing things, while Text 48 always seems to be in a hurry to get to the next scene — much trimming has been done to tighten almost every paragraph. Much of this material was Gosseyn's private thoughts (for details, read on), but there is also a great deal of wordage devoted to describing the jungles of Venus, the ruins of the Machine, and so on, that is absent in Text 48/70.

### CHARACTERIZATION

Perhaps the greatest alterations were done to the characters, three in particular:

#### **GOSSEYN — TEXT 45**

The original serial's outstanding attribute is undoubtedly the way in which the reader is almost constantly privy to Gosseyn's private thoughts. The accumulated volume of such material literally adds up to thousands of words, and presents him as a very ordinary and approachable character, an ordinary man

who discovers he has extraordinary origins and abilities, caught up in the heart of an interstellar conflict. He is plagued with doubts and secret fears after being confronted with his false memories and strange superhuman traits, as any normal man would in such a situation. Although this makes the reader feel as if he is Gosseyn — a laudable achievement in any book — it was criticized as being unrealistic

#### **GOSSEYN — TEXT 48**

In stark contrast with Text 45, the rewrite's characterization of Gosseyn is far less detailed, though perhaps somewhat more realistic. Most noticeably there are far fewer instances where his inner thoughts, doubts, and rationalizations are revealed to the reader, presenting him as a more decisive, confident, and stronger man, who finds himself able to deal with the extraordinary situations at hand. This is more in keeping with someone with intensive null-A training — one of Knight's major criticisms of the serial, a criticism shared by many others, was that this thought-clarifying discipline apparently had no effect in clearing away Gosseyn's mental clutter; that he wandered around in an amnesiac daze, stumbling from one encounter to the next, as a hapless, clueless pawn. Therefore, in the rewrite Gosseyn is always on top of things, ready to take control of the situation.

#### **PATRICIA HARDIE — TEXT 45**

In the serial, Patricia is a far more mysterious character who seems to have the same origins as Gosseyn, and in both versions he has a false memory of having been married to her. One of her main roles is to repeatedly reveal to Gosseyn the "truth" behind everything, only to later admit it was a lie and provide a new explanation. During the course of the novel she offers no fewer than three mutually exclusive explanations of Gosseyn's origins and her own, each of which is contradicted by the next, and all are shown to be untrue if Professor Lavoisseur's explanation at the end is to be believed. Patricia is therefore a very difficult character to get a grasp on — she starts out as President Hardie's neurotic daughter, disguised as an average girl by the gang to manipulate Gosseyn. She is later revealed to be an adept null-A and claims that she is an amnesiac like Gosseyn, and was used by her pretend father, Hardie, to carry out the "invisible chess player's" instructions while ostensibly doing the gang's bidding. And finally, a third version of events is produced: She and Gosseyn were an elderly couple — Patricia died in a plane crash and the distraught Gosseyn was approached by Professor Lavoisseur to participate in his experiments in duplication and plans to obstruct the Greatest Empire's activities. Patricia was "brought back to life" by means of this process, and Gosseyn was

grown a new, young body, but with his memories erased. But even this is shown to be untrue when it is revealed at the end of the novel that Gosseyn is in fact a duplicate of Lavoisseur himself. It is this constant presentation and elimination of explanation after explanation, with no definitive conclusion, that left many readers of the serial dissatisfied.

#### **PATRICIA HARDIE — TEXT 48**

Perhaps with good reason, the character of Patricia was almost totally re-done. She plays a more straightforward role in the proceedings — first disguised as Teresa Clark to bring him into the gang's sphere of influence (as in the serial), then freeing Gosseyn from the gang's steel dungeon and letting him hide in her room. In this new version, she is romantically involved with the double-agent Crang, which causes Gosseyn occasional pangs of jealousy (as in the serial, he has a false memory of her being his wife). There is no long parade of nonsensical, contradictory explanations here — she is Hardie's daughter, and like her father rebelled against null-A for the perceived injustices the Machine caused through the Games. It is Crang who eventually recruited her to null-A, and together they used their influence to infiltrate the Greatest Empire's control centers.

#### **CRANG — TEXT 45**

In the serial, Crang is all villain — having failed at the Games, he let his bitterness consume him and has devoted his life to the destruction of null-A. Apart from capturing Gosseyn on Venus and taking him to Earth, Crang's part is a minor one, having the role of a henchman.

#### **CRANG — TEXT 48**

The alterations to Crang's character were even more drastic than to Patricia's — here is an adept null-A and brilliant double-agent. And yet he remains mainly a background character, his actions reported to the reader through Patricia's explanations to Gosseyn. He is ruthless and capable, subtly manipulating his (supposed) superior Thorson to his own ends.

## PLOT

Here I will discuss the more interesting and major differences between the two main versions, Text 45 and Text 48. For a complete run-down of *all* differences, consult the synopses (beginning on page 25).

### Section #1

Apart from trimming down descriptive details for Text 48, Van had a minor incident in the original that is entirely left out of the rewrite. When the boy comes into his room to remind him of the meeting, as a defensive measure during the policeless period Gosseyn activates a device on his belt which blocks the effect of energy weapons, but still leaves him vulnerable to bullets. It is mentioned only once more in the serial, when Gosseyn is escorting Teresa Clark through the streets, then evidently forgotten about by the author.

### Section #2

It is a common belief that for the Simon & Schuster version, Goodman insisted on passages being taken out that discussed General Semantics. This is untrue, however. For the 1948 version Van added new material that far better explains null-A and the concepts surrounding it than was in the original. This is especially apparent where Gosseyn goes into a detailed explanation of null-A for Teresa's benefit, whereas in the original he merely agrees to do so later (which he never does).

Also, Text 48 gives at least a passing familiarity with the name "Lavoisseur," who he is, and the accident he suffered.

### Section #3

As mentioned above, Gosseyn is a far more confident man in the rewritten version. An example of this is when he is worrying about how the Machine will react to the knowledge that he has amnesia and does not know his true identity. In the original, he merely worries; in the rewrite, he thinks his reasons for worrying through, and concludes that it will allow him to participate in the Games since it will verify with a lie detector that he is not being deceitful.

In Text 45, the Machine stipulates that he discover his true identity within 15 days, or it will not allow him to continue the Games. This soon becomes a moot point, however, since he is unexpectedly killed shortly thereafter and finds himself on Venus.

#### Section #4

The car trip to the subterranean carpark below the Palace is far longer in the original than in the rewrite. It consists of Gosseyn studying his captors, trying to deduce their identities and purpose, reflecting on what has happened thus far, and planning his next moves. Once they reach their destination, in Text 45 Patricia goes straight into the building, while in Text 48 she takes a moment to talk with Gosseyn. There is also more discussion between Gosseyn and Thorson, including a lengthy paragraph describing Gosseyn's shock at hearing null-A derided.

But easily the most significant difference is that in the original, Gosseyn is told by X what the gang knows of his true identity. Interestingly, this information is held back from the reader, perhaps to better make the reader identify with Gosseyn when, after finding himself in a new body on Venus, he cannot recall what X had told him. (Later on, it is revealed that this explanation was in fact false and therefore Lavoisseur kept it out of the mind of Gosseyn II.)

#### Section #5

Up to this point in the story, the differences are minor. With this section — where Gosseyn is kept prisoner in the steel dungeon, escapes, and is killed — versions of events begins to seriously diverge.

In the original, Gosseyn's extra-brain abilities show their first sign of activity when he subconsciously frees himself from the manacles. A guard looks in on him, notices he is free and calls for Thorson. They restrain him again, more thoroughly this time, and Thorson begins to run tortuous tests on Gosseyn — he blacks out, awakening to find he has somehow escaped from the cell completely, and is able to walk through walls in the Palace. Patricia subtly tries to lure him to her room, but doubting her motives he leaves the Palace, is hunted down and killed.

In the rewrite, Gosseyn remains restrained until Patricia comes and releases him. Then there is a scene of boudoir shenanigans as he hides in her bedroom while she and her secret-agent boyfriend Crang discuss matters of interstellar intrigue, where the true nature of the gang — a mere appendage of the Greatest Empire — is hinted at. A man named Prescott is also mentioned, an agent of the gang disguised as a null-A on Venus. Afraid of discovery, Gosseyn leaves the Palace, is hunted down and killed.

#### Section #6

In the original, Gosseyn awakens from his death experience to find he is in a

hospital on Venus. The couple who run the place discuss the death sentence on his head for being there illegally. He assaults and restrains the couple and gets information from them about his surroundings and situation. After telling them all he can remember about his time on Earth, he leaves the hospital and begins his long trek into the forest.

In the rewrite, he awakens outdoors, near the hospital. A couple runs the place, and he recognizes the man's name, Prescott, as being a gang spy. He restrains the couple, intending to learn information from them. He tells the couple his story, believing the woman to be ignorant of her husband's true nature. He then leaves the hospital and begins his trek into the forest.

One interesting discrepancy within the original involves a duplicate of the Games Machine on Venus. Here in Section #6 the doctors mention that Gosseyn's unconscious body was found near the Venusian Machine, but later on in the story a Venusian scientist talks about how they were unable to create another Machine on Venus.

### Section #7

In the original, Gosseyn travels through the jungle for two weeks, eventually being captured by a roboplane sent by the Machine. In the rewrite Gosseyn is captured by the roboplane mere minutes after leaving the hospital — another example of how the plot was tightened up considerably. While he's on board the plane in the serial, there is a great deal of introspection and planning that is absent from the rewrite, showing again the large amount of editing done of Gosseyn's private thoughts and anxieties.

The plane explains to him that it is going to deposit him near the house of a gang agent masquerading as a null-A detective. In the serial, much emphasis is placed on "alien involvement" with the gang, the source of which lies somewhere in the house. The rewrite expunged this entire plot strand, and with good reason — the serial did a poor job of following up on this, and led to the inclusion of many scenes that were misleading.

### Section #8

In the original, Gosseyn has to walk through the rain in the dark for several minutes before stumbling upon Crang's treehouse, as opposed to the plane landing right near the house in the rewrite. The serial also contains a delightful passage that conveys Gosseyn's excitement caused by coming across the library while exploring the house.

In the serial, the book of Venusian history contains more hints at an (ultimately erroneous) alien presence on Venus. The 1948 version eliminates this. The 1970 version adds a brief passage about how Venus was terraformed

— in the 45 and 48 texts, Venus was naturally hospitable.

Tying in with the alien involvement plot strand present in the serial, there is a lengthy sequences in which Gosseyn dreams of inconceivably alien beings coming to earth from the interstellar void — he dismisses this as his imagination running away, but van Vogt still puts the idea forward for the readers to interpret as foreshadowing of future events. This is unfortunate, since the dream was indeed nothing more than his imagination.

In the rewrite, Gosseyn is at Crang's house for one day longer before exploring the tunnel.

### Section #9

Again, the various slabs of narrative contain more introspection and speculation on Gosseyn's part.

### Section #10

Crang and Gosseyn have longer conversations in the original. On the other hand, the rewrite introduces a very long series of whispered meetings with various gang members, each of whom has a secret agenda, rather like in the boudoir scene in Section #5. Another key difference between Text 45 and 48: the rewrite has much more political intrigue, intended no doubt to show the instability of unintegrated men and women wielding power.

### Section #11

In the original, Gosseyn's immunity to the Drae sleeping powder is apparently due to his latent superhuman abilities, tying in with his incredible escape from the Palace in Scene #5. In the rewrite, both of these instances of his unusual abilities kicking in during times of emergency were eliminated; in this case, Prescott had given him an antidote pill in Section #10.

Another important difference between the two versions is in Text 45, Gosseyn continues to believe Prescott to be a wholly genuine Venusian; in Text 48, he knows he is a double agent and is suspicious of his true loyalties.

The serial contains an interesting surveillance device that transmits the intonations of words while obscuring the words themselves — respecting the privacy of conversations while being able to detect moods and, most importantly, threats.

In the serial, Prescott leaves the house twice to check in with the gang men outside, without Kair or Gosseyn suspecting anything is awry. The rewrite is more credible — Prescott does not leave the house but maintained contact

through some other, unrevealed, method.

### Section #12

Gosseyn and Kair's conversation in the original is longer than in the rewrite. In the rewrite, Crang's role as secret null-A continues to develop, in contrast with his minor role as a straight villain in the original.

### Section #13

The conversation between Gosseyn and the Machine in the serial differs considerably from the rewrite.

A scene is present in the original that was eliminated from the rewrite. Gosseyn returns to the vacant lot where he and Teresa/Patricia slept that first night. He sets up a system to alert him of any approach, and is surprised when Patricia shows up, trying to kill him. There is a lengthy conversation then, and she reveals that she is neither Hardie's daughter nor part of the gang, but in fact an amnesiac like him. She also makes many, similarly-unbelievable claims, such as the Machine is behind the conspiracy against itself, all of which he verifies with a lie detector. They arrange to meet the next day at the Palace.

In the rewrite, he calls her and arranges the meeting, and all the crazy, confusing business about her amnesia and the Machine's plot are deleted.

### Section #14

In the original, the sub-plot begun in Section #4 about Gosseyn being told of his true identity is confirmed to have been a lie, created by the off-world gang leaders to deceive the Earth men among their ranks. Also, the alien sub-plot is further toned down when Gosseyn realizes the Distorter is the product of a human civilization.

### Section #15

This section is pretty much the same in both versions. The only main difference is that in the original the Machine says Gosseyn's third body was "accidentally" destroyed — later it is revealed it was destroyed during the indiscriminate bombing of the City; in the rewrite the body was destroyed when the gang's men tried to open its case, only to find it was booby-trapped.

## Section #16

In the serial, Patricia admits that what she told him at the end of Section #13 were in fact lies, and the lie detector's results were falsified by the "invisible chess player" who, like the Distorter, has the ability to manipulate machines from a distance.

The major difference concerns Patricia's character — in the serial, she really is Gosseyn's wife, while in the rewrite she is not, involved rather with Crang.

There is also much more introspection in the original, as he mulls over what has happened so far and wonders what to do next. All conversations are also longer and more detailed, while the rewrite compressed things considerably.

Text 70 adds a short passage discussing the importance of memory. The more confident nature of Gosseyn's character is contrasted between Text 45 and 48: when his time is up in the serial, he "sighed like a sick man at the realization of the time that had passed" — Text 48/70 instead has him "sigh with excitement at the realization that the time for action had come."

## Section #17

The ruins of the Machine are described in more emotional terms in the serial, and there is more chatter between Gosseyn and Lyttle, as well as more introspection.

## Section #18

Gosseyn's reaction is more calm and thoughtful in the rewrite after being transported unexpectedly to Venus. In the serial there is a great deal of nervous thinking on his part, as well as speculation and near-panic.

The elevator in the serial is a normal elevator; in the rewrite, it functions rather like a Distorter, with tubes instead of a lever, transporting instantaneously from one place to another.

Gosseyn briefly meets Blayney again, the man who hit him in Section #9 — he lets Blayney live and escape.

## Section #19

This is basically the same in both versions.

## Section #20

By far the most important difference between the two versions is the inclusion in the original of a whole chapter and a half — constituting this Section, #20 — the events in which are totally absent from Text 48/70:

After letting Blayne go, Gosseyn is captured by the Venusians, whom he tells his story. It is here that the discrepancy within the serial appears regarding the duplicate Machine on Venus — it is stated as existing in Section #6, while here the Venusians explain how they were unable to build another Machine there once they discovered the one on Earth was created using techniques unavailable to those on Earth and Venus, indicating it was built based on alien (non-terrestrial) science.

For a few weeks they undergo various exercises to train his extra-brain. (The chunk of text describing the exercise with the two wooden blocks was re-used in a new context of the rewrite, in Section #22.) There are no results from these attempts, and they eventually return to the tree to collect the Distorter.

## Section #21

In the serial, Gosseyn explores the room beneath the trap door more thoroughly, being alone for several minutes before Thorson enters. In the rewrite, Gosseyn is no sooner on his feet than Thorson appears.

Their conversation also diverges considerably. The serial has Thorson explaining numerous background details and his quest for immortality, the possibility of which has been proved by Gosseyn's rebirth in a new body.

In the rewrite, Thorson demonstrates to Gosseyn how the Venusians have defeated the invading army.

The serial also deals with the increasing number of mentally retarded people in the galaxy and the Greatest Empire's attempt to eradicate them and later use them as workers after giving them basic null-A training. This very strange chunk of material was completely left out of the rewrite.

## Section #22

Text 45 further develops the peculiar relationship between Gosseyn and Patricia, and yet again gives a new explanation of exactly who she is. Their conversation consists largely of this new explanation. In the rewrite, Patricia fills Gosseyn in on the background of the Greatest Empire, the gang, Professor Lavoisseur, and Crang.

### Section #23

Gosseyn's more confident nature in the rewrite is yet again illustrated by his decision to act on his own, resulting in the events of Section #24.

### Section #24

Gosseyn attempts to escape, using his newly developed extra-brain. He stops before succeeding, after Patricia tells him of Crang's grander plan, which his escape would make impossible. This section is wholly absent from the serial.

### Section #25

The climax is longer in Text 45 — the Institute is thoroughly search, and they find several agents of the Galactic League. They eventually find Professor Lavoiseur, who explains the entire duplication process to Thorson and Gosseyn. Together, Lavoiseur and Gosseyn kills the gang men, mortally wounding the Professor in the process. Gosseyn reads the dead man's mind to learn as much as he can.

Text 48 places all the explanations at the very end, when Gosseyn reads the dead Professor's mind. Text 70 introduces several ambiguous and downright cryptic sentences that compound the confusion — this is perhaps intentional, emphasizing that the mind being read is in the process of dying and therefore jumbled.

## FORMAT AND COLOR-CODING

The synopsis of Text 45 is given in the left column, and of Text 48/70 in the right. Color coding is used to indicate differences in plot between the 1945, 1948, and 1970 versions. Four colors are used, which have the following functions:

**Black** indicates plot elements common to *all* 3 versions — 1945, 1948, & 1970

**Red** indicates plot elements unique to the original **1945** text

**Blue** indicates plot elements common to *both* the **1948** text *and* the **1970** text

**Green** indicates plot elements unique to the **1970** text

The distinction between Blue and Green is a subtle one, which hopefully will not cause confusion. The 1970 text is to all intents and purposes identical to the 1948 text. The two differ only in the following ways (side-by-side excerpts from the relevant passages can be read [elsewhere](#) on my site):

(1) The 1970 text adds a new introduction by van Vogt, relating the history of the novel as well as readers' and critics' responses to it, also giving his reasons for revising it.

(2) The 1970 text includes a new scene describing the terraforming of Venus, in Chapter 10.

(3) The 1970 text includes a more detailed discussion of memory replication at the end of Chapter 24.

(4) The 1970 text adds a number of ambiguous passages at the end of Chapter 35 during the scene where Gosseyn is communicating with Lavois-seur's dying brain.

(5) The 1970 text eliminates all special characters:  $\hat{A}$  is throughout replaced by the phonetic *null-A*. The elimination of the special null-A grapheme (capital A with a bar over it, which was designed by Korzybski for *Science and Sanity*) originated in the 1953 Ace edition, as a cost-saving measure by Donald Wolheim. Both the 1945 and 1948 texts use both  $\hat{A}$  and *null-A*. Because of such difficulties, in all editions prior to 1964 the sentence in Chapter 3 discussing the various symbols and terms for null-A is slightly longer. The 2001 Tor edition of

the novel reproduces the 1948 text exactly, so contains special characters.

Since this is a comparative synopsis of *World*, rather than a straightforward summary, the plot is explained in far greater detail than is the case with the other summaries I've done ([Renaissance](#), [Ghor](#), [Kin-Slayer](#), etc.).

Also, to make it easy to read the synopsis of only one version — either Text 45 or Text 48 — plot elements to both versions are present in both columns. So, due to the greater detail and duplication, this study is itself book-length.

Where a scene has been rewritten in the original texts, I try to reflect this by summarizing them using different words. Also, although the two scenes may be virtually identical, they have been color-coded to indicate a change has been made. I have attempted to align such scenes for easier comparison.

A number sign (<#>) is used to indicate a scene or chunk of text present in one version that has been used in the other, but in a different *place* in the story. Also, I often include a brief note to explain the shift. The <#> can be clicked on — this will take you to the scene's occurrence in the other version.

Throughout, Roman numerals (I, II, III, etc.) are used to specifically refer to chapters in the 1945 serial, and Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.) to specifically refer to chapters in the 1948/70 revision. The term "Section" is used to refer to a plot segment (explained above), regardless of the respective versions' actual chapter divisions.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A project of this size was very difficult to finish, especially over the ten-month period it has taken. Were it not for the following people, it would have, in all likelihood, never been completed:

First and foremost, I'd like to convey my sincerest gratitude to my semi-collaborator on this project, Michael McKinney, who functioned as my editor. He offered many excellent suggestions and contributions (including the amazing word-count comparisons), pointed out faults and flaws, and helped in many other ways too numerous to list. Your support has been invaluable.

Tawn, Guy, and Kelvin — you three gave me a *very* good reason to keep going when I (repeatedly) got sick to death of the project and felt like locking myself in a cupboard whenever the word "Null-A" came across my mind.

Hal Drake has also been an encouragement — it was always nice to know a serious academic was interested!

I'd also like to thank my brother Elijah and my friend Daniel Routh — you both displayed sustained, polite interest in the project even when it was quite clear you had no idea what I was talking about. Explaining it to you helped me write the Introduction.

## SECTION #1

Synopsis of Text 45

### *Chapter I*

In the year 2650, a man named Gilbert Gosseyn visits the City of the Machine for the month-long period in which tests are given to determine a person's abilities in General Semantics, and rewards given accordingly. Government positions are given to talented individuals, but the top reward is the privilege to live on Venus, an entire society built solely on the principles of sanity as outlined by General Semantics. During this one-month period, however, the city of the Machine will go without police protection, so the city's populace must cluster together into self-formed protective groups.

Gosseyn is enjoying the view out his hotel-room window and missing his recently deceased wife Patricia when a boy comes into the room. **Gosseyn instinctively activates a shield on his belt which protects him from energy weapons, but not from bullets.**

The boy has come to remind him that the hotel's other occupants are beginning their first group meeting. On his way to the meeting room, Gosseyn recognizes a storekeeper from his small hometown of Cress Village in **California**, but the man does not seem to recognize him. Gosseyn soon dismisses the incident from his mind. In the gathering room, he gives his name and hometown to the group's doorkeeper.

Synopsis of Text 48/70

### *Chapter 1*

In the year 2650, a man named Gilbert Gosseyn visits the City of the Machine for the month-long period in which tests are given to determine a person's abilities in General Semantics, and rewards given accordingly. Government positions are given to talented individuals, but the top reward is the privilege to live on Venus, an entire society built solely on the principles of sanity as outlined by General Semantics. During this one-month period, however, the city of the Machine will go without police protection, so the city's populace must cluster together into self-formed protective groups.

Gosseyn is enjoying the view out his hotel-room window and missing his recently deceased wife Patricia when a boy comes into the room.

The boy has come to remind him that the hotel's other occupants are beginning their first group meeting. On his way to the meeting room, Gosseyn recognizes a storekeeper from his small hometown of Cress Village in **Florida**, but the man does not seem to recognize him. Gosseyn soon dismisses the incident from his mind. In the gathering room, he gives his name and hometown to the group's doorkeeper.

The meeting begins and the group leader outlines the basic principles and procedures of their protective group, including the ability of anyone to challenge anyone else's right to be in the group — this way, they can reject anyone who may pose a danger.

The storekeeper immediately denounces Gosseyn as a liar; Cress Village is very small and everyone knows everyone else, and Gosseyn is unknown to him. Gosseyn tries to refute him with details about the village, including a reference to his late wife Patricia who lives in a curious house near the man's store. But the man derides Gosseyn's claims, and points out that the house belongs to the world-famous Hardie family, and that Patricia Hardie is neither dead nor married.

Gosseyn decides to let the hotel's lie-detector determine who is telling the truth. It reveals that Gosseyn is not who he claims to be, nor has he ever lived in Cress Village, yet it points out that Gosseyn does not consciously know who he really is. According to the rules, Gosseyn is ejected from the protection group. Back in his room he contacts Patricia's house on his videophone, and ends up with her private secretary — something which the Patricia he knew would not need, nor could afford. He is informed that Miss Hardie is not at home but rather currently residing in the Presidential palace in the City of the Machine.

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## SECTION #2

Synopsis of Text 45

### *Chapter II*

Gosseyn walks the streets of the city, unprotected. He considers paying to spend the night in a hotel for the unprotected, but rejects the idea because they are rumored to be unsafe places, and the price is too high. So he wanders on, analyzing his situation. He uses Null-A techniques to help clear his mind and consciously deal with the fact that his memories have been somehow falsified.

As he cautiously walks down the street in the dark, a woman running out of an alley crashes into him. Knowing it could be a trap, Gosseyn restrains and questions her. She claims to have been attempting to evade two men. She explains that she was fired from her job earlier for refusing to become romantically involved with her employer, leading to a lack of funds and being evicted from her apartment that morning, so she is unprotected as he is. They find a vacant lot that looks relatively safe, and choose to spend the night there.

Before going to sleep, they introduce themselves. The woman's name is Teresa Clark, and is a resident of the City. She claims to be ignorant of the whole Null-A philosophy, and asks Gosseyn if he can coach her enough for her to be given a good job.

Synopsis of Text 48/70

### *Chapter 2*

Gosseyn walks the streets of the city, unprotected. He considers paying to spend the night in a hotel for the unprotected, but rejects the idea because they are rumored to be unsafe places, and the price is too high. So he wanders on, analyzing his situation. He uses Null-A techniques to help clear his mind and consciously deal with the fact that his memories have been somehow falsified.

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Before going to sleep, they introduce themselves. The woman's name is Teresa Clark, and is a resident of the City. She claims to be ignorant of the whole Null-A philosophy, and asks Gosseyn if he can coach her enough for her to be given a good job.

He agrees to go over a few basics with her in the morning.

During this conversation, she lets slip that a man named Michael Hardie is President of Earth — the father of the equally famous Patricia Hardie, the woman whom Gosseyn remembers as being his wife before her untimely death. Yet he remembers them as nobodies, not the elite rulers of the planet.

They eventually fall asleep.

Gosseyn wakes up, and Teresa is nowhere to be seen. Relieved to have her gone, he dismisses his earlier suspicions that she was part of an elaborate scheme involving his altered memories.

Gosseyn begins a discussion of cortical and thalamic reactions — cortical being the intellect, and thalamic being emotions. One must strike a balance between the two, use the full potential of both rather than relying entirely on one or the other. An imbalance will result in a neurosis, while a balance will result in a high tolerance for shock and the unexpected — emotional, physical, and intellectual.

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Gosseyn suspects that perhaps it was they who gave him false memories. The discussion of the Hardies brings up the topic of the Semantics building — Teresa mentions that she visited it once and while there she saw the Director, a crippled man named Lavoiseur, whom Gosseyn remembers having been fatally injured in an accident years ago.

They eventually fall asleep.

Gosseyn wakes up, and Teresa is nowhere to be seen. Relieved to have her gone, he dismisses his earlier suspicions that she was part of an elaborate scheme involving his altered memories.

Teresa then emerges from a nearby crowd, carrying breakfast for the two of them. The size and extravagance of the meal tells Gosseyn that she is anything but poor. While eating, he asks her for the name of her boss. She is momentarily taken aback, clearly unprepared for the question, but she rebounds with the comment that she doesn't wish to discuss it. She changes the subject to the topic of the Games: How much will she need to know for the first day? He replies that in his research it shows that mostly preliminaries are conducted: name, cubbyhole assignment, and a test over knowledge of basic Null-A terminology.

During this conversation, she offers him a cigarette from an elaborately hand-crafted bejeweled cigarette case, which Gosseyn estimates to be worth far more than a girl like her could have possibly earned in her lifetime. He chooses not to confront her with this, as she seems oblivious to the blunder she has made. He continues his instruction, and they plan to meet again at the lot that night after the first day of the Games. He is now convinced she is hiding something, and that it is related to his altered memories.

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## SECTION #3

Synopsis of Text 45

### *Chapter III*

Gosseyn and Teresa arrive at the Machine, and he is momentarily taken aback by the magnificence of the structure. He suddenly realizes that the Machine may not allow him to participate in the Games due to his false memories and lack of verifiable identity.

Teresa, oblivious to Gosseyn's problems, reassures him that the sight of the Machine gets everyone off guard the first time. They enter the Machine's lower levels where the tests are administered.

Gosseyn overhears a conversation between two people nearby. A woman expresses her fear about the policeless period **and questions the need for it.**

The man with her replies that it is necessary, as it gives an indication of how far mankind has progressed towards collective sanity, and that on Venus — where only the best-trained Null-A people go — there are no police, **only detectives for special purposes. Gosseyn puts in an encouraging word, but privately figures her to be an amateur and will not get far in the Games.**

Synopsis of Text 48/70

### *Chapter 3*

Gosseyn and Teresa arrive at the Machine, and he is momentarily taken aback by the magnificence of the structure. He suddenly realizes that the Machine may not allow him to participate in the Games due to his false memories and lack of verifiable identity, **but soon reasons that since the lie detector knew he was not being deceitful, the Machine will also understand his predicament.**

Teresa, oblivious to Gosseyn's problems, reassures him that the sight of the Machine gets everyone off guard the first time. They enter the Machine's lower levels where the tests are administered.

Gosseyn overhears a conversation between two people nearby. A woman expresses her fear about the policeless period.

The man with her replies that it is necessary, as it gives an indication of how far mankind has progressed towards collective sanity, and that on Venus — where only the best-trained Null-A people go — there are no police.

Since the test cubicles are arranged alphabetically, Gosseyn and Teresa split up but agree to meet at the vacant lot again that night, and she goes on to the C section. Gosseyn does not immediately proceed to the G section; instead he discretely follows her — she exits the Machine, clearly not intending to undergo the tests. His suspicions are confirmed: Teresa's meeting with him was no accident.

He enters his cubicle, and the Machine asks for his name. It agrees to use that name for him, though it knows it to be false. Gosseyn asks if it knows his true name, but the Machine replies that that information is not in his mind.

# It suggests he visit a psychiatrist, where he can have his cortex scanned.

The Machine then asks him to stop his questions, that it is time for the tests to begin.

Gosseyn passes the first day's thirty-minute test, which simply requires definitions of basic Null-A terms. The Machine announces that over 99 per cent of all who took the test also passed, and wishes all luck for the next day. It then holds a private conversation with Gosseyn. It affirms that the false memories were implanted intentionally, but there is no indication of who put it there.

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# *[This suggestion was placed slightly later in the revision.]*

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The Machine however believes his fixation on Patricia Hardie to be significant. Gosseyn asks if it could be megalomania rather than hypnotism, but the Machine rejects that notion — the idea was definitely hypnotically planted.

It confides in Gosseyn that it has detected strange activities throughout the planet, and that he is at the center of them.

Finally, it sets a limit of fifteen days for Gosseyn to discover his true identity — if he does not find out within that time, he will not be permitted to participate in the Games beyond that point.

Dissatisfied and rather confused, Gosseyn leaves the cubicle and exits the building.

Gosseyn collects himself and reviews his situation: he now has two purposes — to see the psychiatrist and discover his identity before the fifteen day period is up.

He strolls down the main street until the presidential palace comes into sight. This brings the whole puzzle of Patricia Hardie to his mind. Part of the explanation for what has befallen him must lie with the Hardies.

He considers going to the palace and demanding to speak with them, but discards the idea as unrealistic and unwise.

He eats lunch and looks up a famous Null-A psychiatrist, Dr. Enright, in the phone book. Enright had authored many books essential for anyone studying for the Games. Gosseyn goes to his office and makes an appointment for three days later, Enright's earliest opening, and makes a deposit. Slightly disappointed, Gosseyn makes his way back to the vacant lot.

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On his way he sees in the near distance a magnificent car pull up and let Teresa Clark out. To confirm his idea, he asks someone nearby who she is. The man replies that it is Patricia Hardie, the president's daughter and well-known thalamic-driven (irrationally emotional) individual. Gosseyn follows her discretely to the lot, where he watches her for several minutes before revealing his presence. Her constant fidgeting and impatience is a clear indication to him that she has had little or no Null-A training, odd for the daughter of one of the world's most talented and highly-trained Null-A individuals.

He considers making love to her and manipulate her into being loyal to him rather than whoever she is working for, but rejects it as criminal; he refuses to use another person's lack of self-control to his own advantage.

She lies down on the grass, tired, and suddenly notices Gosseyn.

He reviews in his mind the salient points of his dealings with Teresa Clark / Patricia Hardie. He suspects they are tracking him and using her as a means of forcing planned reactions out of him. He decides to play along.

He sits down beside her and begins to explain his entire situation: the false memories, being expelled from his hotel, his conversation with the Machine and so on, but never hinting at his knowledge that she is Patricia.

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She lies down on the grass, tired, and suddenly notices Gosseyn.

He sits down beside her and begins to explain his entire situation: the false memories, being expelled from his hotel, his conversation with the Machine and so on, but never hinting at his knowledge that she is Patricia.

Strangely, her first question is about the psychiatrists on Earth, if they really are all men who have returned from Venus. Bemused and somewhat surprised at her unexpected inquiry, he answers the question in the affirmative. She then asks if he truly has no inkling of who he really is, and asks how he arrived in the Machine's city to begin with. He vividly recalls flying from Cress Village, and having no meal on the plane. During a pause in the conversation, they are suddenly assaulted and abducted by a group of men, who put them both in their large car and drive off. Gosseyn wonders whether they are working for her and acted on her signal, or if they are just normal thugs taking advantage of the policeless period.

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## SECTION #4

Synopsis of Text 45

### *Chapter IV*

Gosseyn and Patricia are being driven to an unknown destination in a convoy consisting of six cars; Gosseyn is in one car, Patricia in another.

Gosseyn rejects the idea of escape as too dangerous and doomed to fail.

He deduces that Patricia is in league with these kidnappers; he is, at least, relieved that they are not in the hands of the one of the street gangs.

Gosseyn analyzes the men in his car to determine their identities and intentions — he comes to the conclusion that some of them are detectives. He tries out his suspicion by trying to provoke a response to his query about on what authority they have captured him. The man tells him it's none of his concern, but then soon after realizes his error and says that he's not been captured on any authority. Gosseyn concludes that they are indeed hired detectives pretending to be members of a street gang.

He thinks back on his capture, and assumes that Patricia had a concealed signaling device that she used to initiate a plan to capture them both under the ruse of a random street gang abduction. Evidently, they are deceiving him because they plan to later release him, allowing Patricia to continue spying on him afterwards.

Synopsis of Text 48/70

### *Chapter 4*

Gosseyn and Patricia are being driven to an unknown destination in a convoy consisting of six cars; Gosseyn is in one car, Patricia in another.

He deduces that Patricia is in league with these kidnappers; he is, at least, relieved that they are not in the hands of the one of the street gangs.

Gosseyn attempts to speak to one of the men, but the man says that they are not authorized to speak with him; Gosseyn then knows that they are not members of a street gang, but part of a greater hierarchical structure.

He's unconcerned about them stealing the possessions on his person, since most of his money is deposited at the hotel. He also reasons that if they learn anything about him based on the items on his person it would be worth it, since he would learn something, however small, of his true identity. Gosseyn's determination to find the truth about himself grows to an all-time high in anticipation of the approaching ordeal at the hands of these men who obviously have a great interest in his identity.

The car radio relays the voice of the kidnappers' boss; he instructs the men to stop pretending to be gangsters, that Patricia has told him that there is "no further need for it," and that they are to give Gosseyn no information. This, Gosseyn realizes, means they no longer intend to release him afterwards.

The cars enter a long tunnel, and at the end they stop in a larger cavern that leads into a subterranean building. Patricia gets out of the car she was riding in.

Without even glancing at Gosseyn, Patricia enters the underground complex.

The cars enter a long tunnel, and at the end they stop in a larger cavern that leads into a subterranean building. Patricia gets out of the car she was riding in and comes over to Gosseyn's car. She tells him of her true identity, and he replies that he already knows. This surprises her, and she asks why he didn't leave her. He says that the only way to learn about himself is by coming face-to-face with those keeping an eye on him. She tells him that her father, President Hardie, has spies in every hotel, and Gosseyn's incident with the lie detector aroused Hardie's suspicion.

Patricia apologizes and enters the underground complex.

A man comes over to Gosseyn's side of the car, and at his first sight of Gosseyn begins to taunt him as being a rather inept "superman."

Gosseyn is taken aback by this, but realizes that the comment must indicate that the man is aware of Gosseyn's true identity. He is puzzled by the reference to being a **superman**; Gosseyn has found himself to be no different than anyone else, so he assumes the man is merely trying to annoy him.

The man goes on to deride Null-A, and this is the first time Gosseyn has ever heard such openly contemptuous remarks about the world's predominant philosophy. He is shocked into momentary silence, and tries to retort with an amusing quip to boost his morale, and says to the man that it's obvious he's tried and failed the Games.

The man laughs, admits his failure at the Games, and comes back with a question for Gosseyn to consider: Since he failed the Games, how did he come to be the President's right-hand man? Gosseyn is overwhelmed with the import of the man's question, and wonders how much harm these conspirators could do since their plot remained undetected for so long.

He tells Gosseyn to expect more shocks, and that his name is Thorson; he doesn't consider his knowledge of that fact a threat now that he is under their control. Thorson and the other men escort him into the subterranean entrance to the president's Palace of the Machine.

A man comes over to Gosseyn's side of the car, and at his first sight of Gosseyn begins to taunt him as being a rather inept "dangerous man."

Gosseyn is taken aback by this, but realizes that the comment must indicate that the man is aware of Gosseyn's true identity. He is puzzled by the reference to being a **dangerous man**; Gosseyn has found himself to be no different than anyone else, so he assumes the man is merely trying to annoy him.

The man goes on to deride Null-A. Gosseyn interprets this antagonism as an indication that the man had tried and failed the Games, and says so.

The man laughs.

He tells Gosseyn that his name is Thorson; he doesn't consider his knowledge of that fact a threat now that he is under their control. Thorson and the other men escort him into the subterranean entrance to the president's Palace of the Machine.

Gosseyn begins contemplating about escape, but intends to first learn as much as possible of his identity from these people.

They bring Gosseyn into a luxurious room, where he meets President Hardie, Patricia Hardie, and a man in a wheelchair who has evidently been put back together with a special kind of plastic after a terrible accident. Gosseyn bluntly asks *what* that man is. The man-things laughs and replies with a mathematical metaphor, that he should be thought of as an "X" quantity **equaling infinity. This small quip tells Gosseyn a great deal about X's character.**

Patricia is dressed in a very fancy dress, a stark contrast to her choice of clothes when she was disguised as Teresa Clark.

**She tells Gosseyn that he was stupid, and that they had a hard time making him suspect Clark wasn't the innocent girl she pretended to be. This confirms Gosseyn's earlier thoughts that she was consciously manipulating him to react to a specific plan. Her arrogance and self-confidence makes her a weak player in the events around him, and he is amused at the plotters' apparent ignorance of this critical fact.**

He turns his attention to President Hardie and has a difficult time taking in the idea that the greatest Null-A mind on Earth is the driving force behind this vast conspiracy. **He notices the resemblance between President Hardie and his daughter Patricia.**

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Gosseyn mulls over his conversation with the Machine when it almost explicitly spelled out Hardie's involvement in the plot it sensed. Hardie tells Gosseyn that he and his henchmen are people who would've lived as nobodies if they had accepted the Null-A philosophy. He argues that before the days of Null-A most of history was made by ruthless people like themselves and that such days will soon return.

Hardie instructs Gosseyn to comply with his orders or he will be killed. Knowing that escape is currently impossible, Gosseyn allows Thorson to restrain him in a chair and attach wires, part of a larger machine on a nearby table, to various parts of his body. Hardie and X watch with intense interest, while Patricia sits and smokes.

Gosseyn, presuming that they want to extract specific information from him, tries to reason with the men saying that if he had invented some device before he lost his memory, that history has shown superior technology alone does not win wars. But he offers his full cooperation if only they will ask him what they want. X replies that he doesn't believe that Gosseyn, a person who has the power to destroy them, is really as unknowing and innocent as he claims.

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X brings up the point that at such a crucial stage in their plot, Gosseyn's sudden appearance and involvement cannot be an accident. He also points out how the hotel lie detector's response to Gosseyn's false identity was an unprecedented event. Patricia reminds X that the lie detector in the hotel verified Gosseyn's lack of memory. X replies that he and someone named Crang have proved that machines can be externally influenced, as witnessed by their rigging of the Games, giving unqualified men like Hardie power and position. He says no ordinary machine can be trusted to give truthful results. Hardie agrees with X, and emphasizes that Gosseyn is too much of an unknown factor to underestimate him.

Gosseyn finally asks the men to tell him what they know of his identity. X replies that they cannot afford to let him have such valuable information, even though he is about to die. This shocks Gosseyn, as he hadn't thought they were really going to kill him. It does follow reason, though, since they have gone too far to turn back. This indicates that these men had a certain amount of Null-A training but only to an extent.

Hardie interjects that if Gosseyn knows a few facts, it couldn't be dangerous, and it may even assist with Thorson's examination of his mind. Thorson agrees, and X asks Patricia to leave the room.

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At Hardie's request, Thorson says he plans, in effect, to break into Gosseyn's mind and discover his true identity. X asks Patricia to leave the room, since the information about to be discovered is too sensitive for anyone but the three men to know.

Patricia wants to stay, but X and even her father insists she leaves, which she does but only after threatening to kill X.

X explains to Gosseyn his identity and purpose [information that the reader is not privy to]. Gosseyn is overwhelmed by this revelation and his reaction is one of sheer disbelief.

Thorson activates the machine attached to Gosseyn, which causes disorientation and strange sensations. Thorson explains the principle and function of the machine to X and Hardie in the background: the machine sends energy — the same energy utilized by the human nervous system to transmit signals — into Gosseyn's head through the connections on his back. The energy goes through every available existing energy conduit, following existing nerve pathways and synapses but not creating any new ones. During this process, another part of the machine is "photographing" this energy flow as it goes through these pathways. The energy then exits through the machine connections on Gosseyn's face. Using the resulting full-scale positive prints, Thorson will be able to see in which part of his brain Gosseyn's memory lies, so he can later stimulate these areas to get Gosseyn to verbally release the desired contents.

During the process, Gosseyn tries to concentrate on Thorson's explanation, but the discomfort is too great and he keeps thinking back to X's revelation of his true identity [details which are again kept from the reader].

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After a few minutes, the procedure is concluded. Thorson deactivates the machine, takes out the film, and exits the room to develop it, leaving X and Hardie to ensure that Gosseyn goes nowhere. However, Gosseyn is still recovering from the trauma the machine caused, and is incapable of even seeing properly much less attempting an escape.

Thorson returns some time later, and rather than informing Hardie and X of the results, goes straight to Gosseyn. He utters something in a language that neither Gosseyn, Hardie, or X are familiar with. Hardie asks him what he just said, and Thorson impatiently indicates for him to remain silent. It is obvious that Thorson is a man accustomed to commanding, which makes his subordination to Hardie puzzling. Evidently he has obeyed Hardie's orders in the past only because doing so suited his purposes.

X takes one of the prints from Thorson and examines it with Hardie. X's reaction is one of astonishment, so much so that he nearly stands up from his wheelchair. He exclaims that they captured Gosseyn at the right time, before he had the opportunity to see the psychiatrist as the Machine suggested.

Hardie's reaction is one of confusion; he admits that he knows very little about Null-A and human physiology, since his position as President was the result of X rigging the Games for him. Thorson finally pulls his attention from Gosseyn, goes over to Hardie and whispers an explanation of the print.

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Once Hardie understands, his reaction is immediate; he suggests they kill Gosseyn instantly. Thorson reminds them that Gosseyn can do nothing, since the prints show that "there are no bright lines near it," meaning that the object revealed in the photo isn't connected to the rest of his brain. Hardie counters that he might "learn to use it" but Thorson points out that that would be impossible in so short a time, **and that conditions on Earth are not correct to let him develop it. Thorson compares Gosseyn's situation to that of a man living with animals [apparently meaning that Gosseyn is a higher-level organism than most humans living on Earth].**

Thorson also points out that it's impossible for anyone to escape from the special dungeon they've set aside for Gosseyn.

Men come into the room and lift the still-restrained Gosseyn, and carry him down several flights of stairs, chair and all. The final stairway leads through the floor into a solid-steel room with the only exit being the hole in the ceiling. The men leave Gosseyn in the room, and once they ascend the stairway they pull it up and seal the exit.

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## SECTION #5

Synopsis of Text 45

### *Chapter V*

Nervous and afraid, Gosseyn stands and explores his small, dark cell. In light of his recently gained knowledge of his true identity, he is amazed that a person such as he is capable of such an intense reaction to his dire situation.

Certain of his imminent and inescapable demise, he thinks on the nature of "life after death" in the form of being remembered in others' memories, as a shape in photographs, and as biographical information stored in a machine.

Overwhelmed with panic and emotion, he sits back down and absent-mindedly fiddles with the loose manacles. He then comes to an abrupt mental halt; he has no recollection of escaping from the restraints, much less knows how he could have done such a seemingly impossible thing.

One of Thorson's men opens the ceiling hatch to check on the prisoner.

He excitedly reports to his superiors that Gosseyn has somehow released himself from the manacles. After a few moments of scrambling, armed guards descend into the cell and keep Gosseyn covered.

A group of men bring in a table and some machines, including the one used earlier to photograph Gosseyn's brain.

Synopsis of Text 48/70

### *Chapter 5*

Gosseyn sits in the restraining chair, nervous and afraid.

Certain of his imminent and inescapable demise, he thinks on the nature of "life after death" in the form of being remembered in others' memories, as a shape in photographs, and as biographical information stored in a machine.

One of Thorson's men opens the ceiling hatch to check on the prisoner.

A group of men bring in a table and some machines, including the one used earlier to photograph Gosseyn's brain.

A couple of detectives check Gosseyn's hands and conclude he did not slip out of manacles; his method of removing them is inexplicable. He is re-restrained, this time with chains, and his entire body, rather than just his arms, is strapped down. Thorson enters and tells Gosseyn that this second examination will be very painful and will undoubtedly result in permanent injury and madness.

Gosseyn's next moment of consciousness finds him running down a hallway, with many men in close pursuit. He has no memory of escaping from the steel dungeon or how he eluded his captors. His only thought is to escape the Palace and to get to the Machine.

He comes to a dead end, but somehow passes *through* the wall. Marveling at the untapped potential of his full powers, he continues onward.

He passes through another wall, straight into a room where President Hardie and his daughter are having a conversation. Gosseyn's presence is undetected, and he listens in. The President confides in his daughter that the "monster" [Gosseyn] has escaped and is roaming the Palace — he also notes that Gosseyn has the ability to "destroy us all." At this moment Patricia notices Gosseyn's presence, but does not raise an alarm. Rather, she in a roundabout way communicates to Gosseyn — in the guise of conversing with her father — a hidden way to get to her room, and that she will join him shortly.

Two men come in, make sure Gosseyn's restraints are tight, and leave.

A few minutes later, the ceiling hatch opens again and Patricia Hardie descends, alone, into the prison. She frees him, gives him directions for getting to her room, and leaves. He follows the directions and finds himself in her bedroom. He doubts his chances of remaining safe there, and as he moves to climb down the balcony he spots a few patrol guards on the lawn below. He remains in the small apartment, but first finds the room that gives him the best opportunity to detect someone coming and to escape quickly if the need arises.

Patricia joins him shortly, and explains that Gosseyn has no chance of stopping the plot, since it involves men from other solar systems. His first impulse is to reject this notion as absurd, but recalls that President Hardie speculated that Gosseyn was sent to Earth by the "Galactic League." During their conversation, he tells Patricia of his plan to get to the Machine — if nothing else, it will be able to protect him. But before they can do anything further, a man named Eldred Crang comes to visit Patricia — the two of them are romantically involved. While she answers the door, Gosseyn hides and plans to run if he suspects Crang intends to search the apartment.

He follows the directions and finds himself in her bedroom. He decides that waiting for her would be too risky, that although she may be genuinely concerned for him, she could very well have devised this method of getting him out of the room where she and her father were defenseless, and into a place where they could trap him.

He therefore climbs down some trees close to her balcony, and runs the short distance to the Machine's grounds. However, he falls into a massive ambush, and the Machine's legendary defenses in the grounds apparently have no interest in saving Gosseyn. He is mercilessly torn apart by heavy, concentrated machine-gun fire, and lit afire by an energy beam. His last thought is a regret that he will never see Venus. His body damaged beyond hope, Gilbert Gosseyn dies.

Crang and Patricia's conversation reveals that Thorson, Crang, and a subordinate named John Prescott are all men from beyond the solar system. Apparently Crang and Prescott have secretly adopted Null-A — the philosophy of their enemy, the Games Machine — though Crang suspects Prescott's commitment is superficial. Crang and Patricia kiss, which arouses jealousy in Gosseyn — his false memories of Patricia as his wife still hold a strong sway over his emotions. He doubts if anything but intensive Null-A therapy can cure him of these feelings.

A group of guards come to Patricia's door and wish to search her apartment. Gosseyn takes this as his exit cue.

He therefore climbs down some trees close to her balcony, and runs the short distance to the Machine's grounds. However, he falls into a massive ambush, and the Machine's legendary defenses in the grounds apparently have no interest in saving Gosseyn. He is mercilessly torn apart by heavy, concentrated machine-gun fire, and lit afire by an energy beam. His last thought is a regret that he will never see Venus. His body damaged beyond hope, Gilbert Gosseyn dies.

## SECTION #6

Synopsis of Text 45

### *Chapter VI*

A partly conscious Gosseyn overhears a man and a woman discussing his condition. He was found near the Machine on Venus, and after checking with the Registry they found him to be there illegally. The Registry plans to question him and then kill him, according to the law regarding illegal immigrants. Discussing his fine physical condition, the couple — obviously two doctors discussing their patient — leave the room. Gosseyn awakens enough to realize he is not only alive but uninjured. He reviews his memories and finds no recollection of how he got to Venus, or how he survived the massive traumas and grievous injuries during his escape from the Palace. He speculates that perhaps this is another instance of induced amnesia and false implanted memories.

He gets up from his hospital bed and dizzily staggers around in the dark, but before he can explore the room the couple returns. The man turns on the lights and opens the window blinds. After a period of adjustment to the light, Gosseyn scans the room and the two people, but his attention is grabbed by the view out the window: the hills, mountains, dense vegetation, mist, and the gargantuan trees of Venus. His doubts about his location are dissolved by the irrevocable proof of this vista.

Synopsis of Text 48/70

### *Chapter 6 - most of 8*

Gosseyn awakens at the base of a gigantic tree. Although only partly conscious, he realizes that such great trees are only to be found on Venus. He is then flooded with the memories of the events leading up to his apparent death, but has no recollection of how he ended up on Venus.

He gets up and examines himself. He is wearing new, unfamiliar clothes and his body is in perfect condition — he sees no injuries or scars from the deadly attack he suffered on Earth. He assumes someone must have repaired his torn form and taken him to Venus.

# *[This rain scene is taken from Chapter VII of the serial, placed here in this new context in a slightly re-written form:]*

As he looks up and appreciates the enormous trees of the planet, he hears a great pouring sound as water gushes down on him. He surmises that the trees foliage is so thick that whenever it rains here they must trap the water in their branches until the weight suddenly becomes too much and the water is released downward.

The man is struck by Gosseyn's reaction to the view, that he was shocked by the trees — showing that perhaps he was truly unaware of his location. The doctors try to calm him down by confirming to him that they are indeed on Venus, and he is their patient.

He walks through the forest towards a distant light, and he comes to a meadow with a river on one side and a building on the other. He approaches the house cautiously, keeping low in the many shrubs, and comes to the walkway leading to the front of the house. Engraved on one of the stepping-stones is the name of the owners: John and Amelia Prescott.

He immediately recognizes the man's name as the one mentioned by Patricia Hardie in her conversation with Crang in her bedroom. Prescott is Crang's subordinate, whose secret allegiance to null-A is shaky at best.

Aware that he is still in danger, he goes around the side of the house. He stops when he hears a woman's voice. Amelia is complaining to her husband that he is away on trips to Earth too frequently. His most recent trip was a month ago, and is due to leave within the next couple of days — this will leave her by herself to deal with the patients due to arrive in two days. He replies that he is a restless individual who must keep moving about. She then goes into the house and the man sits on the porch. It's apparent to Gosseyn that this is the same John Prescott of whom Patricia spoke, and is stationed here on Venus in the guise of a doctor.

Remembering what they said earlier about the legal requirement to kill him, he feigns surprise and studies the two. They seem unarmed and have no defensive belts. Knowing that this is his best opportunity to catch them unaware and save his life, he jumps out of bed — discovering himself to be naked, but not letting that stop him — and despite his weak condition attacks the man and renders him unconscious. The woman asks Gosseyn if he had heard them earlier discussing the necessity of killing him. He replies that he did indeed, and likewise knocks her unconscious. He takes the man's clothes, and tears the bedsheets into strips to bind and gag them.

Gosseyn then explores the well-equipped country hospital, and finds no other people present.

The reference to the last trip to Earth a month ago confuses Gosseyn. He remembers hearing Patricia referring to Prescott accompanying Crang to Venus, indicating Prescott was on Earth the same time as Gosseyn. This means that his torn body must have fully healed within the impossibly short time of a few weeks. He soon abandons this train of thought as groundless speculation, since many trips could have been made in the meantime, and he lacks any solid information.

Gosseyn takes this opportunity to knock Prescott unconscious. He carries him into the house, to move him off the porch in case his wife heard the struggle and comes to check on her husband. He hears Amelia working in the kitchen, apparently unaware of the attack on John. Gosseyn goes upstairs and deposits the unconscious man in the master bedroom, and tears the bedsheets into strips to bind and gag him.

He returns to the first floor, and goes into the kitchen. Amelia is taken by surprise and Gosseyn has little trouble rendering her unconscious also. He takes her upstairs and bind and gags her next to her husband. He then explores the house to ensure the Prescotts are the only people living in the immediate area.

## *Chapter 7*

A brief exploration of the house shows that it is indeed a small hospital and that no one else is present.

He goes outside and is immediately awed by the lush and pleasant plant-life, giant trees, deep valleys, and mighty mountains of Venus.

The hospital seems to be in a remote area of the planet, which means Gosseyn has minimum risk of being discovered. His first thought is of escape, to get as far away from this hospital as possible before a robo-plane finds him, for presumably the two doctors had notified the authorities. He soon realizes that to flee in a random direction would be unwise, so he decides to question the couple about the surrounding area.

He decides to get information from the couple and leave as soon as possible, to minimize possible contact with any new arrivals. He tries to find a weapon to use to defend himself if the authorities arrive, but finds none. He walks out onto the house's terrace and the view is a pleasant one. The only possible way to get to this remote dwelling is by air travel — the house sits on a low mountain near a heavily forested valley. Although this will give him forewarning of any approach, it also means that a ship could arrive near the house and be filled with thugs from the gang that is conspiring to destroy null-A. Even while thinking these thoughts, he is soothed by the peaceful, beautiful setting of Venus.

Reminding himself that time is critical, he checks once more for any approaching ships, and returns to the room where the Prescotts remain tied up but now conscious. Gosseyn removes Amelia's gag and she immediately addresses him as "young man" and scolds him for interrupting her dinner preparations. She then asks who he is and what he wants with them. Gosseyn undoes John's gag but the man says nothing.

Gosseyn asks Amelia what the procedure is for calling for a robo-plane taxi. She deduces from this that his presence on Venus is not legitimate and is therefore ignorant of their routines.

In response to his queries she explains that he needs to present no means of identifying himself, nor does he need to tell them where he is — the call is automatically traced. Suspicious, he gets a lie detector from another room and asks it if she is telling the truth — it confirms that she is. In response to his question, she replies that it will take an hour or so for the plane to arrive.

He attempts to make the call using the videophone extension in the room's corner, but it doesn't work. He tries again with no success and resorts to going downstairs and inspecting the inner workings of the main machine. He discovers that the problem is not with the machine but has to do with the outside connection. He reasons from this that whoever took him to Venus is intent on isolating him in the house, and is waiting for him to do something.

### *Chapter 8*

Disturbed by this new development, Gosseyn resolves to get information from the couple and then leave quickly on foot. On his way up the stairs he overhears the Prescott's discussing the non-functioning videophone — the husband expresses his mystification, and his wife explains that either an interference field has been created between Earth and some other place, or the machine has merely stopped working.

He returns to the room where he left the restrained doctors. He undoes their gags and asks where they keep their maps of the planet. The man is amused at Gosseyn's confidence that escape is possible. Knowing that no matter how much help he gives Gosseyn that the authorities will capture him, he tells him the location of the maps. Gosseyn gets them, all the while thinking on how strange it would be if it turned out that Venus is a series of isolated settlements, just like this hospital. He wonders if such a socially-segmented society would be a healthy one. He reasons that he doesn't have much time, that the Registry has already sent out a police-filled roboplane to collect him.

He returns to the room and spreads out the three-dimensional maps. There are many large cities marked with areas of glowing lights — obviously his earlier perception of Venus as socially isolated was entirely wrong. He plans to get to one of these cities — where he could easily hide — and take a ship back to Earth.

The only problem with the latter explanation is that machines on the verge of wearing out automatically send a signal to the maintenance personnel who come and deal with it before it stops working. Gosseyn — not wanting them to know he overheard them — goes down the stairs quietly and then comes back up making deliberate noise so they will be sure to hear his approach.

He asks where they keep their maps of the planet, and Amelia tells him they're in the basement laboratory.

He collects some mountaineering supplies, and asks the couple exactly where the hospital is on the map. John shows him: their location is

four hundred miles away from the nearest city. Gosseyn is pleased by the prospect of hiking through hundreds of miles of rough country, taking the most difficult routes — this increases his chances of evading capture.

His only concern is with food supply, and asks the man about how plentiful food is in the wild areas of Venus. The man tells him that food — mostly fruit — is extremely easy to find, and in enormous quantities. Suspicious, Gosseyn fetches a lie detector and has the machine verify the statement. Gosseyn is struck by how confident Prescott must be of Gosseyn's capture, if he freely gives out such helpful information, and expresses these thoughts. Prescott replies that the police system on Venus is very different than Earth's — a null-A detective will be sent after Gosseyn, and will capture him within a very short period of time.

Gosseyn asks if a special investigator has been sent, and the woman speaks up for the first time. She explains that a roboplane comes to the hospital every third day to make deliveries and pick up items to ship out. They simply had to tell Registry of Gosseyn's presence, and they in turn would contact the police, and one of their detectives would volunteer his service.

He fetches them and examines them, and asks exactly where the hospital is on the map. She draws his attention to a mark she made some time ago of their place on the map, and Gosseyn notes that they are four hundred miles away from the nearest city, New Chicago.

In response to his question, she tells him of the copious fruits available in the wild forest; he verifies her statement using the lie detector. He asks if she is helping because she is confident of his eventual capture. She replies that capture is inevitable, since a null-A detective will have been put on the case and such individuals are famous for the speed with which they carry out their assignments.

She says that the previous day the delivery roboplane had spotted Gosseyn near the Venusian's Games Machine — an exact replica of the one on Earth — and was picked up and brought to the hospital, the plane's normal destination, for treatment. Since nothing further awry was reported to the Registry, the roboplane is scheduled to come back on schedule, in two days' time.

Gosseyn speculates that his presence on Venus near the Games Machine has significance: perhaps the one on Earths somehow transported him to its Venusian extension while he was dying, via some unprecedented method. He discontinues this train of thought, as irrelevant to the pressing issues and impossible to verify in his present situation.

At his request, the couple tell him their names: John and Amelia Prescott. Before he leaves, he feels compelled to warn the couple — who seem to be intelligent and reasonable people — of the plot he discovered on Earth threatening null-A, So he relates to the couple the events he's experienced since arriving in the City of the Machine on Earth, and argues that his present death sentence for being illegally on Venus is unjustified.

Based on her discussion, Gosseyn reasons that she is not a member of the conspiracy to destroy null-A — he wishes to contact the authorities while evading capture by the gang, but she assumes he is a fugitive from justice. He also takes John's prolonged silence as an indication that he is aware of who Gosseyn is — the man murdered by the gang on Earth. However, Gosseyn doesn't want John to know that Gosseyn knows who John is.

So as he relates to the couple the events he's experienced since arriving in the City of the Machine on Earth, he has several things in mind: the woman is uninvolved in the conspiracy, so giving her this information will help disseminate the knowledge of the plot and will preserve the knowledge in case he dies. He realizes this may put her in danger from her husband, but feels compelled to let her know of the conspiracy.

He takes an hour to explain all this, and at the end John Prescott says there is one major flaw in Gosseyn's story. Gosseyn replies that everything he has told them is true according to his memory — unless his present memory was also falsely induced, like his earlier belief to be married to Patricia Hardie. He asks John what the flaw is; the man replies that there is no way that the Gosseyn in front of him is the same Gosseyn who was killed on Earth — one of the basic idea of null-A states that no two objects are identical in all respects, and that Gosseyn is reasoning that he is the dead Gosseyn based on only his memories. The same issue had been bothering Gosseyn ever since he regained consciousness, and it does indeed seem an insoluble problem. John compares his fantastic story of presidential conspiracies to the ramblings of a village idiot. John points out that since a lie detector is present, it would be easy to verify at least if the memories in Gosseyn's mind coincide with his story.

Gosseyn goes over, touches the nodes of the lie detector, and asks its verdict. It replies that Gosseyn's story is true according to his knowledge of events, and that it is true that he and the first Gilbert Gosseyn who died are not the same people.

At the end of Gosseyn's story, John Prescott speaks to him for the first time. He says there is one major flaw in Gosseyn's story. Gosseyn replies that everything he has told them is true according to his memory — unless his present memory was also falsely induced, like his earlier belief to be married to Patricia Hardie. He asks John what the flaw is; the man replies that there is no way that the Gosseyn in front of him is the same Gosseyn who was killed on Earth — one of the basic idea of null-A states that no two objects are identical in all respects, and that Gosseyn is reasoning that he is the dead Gosseyn based on only his memories.

John points out that since a lie detector is present, it would be easy to verify at least if the memories in Gosseyn's mind coincide with his story. After John makes this statement, Gosseyn himself begins to doubt his own story, yet cannot deny the necessity of using the lie detector.

Gosseyn goes over, touches the nodes of the lie detector, and asks its verdict. It states that there is no way it can verify whether the events he described really happened, only that his memory contains records of such events.

It does not know why he has some of the memories of the dead Gosseyn, nor does it have any clue about his true identity.

Gosseyn unbinds the two doctors, now convinced that Gosseyn is no mere "village idiot." Amelia offers to pack him some meals for his trip, and that they will pass along his story to the detective when he arrives. Gosseyn asks if it would be better for him to remain and speak to the detective himself, but John insists that leaving would be safest; detectives are authorized to kill illegal immigrants on sight, and have been using their powers more liberally in recent years. He advises that they should tell the detective the story, and it should be given time for the full implications to sink into the man's mind before Gosseyn reveals himself. So Gosseyn leaves, and an hour later is well on his way west through the dense forests of Venus.

It says he has the memory of the first Gilbert Gosseyn who died, and the memories of the death are so vivid and realistic that it almost certainly is a memory of being killed. But it concludes that his true identity is not contained in his mind.

He unties Amelia Prescott and explains that he will take her with him, alone, for a mile and then will let her return to the house. During the short walk, he relates his knowledge of John's involvement in the plot to overthrow null-A. He informs her that she will have to decide for herself — based on her intimate relationship with him — whether or not he will adhere to the gang's conspiracy or let his secret null-A education bear out.

Gosseyn asks her about the routine and function of the hospital. She explains that they are a volunteer hospital — when an injury or illness occurs an automated system notifies the nearest hospital, and they can either take in the patient or refuse treatment. She admits she has been refusing more patients than usual lately, but gives no explanation for this. She tells Gosseyn that she plans to trust John, but that she will give Gosseyn enough time to get a head start. He wishes her good luck and watches her return to the house, marveling at the nature of woman to be so nurturing. He then turns and proceeds into the dense forest.

## SECTION #7

Synopsis of Text 45

*Chapter VII*

Gosseyn follows a small path deeper into the forest. He enjoys the pleasant scenery and finds it very calming after all the recent stress. The further he goes, he notices that the vegetation above him is so tall and thick that even though the sun has not yet set, it is quite dark. **He keeps his mind from considering the mysteries surrounding himself and concentrates on enjoying the beauty of the forest.**

Even though the darkness doesn't make him afraid, he is concerned that in such a dense forest where the sun cannot be seen he could very easily lose track of which direction is which. He brought a compass with him from the house and hopes it will be sufficient.

# As he walks along, he hears a distant sound coming from above him: a steady, dull, soft roar. It eventually stops and it isn't until many minutes later that he hears a great gushing sound approaching from the trees above him; he looks up and is drenched by several gallons of water. Water comes down in other spots around him. He reasons that the dull roar he heard earlier was the rain but the trees' foliage is so thick that the water was trapped in their branches until the weight became too much and the water was released downward. He figures the trees above him still hold the great majority of the rain's water.

Synopsis of Text 48/70

*end of Chapter 8 - 9*

Gosseyn follows a small path deeper into the forest. He enjoys the pleasant scenery and finds it very calming after all the recent stress. The further he goes, he notices that the vegetation above him is so tall and thick that even though the sun has not yet set, it is quite dark.

Even though the darkness doesn't make him afraid, he is concerned that in such a dense forest where the sun cannot be seen he could very easily lose track of which direction is which. He brought a compass with him from the house and hopes it will be sufficient.

# *[This rain scene was slightly rewritten and moved to the beginning of Chapter 6 in the revised edition.]*

Pondering his odd situation — a dead man without a memory evading a second death in a gigantic forest — he continues on his way.

A few minutes later, the dark deepens and he figures that the sun has finally set.

He had plans to climb a tree to avoid any possible hostile animals, but it is too dark to see. The moss-covered earth beneath him will have to suffice as a resting place, but before he retires he draws lines in the ground to show east and west, and aligns himself with it as he lies down. A correct sense of direction is very important, as he intends to not head directly east from the hospital but to go a little off course and then continue east to make him more difficult to track.

He wakes early in the morning and continues in a roughly eastern bearing. He comes to a meadow and follows the creek flowing through it, rationing the food given to him by Amelia Prescott and eating mostly the wild fruit. He eventually comes to the wide, deep river that he spotted in the distance from the hospital. Rather than crossing the dangerous body of water, he finds two great trees on either side of the river whose limbs entangle above the water. He climbs the tree on his side, and after many hours of stressful and perilous climbing and jumping from limb to limb, successfully reaches the other side.

A few minutes later, the dark deepens and he figures that the sun has finally set.

He considers the problems of having to sleep in the dense forest when he comes to a meadow.

Gosseyn continues his journey for two weeks, enjoying the peace and beauty around him. He speculates that spending such a long time in a forest of gigantic proportions would give his mind a better sense of scale of himself to the universe around him.

He gradually heads a little more to the south, through mountain passes and valleys. He is settling himself down one evening when a roboplane approaches and lands in front of him. He is pinned down with a spotlight, and the plane's mechanical voice informs him that if he does not come aboard he will be shot. He sees the guns, and realizes he cannot escape. His only possible chance of resistance will be available once he is inside the machine.

He enters the vessel and sits in one of the seats in the dark cabin. The plane takes off

He is settling himself down when a roboplane approaches and lands in front of him. He is pinned down with a spotlight, and the plane's mechanical voice tells Gosseyn it is not an enemy, but in order to get him inside as quickly as possible to allow it to explain it has several guns trained on him. He sees the guns, and realizes that no matter who sent the plane, friend or foe, he has no choice but to comply. He enters the vessel and sits in one of the seats in the dark cabin. The plane takes off.

### *Chapter 9*

It gains height for several minutes before finally reaching cruising altitude.

The cabin lights then come on and Gosseyn examines the possibilities for taking control of the plane. He notices that the control panel is near, and there are no guns covering the inside of the cabin. But, not believing that taking control would be so easy, he refrains from taking any action as he studies the control panel more carefully for hidden traps. His first thought is to smash the controls, forcing the plane into a dive, giving him time to access the emergency controls.

It gains height for several minutes before finally reaching cruising altitude.

The cabin lights then come on and the plane tells Gosseyn that during their short trip he can ask questions. His first question is to ask who the roboplane is. It responds that it was sent by the Games Machine, and Gosseyn asks if the Machine itself is speaking through the plane. It replies that although messages from Venus can reach the Machine on Earth, the Machine is unable to send signals that far. He asks if it is asking independently, then, but it tells him that it is following its instructions.

While considering his options, he realizes the roboplane's actions are not consistent with a normal arrest by the detectives of Venus - the entire incident of his capture is shrouded with secrecy. Roboplanes have very dependable intelligences, and for it to have neglected stating that it represented the authorities is a bad sign. He tries to force the machine into speaking with him by provoking it with an accusation that it has superseded its authority and could be punished for its insubordinate behavior. It replies with a chuckle and explains that capturing a fugitive is no crime. Gosseyn deduces from this that the roboplane was sent by the gang plotting against null-A, and not from the Venusian Registry. It says it was able to track him by using "the science of unstraight lines." He recognizes the reference to the mathematical technique whereby it was able to calculate his movements through the countryside - with the hospital as the starting point, it was able to predict how far and by what routes he would travel each day, assuming he like anyone else would follow the paths of least resistance, e.g. going through mountain passes rather than over the mountain itself.

It tells Gosseyn that it is aware of his ideas for taking control of the plane, an observation made plain by his body language. It also informs him that the floor of the forward half of the cabin is electrified, and contact with him would be fatal. It asks him to remain calm and listen while it explains a few things. Gosseyn has no choice but to comply.

He then asks if it can tell him his true identity. The plane responds that it has no information about him or his activities on Earth, and can only impart information relating to the Venusian predicament. He asks if the Machine knows his true identity, but the roboplane doesn't have that information either.

Determined to get some kind of answers, he asks about his apparent death experience on Earth. It admits it knows of his death, but has no idea how it is possible that he is still alive. It advises him that time is being wasted on such questions; it can only answer questions relating to Venus, and it offers to give a detailed account of how things currently stand rather than hope that Gosseyn will ask the right questions. Gosseyn is still dissatisfied, but agrees that that would be the best course of action.

The roboplane goes into a detailed description of society on Venus: it is a democracy in the fullest sense of the word, with no government of any kind — everything is done on a volunteer basis. All are free to choose their own jobs, and each person takes into account the balance of current jobs to ensure that no one field of service becomes too small or too large. It makes the detective its example: when one resigns or dies his slot of employment is made open to applicants, whom the retiring detective interviews for their suitability. The applicants also discuss the matter among themselves and they elect the one best suited for the job.

Gosseyn is pleased by this remarkably clear and succinct description of life on Venus. **This makes him wonder exactly who has sent the plane.**

The roboplane continues its description. It reveals that **X**

has for years been steadily infiltrating the detective and judicial sectors of Venusian society.

The gang now effectively has total control over those areas. Gosseyn is astounded by this revelation and leaps to his feet, and utters a few exclamations of incredulity and frantic queries.

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Gosseyn is pleased by this remarkably clear and succinct description of life on Venus.

The roboplane continues its description. It reveals that **the gang, under John Prescott's coordination, has for years been steadily infiltrating the detective and judicial sectors of Venusian society, as well as murdering those detectives who pose a danger to their plans.**

The gang now effectively has total control over those areas. Gosseyn is astounded by this revelation and leaps to his feet, and utters a few exclamations of incredulity and frantic queries.

The machine interrupts his clumsy questions and tells him that it is merely trying to make it clear to him that it is impossible to evade being captured by the gang.

It emphasizes the enormity of the situation and Gosseyn's involvement in it; the gang is desperately trying to capture him to find out **just how much of a threat he is to their plan**, and they're using all their resources to do so. In light of this, the robo-plane tells Gosseyn of his only viable option: he must give himself up to them, hoping their second attempt at examining him will be less hasty, allowing him to live for several days.

# The roboplane pauses briefly to let Gosseyn ask any questions he may have.

**Gosseyn is still in shock. He chides himself for underestimating the gang. He hits upon the idea that perhaps X sent the roboplane to trick Gosseyn into turning himself in without a fuss. He realizes he has no way to confirm this, so adopts a less intense and more impromptu attitude. During these thoughts, he notices it's raining outside.**

The machine interrupts his clumsy questions and tells him that it is merely trying to make it clear to him that it is impossible to evade being captured by the gang. **It explains that it is for this reason that it was necessary to block the videophone signal from Prescott's house — if he had been able to contact the authorities, who are under the influence of the gang, the results would have been disastrous. All phones of notable people on Venus have been tapped by the gang, and even the gang's operatives' phones are tapped by Thorson. It tells him Crang cannot be trusted since he must conform outwardly with the gang to avoid being replaced.**

It emphasizes the enormity of the situation and Gosseyn's involvement in it; the gang are desperately trying to capture him to find out **who placed Gosseyn on Earth**, and they're using all their resources to do so. In light of this, the robo-plane tells Gosseyn of his only viable option: he must give himself up to them, hoping their second attempt at examining him will be less hasty, allowing him to live for several days.

# *[The roboplane's invitation to ask questions was for the revised edition moved closer to the end of the chapter.]*

Having calmed down somewhat, and soothed by the sound of the rain, he is able to think more clearly. He realizes that the roboplane's comments on the gang were anything but complimentary — therefore, whoever sent the plane is working for his benefit, but he has no idea who it might be. His thoughts are interrupted by the plane tilting into a descent, and the plane urging Gosseyn to ask his questions before they land. He imagines himself in a few minutes time being restrained and taken away by the gang's henchmen.

His head is filled with so many questions he doesn't know which he should ask the plane. He suddenly realizes that his efforts in convincing the Prescotts of his story was a waste of time, since they will merely relay the information to a detective, now revealed to be all agents of X.

There are currently only three people aware of his true story who might also be able to do something about it: himself, the plane, and the Games Machine. This brings him to the question of where the plane gained this information.

Just as he is about to ask the question, the plane informs him that no time remains. It must now listen to its instructions without interruption since time is running short. They will land a short distance away from the home of a detective — one of X's agents — and Gosseyn must enter it and tell his story to the agent, as if he still believed the detectives to be genuine null-As doing their duty.

In a few minutes the plane will land outside Crang's home and Gosseyn must enter it and tell his story to him, as if he were unaware of who Crang is.

It tells him to maintain the act until he deems the situation to have become too dangerous.

# *[In the serial, the roboplane's invitation to ask questions occurred earlier in the chapter.]*

It also tells him that the Games Machine wishes to relay to him a warning, and at this point Gosseyn exclaims his surprise — the plane must have been sent by the Machine. The roboplane ignores his interruption and gives its warning — there is an alien life form working behind the scenes, assisting the gang in their efforts. The Machine knows nothing about it, except that it is there and involved. It is nearby, and Gosseyn should be able to find out more information inside the detective's house.

The plane lands and instantly urges Gosseyn to get out. It cannot remain in the area for very long, and each moment it does so increases the chances of its discovery by the alien. He runs to the door, but turns and begins asking the questions which still fill his mind. It urges him more intensely to leave, saying that the gang must not know how Gosseyn arrived at the house. He reluctantly disembarks the plane, and goes out into the night and the pouring rain (the sound of which helped mask the plane's arrival). The roboplane takes off, leaving him alone.

It tells him to maintain the act until he deems the situation to have become too dangerous.

# The roboplane pauses briefly to let Gosseyn ask any questions he may have.

Rather than ask questions, Gosseyn makes protests against this plan as capable of accomplishing nothing but his own death, pointing out that no measures have been made to provide for his safety. The plane admits that this is the case, but tells him not to underestimate his abilities once danger arises, reminding him that he was captured and killed on Earth but seems none the worse for it now. Nevertheless, Gosseyn remains solid in his objections and refuses to cooperate.

The plane tells him that if he doesn't leave voluntarily, it will fill the cabin with a non-lethal gas that will force him into leaving. It tells him that the Machine itself created this plan, with Gosseyn's own well-being in mind. Gosseyn asks why it is so important that they capture him, and the plane replies that the gang must see for themselves that a dead man is not really dead.

The plane lands and urges Gosseyn out. He leaves quickly so that the plane will not use the gas. At the last moment he hesitates, but the plane reinforces the importance of a speedy departure, saying that the gang must not know how he came to the house. So, still not pleased with the situation but seeing no alternative, he reluctantly disembarks the plane and goes out into the night. The roboplane takes off, leaving him alone.

## SECTION #8

Synopsis of Text 45

### *Chapter VIII*

Gosseyn walks through the rain in the direction that the roboplane let him out, hoping it will lead to the house it spoke of. He is momentarily afraid of being hunted by wild animals, but realizes that they won't be out in the rain to hunt — if anywhere, they'll be under the cover of the trees. He also assumes, based on the plane's description, that the detective's house will be in the forest.

Thoroughly soaked and miserable, Gosseyn is relieved when the rain abates and eventually stops. He soon comes to dry ground, and since it is dark he can only assume that he has entered the forest. He walks for several minutes with no sign of nearby habitation, when he finally spots light in the distance. He continues in that direction until he comes to one of the gigantic Venusian trees with windows in its side, with light pouring out of them.

He stands and watches the windows for a short while to see if there is anyone inside. He detects no movement, so he approaches. He ascends a stairway carved into the side of the tree that leads to a terrace and a front door, which he knocks on.

Synopsis of Text 48/70

### *Chapter 10*

Gosseyn walks about a hundred yards away from where the plane landed, and soon spots light in the distance. He continues in that direction until he comes to one of the gigantic Venusian trees with windows in its side, with light pouring out of them. He reinforces his decision to go along with the Machine's plan as outlined to him by the roboplane.

He stands and watches the windows for a short while to see if there is anyone inside. He detects no movement, so he approaches. He ascends a stairway carved into the side of the tree that leads to a terrace and a front door, which he knocks on.

There is no response, which fits in with his earlier guess that no one was home even though all the lights were on. After knocking loudly again he tries the door, finds it unlocked, and enters. The corridor beyond has been literally carved out of the trunk of the tree — all the walls, ceiling, and floor are polished wood. Considering how ironic it would be if a man giving himself up would be shot and killed by the owner who thought him an ordinary thief, he knocks yet again, but there is still no response. He moves further into the house, finally convinced that the owner is not at home.

He notices a bright light coming into the hall from a room leading off, and he enters it. It is an opulent living room, whose lights he had seen when he was in the forest — the room is well lit, and the entire opposite wall is made of vast windows. He explores the rest of the house and finds several bedrooms, and all the other rooms common to all houses. He also finds a library, which arouses his excited interest with its exclusively Venusian (null-A) selection of books. He resolves to look at the library's contents in detail later on. Gosseyn wonders if the owner — a detective — is out searching for him while the target of the manhunt is exploring his house. The owner's absence, although momentarily convenient, creates some additional problems — Gosseyn had committed himself to the roboplane's advised course of action, but now that he has more time to consider it he is growing more hesitant about actually following through.

There is no response, and he realizes that the lights being on does not indicate that the owner is home. After knocking loudly again he tries the door, finds it unlocked, and enters. The corridor beyond has been literally carved out of the trunk of the tree — all the walls, ceiling, and floor are polished wood. Considering how ironic it would be if a man giving himself up would be shot and killed by the owner who thought him an ordinary thief, he knocks yet again, but there is still no response. He moves further into the house.

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# [In the serial, Gosseyn comes upon the garden later on in the chapter.]

He also finds a door to a central garden area which he cannot get a good look at due to the dark. He is finally convinced that the owner — Crang — is not at home. The owner's absence, although momentarily convenient, creates some additional problems — Gosseyn had committed himself to the roboplane's advised course of action, but as long as Crang isn't there he has time to reconsider and possibly leave.

He continues exploring the house. He finds a kitchen and a door that leads into a lengthy pitch-black passageway and closes it, moving on towards the bedrooms.

# Each bedroom has a connecting door to a central garden area which he cannot get a good look at due to the dark.

He selects a bedroom, washes his dirty rain-soaked clothes, takes a bath, and goes to bed. While lying there, his thoughts center on the mystery of his identity — he recalls having been told by X who he was, but now he cannot remember any of it, only that whatever it was it is very important.

He reminds himself that null-A has shown that all people are equal — none more inherently important than anyone else, since null-A training can bring all up to the same level. Yet, despite this fact, he is sure that he is "important." He drifts off to sleep.

While asleep, he hears faint whispering and feels something brush against him. Half-awake, he blames it on an insect, but then realizes that so far he has seen no insects at all on Venus. With the fuzzy logic of the half-asleep state, he reasons that the owner must have come back, and that's what he's hearing, and goes back to sleep.

He awakens the next morning with the excited thought that today he will be able to examine the library at his leisure. He then remembers the whispering of the previous night and his bleary explanations of them.

He continues exploring the house. He finds a kitchen and a door that leads into a lengthy pitch-black passageway and closes it, moving on towards the bedrooms.

# [In the revised version Gosseyn comes upon this garden earlier on in the chapter.]

He selects a bedroom, takes a bath, and goes to bed. While lying there, his thoughts center on the mystery of his identity.

He reminds himself that null-A has shown that all people are equal — none more inherently important than anyone else, since null-A training can bring all up to the same level. With the final nagging thought that whoever he is he must be important, he drifts off to sleep.

He awakens the next morning, and wonders if Crang has come home during the night, without noticing the presence of his unexpected house-guest.

Momentarily amused at his attitude of "Don't shoot me until I've had a good night's rest," he discards his intentions of exploring the library and settles on a course of action to announce his presence to the owner in a way that will not alarm him.

He performs his morning ablutions loudly, while whistling and splashing — Gosseyn does this on the theory that the owner will not shoot him instantly, but will have had prior awareness of Gosseyn's presence and will therefore assume him to be non-hostile. Gosseyn goes into the kitchen to fix breakfast, clattering pots and pans and noisily clanking silverware and slamming cabinets and drawers — again, whistling all the time loudly and without a tune. He even eats his breakfast as loudly and obnoxiously as possible. While eating, he begins to reevaluate his earlier idea that someone had arrived last night. He remembers the whispering, and in mild alarm he gets up and looks in all the other rooms for signs of someone else having been there. None of the other beds were slept in, but he finds the door to the dark passageway to be open. He dimly recalls having shut it the previous night, but does not exclude the possibility that he left it open by accident.

He goes to the living room and calms himself with the assurance that there is no evidence of anyone else being around. He notices the view out the window, and it being daytime now he can see the large and beautiful meadow across which he had walked the previous night.

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Gosseyn therefore searches the house and calms himself with the assurance that there is no evidence of anyone else being around. He returns to the door leading to the dark passageway, toys with the idea of exploring it, but chooses not to.

He goes to the living room and

notices the view out the window, and it being daytime now he can see the large and beautiful meadow across which he had walked the previous night.

The meadow is part of a garden many acres large, part of which comes up to the side of the house. He remembers the **dark central** garden **connecting the bedrooms** and goes to it. In the light of the day he can now see many fantastic Venusian plants, including tree-size flowers. **He enjoys the scents and colors for a while then proceeds to the library.**

He selects four books from the shelves — a history of Venus, a book about the creation of the Machine, one on solipsism, and one about the detectives on Venus. **He finds the owner's name "Eldred Crang" in the front of the books — Gosseyn remembers X saying a man named Crang had assisted in rigging the Games.**

He settles down with the history book, **all the while knowing the owner could return at any moment.** The history relates the story of man's first landing on Venus and the century-later efforts of the Institute of General Semantics to colonize it using the Games Machine to select colonists.

Some statistics are also given: there are approximately 120 million men and a slightly larger number of women on Venus as of the present year (2560).

The meadow is part of a garden many acres large, part of which comes up to the side of the house. He remembers **the door to the garden** and goes to it.

In the light of the day he can now see many fantastic Venusian plants, including tree-size flowers. **Unable to properly appreciate the garden, he returns to the living room, deciding to do some reading while waiting for Crang's return.**

He selects four books from the shelves — a history of Venus, a book about the creation of the Machine, one on solipsism, and one about the detectives on Venus. **He finds reading difficult at first, then puts on some music to create some background noise. He eats lunch with a book at hand and after dinner**

he settles down with the history book.

The history relates the story of man's first landing on Venus and the century-later efforts of the Institute of General Semantics to colonize it using the Games Machine to select colonists.

**But before they could settle Venus, it had to be terraformed. Ice meteors taken from orbit around Jupiter were melted in orbit around Venus, and the subsequent three-year rains produced oceans and a breathable atmosphere.**

Some statistics are also given: there are approximately 120 million men and a slightly larger number of women on Venus as of the present year (2560).

Gosseyn then reads an account of the first man on Venus, Daniel Miller, who was convinced that there was some native intelligence lingering and watching him during his brief trip into the forest — he stated that the natives must be highly camouflaged in order to avoid detection and warns his men to remain on the lookout. The book's author remarks that in the 400 years of human habitation, no one has detected these beings, and that Venus is unique in that it has only vegetable life and no animal life of any kind. The author also states that there have been certain finds that have been thought to indicate a native life-form, but he goes to great length to discredit these discoveries. The foremost of which is the many hollowed-out trees used by men as homes. The author explains them away as the result of a type of dry rot that prohibits the growth of irregularly shaped areas within the tree's trunk. Gosseyn finds this argument unconvincing, and, looking around him at the interior of one such tree, and concludes the dimensions are too exact and convenient to be a random phenomenon.

He puts aside the history book and again thinks on the whispering sounds he heard the previous night. He soon abandons this trail of thought as unfruitful due to lack of any further evidence and he lacks the time to give it greater consideration.

Gosseyn wonders if the greater number of women might explain why Amelia, presumably a balanced null-A personality, had married John Prescott, obviously an unbalanced individual with an ambivalent attitude towards null-A.

He moves on and begins reading the book about solipsism written by a Dr. Lauren Kair, who, according to a note in the book, is currently working as a psychiatrist on Earth. While reading the book, Gosseyn comes upon a section explaining that people who have suffered serious accidents sometimes suffer from mental symptoms, including egotism, which were not present in the individual before the trauma. Gosseyn concludes that X must have been such a person — a reasonable null-A man, who suffered a terrible accident and as a result is now mentally unbalanced.

That night, while he is asleep, Gosseyn hears the whispering sounds again. He somehow senses that they are many voices, debating — some advocate taking action and other are advising a more cautious approach. They soon stop, and he senses that they have agreed hesitantly on a decision. He then has a strange dream — out in the void of space is a group of unimaginably alien intelligences traveling at tremendous velocities. Gosseyn feels as if he is one of them, perceiving what they do and as they do. He is profoundly disturbed by the sheer alienness of them and awakens with a jolt.

After reading the history, he goes to bed and begins reading the book about solipsism written by a Dr. Lauren Kair, who, according to a note in the book, is currently working as a psychiatrist on Earth. While reading the book, Gosseyn comes upon a chapter explaining that people who have suffered serious accidents sometimes suffer from mental symptoms, including egotism, which were not present in the individual before the trauma. Gosseyn concludes that X must have been such a person — a reasonable null-A man, who suffered a terrible accident and as a result is now mentally unbalanced, and due to the nature of the accident the aberrations went unnoticed by psychiatrists.

After some thought he dismisses it as the manifestation of his uneasy mind. It has however reminded him of the roboplane's statement that an alien intelligence is involved with the gang and evidence of it can be found in the detective's house. He gets up and decides the time has come to investigate. The dark passageway leading deep into the tree is undoubtedly where he will find the answers, and after getting a flashlight he begins the long walk down into the dark tunnel.

He goes to sleep and wakes up the next morning, with still no sign of Crang. He decides that he will wait one more day, and then if he still hasn't arrived he will do some investigating. The whole day passes with no arrival.

He again goes to sleep and wakes up the next morning, and Crang still hasn't come home. After breakfast, Gosseyn tries to place a long distance call on the videophone, but he is very surprised when the robot operator asks him which star he would like to call. He hurriedly makes an apology and hangs up. He chides himself for not considering that Crang's house, the Venusian base of operations for the gang, would have to have the ability to communicate across vast interstellar distances.

He then tries to place a local call, but the robot operator informs him that only Crang is authorized to make local calls from that phone. Dismayed at having wasted so much time, he decides the time has come to investigate the dark passageway he noticed earlier, and after getting a flashlight he begins the long walk down into the dark tunnel.

## SECTION #9

Synopsis of Text 45

*Chapter IX (first half)*

*[Part 2 of the serial begins with Chapter IX, which includes a brief recap that reemphasizes all the salient events so far. Van later used these serial recaps (unaltered to account for the revised contents of the later, more widely read book editions!) as well as those in the serial of The Players of Â, as an overall memory refresher in the introduction to 1985's Null-A Three.]*

As Gosseyn explores the tunnel, he chides himself for putting himself in potential danger, since he is apparently the most important person in this whole series of events and the only one who knows of the gang's plot. But he reminds himself that the Machine ordered him into this situation, and it has his and humanity's best interests in mind. He knows he can get information from the gang members, but still believes the Machine knows more than it's willing to tell him. Rather fed up with being shuffled around, clueless, he resolves to in future agree to nothing until he gets some explanations. Yet he reminds himself that a dead man can do no good, and that he shouldn't expect to survive being killed again.

Synopsis of Text 48/70

*Chapter 11*

The seemingly endless tunnel branches off into side corridors several times, but he is able to avoid getting lost by sketching his route in a notebook. After quite some time he concludes that he is deep beneath the surface, and that these tangled tunnels must be the hollow roots of the gargantuan trees above him. Having followed the main passageway, he begins to wonder what the side tunnels lead to — he searches for any indications as to where each tunnel leads, **concluding that such a magnificent maze of tunnels must have been constructed according to some plan,**

but he finds no directional clues or signs of habitation. Realizing that exploring this region would take days, he retraces his steps back to Crang's house to get provisions for the necessary tedium ahead.

He makes some sandwiches and is in the middle of breakfast when Crang and three of his henchmen burst into the house with guns. Gosseyn is relieved **to be out of the potential danger of the tunnels as well as to finally meet Crang. He prepares to give his performance of believing them to be regular detectives.**

While Gosseyn is held at gunpoint with his hands in the air,

Blayney, one of Crang's men, sees the sandwiches and confronts Gosseyn with the accusation that he was about to leave — the man is almost hysterical over the possibility of Gosseyn getting away, and strikes him.

The seemingly endless tunnel branches off into side corridors several times, but he is able to avoid getting lost by sketching his route in a notebook. After quite some time he concludes that he is deep beneath the surface, and that these tangled tunnels must be the hollow roots of the gargantuan trees above him. Having followed the main passageway, he begins to wonder what the side tunnels lead to — he searches for any indications as to where each tunnel leads,

but he finds no directional clues or signs of habitation. Realizing that exploring this region would take days, he retraces his steps back to Crang's house to get provisions for the necessary tedium ahead.

He makes some sandwiches and is in the middle of lunch when Crang and three of his henchmen burst into the house with guns. Gosseyn is relieved to finally meet Crang, **whom he knows to be a secret null-A and therefore capable of possible, if limited, help.**

While Gosseyn is held at gunpoint with his hands in the air, **considering how to best relay the story the Machine instructed him to tell,**

Blayney, one of Crang's men, sees the sandwiches and confronts Gosseyn with the accusation that he was about to leave — the man is almost hysterical over the possibility of Gosseyn getting away, and strikes him.

Crang restrains Blayney from further violence, and Gosseyn tells Crang that by the time Blayney is 40 years old he will be a liability rather than an asset. Gosseyn explains that Blayney must have been reckless when young and as he gets older he is slowly realizing that those experiences could have killed him, and is now reacting with fear at the slightest hint of things going wrong — he will also soon begin having nightmares about being injured in situations when he was young. Blayney's reaction to this analysis is sadly predictable, asking for permission to hit Gosseyn again, but Crang asks Blayney what he cares what Gosseyn thinks. Gosseyn is satisfied that he has now planted in their minds the impression of Blayney as a loose canon.

Rather appalled at their lack of pretense of being reasonable Venusian detectives, Gosseyn wonders if he can do his performance of naivety convincingly, but chooses to tell his story as if to null-A detectives anyway.

Crang's reaction is one of momentary confusion,

Crang restrains Blayney from further violence, and Gosseyn tells Crang that by the time Blayney is 40 years old he will be a liability rather than an asset. Gosseyn explains that Blayney has begun acting as if things that *could* have gone wrong indeed *have* gone wrong, indicating a severe mental disorder, and is becoming a coward and compensating with unnecessary violence — he will also soon begin having nightmares about being injured in situations when he was young — in short, a typical case of lack of null-A integration. Blayney's reaction to this analysis is sadly predictable, asking for permission to hit Gosseyn again, but Crang asks Blayney what he cares what Gosseyn thinks.

Gosseyn tells the story the Machine instructed him to tell, as if he were telling it to genuine null-A detectives.

Crang's reaction is one of momentary confusion. During this time Gosseyn studies Crang; he has no emotional reaction towards the man, whom he knows Patricia loves. Based on the color of his skin Gosseyn speculates that Crang comes from a world whose sun is more intense than Earth's. He reminds himself that the Machine told him to expect little or no help from Crang, since he must keep up pretenses in his role as a leading member of the gang. Crang eventually laughs,

but then tells Gosseyn that they need not keep up pretenses anymore, and that they are taking him back to Earth within the hour. Realizing that he is now going to be removed from the one place where his warnings would do any good, Gosseyn grimly mentally reviews his time on Venus — in three week's time he was able to warn only two people — John and Amelia Prescott — and they merely relayed it unknowingly to the already corrupt Venusian detectives.

Crang then has the Prescotts brought into the room — the two others who know what Gosseyn knows are now under the control of the gang. John tells Gosseyn that this is a very bad sign, and Gosseyn mutters an apology for getting them involved. This new turn of events makes him reflect on how many innocent people have been killed through the millennia. He speculates that the unsuspecting Venusians will no doubt soon be surprise attacked by the gang's fleets, awaiting their orders, to come no doubt after Gosseyn is dealt with.

and tells Gosseyn that they need not keep up pretenses anymore, and that they are taking him back to Earth within the hour to let Hardie and the rest decide what to do with him.

Gosseyn grimly mentally reviews the short time he's been on Venus — he has been able to warn only one person — Amelia Prescott — and she merely relayed it unknowingly to the already corrupt Venusian detectives.

Crang then has the Prescotts brought into the room. They are both bound and gagged. John Prescott obviously continued his subservience to the gang rather than side with null-A and has been restrained for pure show, while his wife Amelia struggles against her bonds. Gosseyn knows that John is a member of the gang, but has a secret but wavering alliance with null-A, but apparently the gang doesn't know he knows. He decides to play along, to keep this knowledge as a tool in the future.

## SECTION #10

Synopsis of Text 45

*Chapter IX (second half)*

Two days later, aboard a large spaceship traveling to Earth, Crang tells Gosseyn that there are four hundred guards on the ship to ensure that Gosseyn arrives at the destination with a minimum of trouble, and that he is one of a handful of people who know of Gosseyn's true identity. Gosseyn's reaction to this revelation is not one of excitement, but one of ordinary acceptance; during his time on Venus he had wondered and speculated on the puzzle of who he is, and has long since grown accustomed to thinking on it.

He asks Crang to tell him who he is, not expecting to be told. Crang refuses, and gives an example of what happened last time they told him — he escaped and was killed. He also explains that he knows *why* Gosseyn has false memories and is being kept ignorant by the Machine, and agrees that it is a good reason. He again reaffirms Thorson's comparison of Gosseyn to George the jungle boy, a human living among inferior animals. Gosseyn asks what they intend to do with him, and Crang tells him he will find out the next night, on Earth.

Synopsis of Text 48/70

*Chapter 12-14*

Two days later, aboard a large spaceship traveling to Earth, Crang tells Gosseyn that there are four hundred guards on the ship to ensure that Gosseyn arrives at the destination with a minimum of trouble. Gosseyn considers Crang's position in things: a secret null-A and yet still a high-ranking member of the gang. He realizes Crang will have to do many unjust and unpleasant things to remain in his position, yet the good effects that will be brought about in the end by having a null-A individual in such an influential place will balance out the evil he must do.

Crang leaves, and Gosseyn looks out a porthole and considers his situation. Realizing that he will be spending all of the foreseeable future in the gang's custody, he wonders what plans the alien intelligence on Venus has, and if they are different than the gang's. He wonders if X knows of the aliens, and if not whether he should warn him.

After landing in a foggy City of the Machine, Gosseyn is moved to the president's Palace where he is shown to his own spacious apartment. Crang enters with him, and a butler comes in and tells Gosseyn his evening suit has been laid out. Gosseyn cracks a joke at Crang, that he's heard of an executioner dressing up for the occasion, but never the victim. Crang appreciates the humor, but reminds Gosseyn that the gang are determined, hardened people who know that in the null-A world they would have had no place. Crang then relates his bitter experiences when he was younger, striving and failing to meet the demanding requirements of null-A. He says that according to that philosophy, all members of the gang are mentally unsound, having to cheat to pass the Machine's tests, but that their intelligence has allowed them to go much farther than the mere paper-pushing jobs they would have been assigned if they had not cheated. Crang sums up his sentiments by stating that death is better than being a menial worker, that being dead would be less frustrating.

After landing in a foggy City of the Machine, Gosseyn is moved to the president's Palace where he is shown to his own spacious apartment. Crang enters with him and draws attention to the three other doors in the room, including one that leads to a back entrance. He warns Gosseyn that although no guards will be posted to watch him, he states that escape is impossible.

After getting a hold of himself, he states that the gang is poised to take over the solar system, with Gosseyn being the only thing holding them back. Gosseyn asks why they don't just kill him, and Crang replies that it didn't work the first time, and that they must assume he is invincible. The gang was very shocked when the Prescotts told Gosseyn's story to the detectives they met, that he was the same man in a new body, and that this revelation has prevented them from taking their plans any further until his role is fully understood.

Gosseyn thinks for a few moments, and chooses not to tell them his own belief that he is *not* invincible. Crang asks Gosseyn what he thinks of what he has said, and Gosseyn's reply is that there is no need to eliminate the Machine's tests, but that there is room for improvement.

Crang leaves, but first tells Gosseyn to be dressed and ready within **half** an hour, since he wants to show him something before dinner.

Crang leaves, but first tells Gosseyn to be dressed and ready within an hour, since he wants to show him something before dinner.

While dressing, Gosseyn considers if escape really is possible, and wonders if they are trying to encourage him to attempt it. He selects a suit, and at that moment someone comes through the back door. Putting on a robe, he goes out into the main room to investigate.

The person is Patricia Hardie, who has secretly come to ask Gosseyn some questions. She chides him for leaving her room so abruptly during his prior escape, and asks him if he really was killed.

Before he can answer, she tells him she is suspected of having released him last time, and tells him that it must not be known that she is in his room. She finally asks him who he really is.

He relates to her his experiences on Venus, but excludes the information that he knows on John Prescott's identity and null-A sympathies (even though he learned this from her). Patricia is disappointed that this second body is as ignorant as his first, and tells him that he is being manipulated.

He asks what her role is in all these schemes. She sidesteps the question, instead hurriedly relaying some more information: Thorson is the representative of someone named "Enro," and they have been forced to postpone their invasion of Venus due to Gosseyn's mysterious presence. She explains that his sudden appearance on the scene has everyone confused, and the Galactic League is uncertain whether whoever introduced Gosseyn is a friend or foe. She suggests he investigates further into X's motivations, and says that even the gang is unsure of them. She finally advises him to stay alive no matter the cost, and leaves the way she came.

Gosseyn takes a shower, wondering about Patricia's motives and role. When he comes out, he finds President Hardie in the room waiting for him. Hardie tells Gosseyn he had this room prepared so they could converse without anyone listening in.

Gosseyn is filled with anger at the sight of Hardie, for having cheated and plotted to achieve his current status. Hardie proposes a two-way question and answer session, whereby they will take turns answering each other's queries. Seeing the value of this, Gosseyn puts his anger aside and agrees.

Gosseyn's first question is to ask exactly who Hardie is. Hardie refuses to answer, saying that revealing such information could lead to ruin. Gosseyn then asks if he knows any more about his identity than is already widely known. Hardie affirms that he does: he explains how he received a letter shortly before Gosseyn's appearance on the scene, in which the anonymous writer told of how he knew of the gang's secret plot, and that Gosseyn — who will be able to prevent their schemes from coming to fruition — would be found at a certain hotel. Hardie reveals that he burnt the letter and kept its information — only some of which he has just told Gosseyn — from all the other gang members.

Slightly taken aback at how many gang members seem to have their own secret plans, Gosseyn asks what they intend to do with him. Hardie says that Thorson and X are hashing out an offer for Gosseyn, which he suggests he accept for the moment to save his skin. He also notes that most of them believe Gosseyn has a third body somewhere, so killing him again would be futile.

This leads Gosseyn to realize that he has not been out of the gang's control ever since he first met Teresa Clark — he even suspects that the roboplane who took him to Crang's house might have been a carefully trained servant of the gang, to pretend to have instructions from the Machine. He does not believe a third body exists, or even that his present form is a *second* body, but chooses to not reveal this skepticism to his captors.

It is then Hardie's turn to ask Gosseyn questions. He asks if Gosseyn has been contacted by anyone claiming to be part of the group who sent him to Earth in the first place. Gosseyn replies that unless it is the Machine, the answer is no. Hardie unconsciously uses some null-A logic to point out that that is speculation, then realizes what he has done — he says that he's noticed other gang members using null-A logic also and muses on the irony of this. Hardie then asks if Gosseyn "feels" any different than other, normal human beings, to which the answer is no.

Hardie then asks how Gosseyn found Crang's house on Venus; Gosseyn relates the incident with the roboplane. Gosseyn interrupts Hardie's next question to ask what they discovered in the photographs of his brain, and Hardie explains that some extra brain tissue was found. Hardie re-asks his question about the roboplane.

Gosseyn says that it seemed to be from the Machine, but he found its instructions to surrender to be suspicious, and Hardie reveals that lately Thorson has withheld information from him, so he cannot say with certainty whether the gang had anything to do with the roboplane or not — indeed, this withholding of information is why he is having this interview with Gosseyn.

He tells Gosseyn that the Machine thought him to be a potential dictator and so it kept him from greater power. Yet he was able, with the gang's help in corrupting the Games, to become President.

They are interrupted by one of Hardie's men who had been on lookout for anyone approaching the room, and reports that Thorson is coming. Hardie briefly expresses his satisfaction with this exchange of information, and says that he believes Gosseyn does in fact have a third body. He then leaves through the back door, and Thorson shortly thereafter enters through the front door.

### *Chapter 13*

Gosseyn can discern Thorson's nervousness and doubt in the dependability of his fellow gang members. Thorson comments wryly on Gosseyn's "interesting perfume" — Gosseyn realizes that Patricia's scent still lingers in the room. Gosseyn asks Thorson what he wants; he merely says that he wants a good look at him, gets a good look, and leaves. Rather mystified by this strange action, Gosseyn continues dressing.

The front door opens yet again. It is John Prescott this time, who hurriedly explains to Gosseyn that he is a member of the gang, yet secretly has allied himself with null-A — information of which Gosseyn was already aware, and now that the information has been presented to him he will no longer be able to hold that trump card as a surprise. Prescott explains that the only reason why he is revealing himself is because of his wife Amelia, who is totally innocent and a true prisoner of the gang. He tells Gosseyn that Thorson and X intend to do something unpleasant to her as a means of manipulating Gosseyn. For this reason, Prescott demands — holding Gosseyn at gunpoint — that he take a pill he brought with him that will supposedly act as an antidote in the eventuality that Prescott is forced to do something drastic. After verifying Prescott's statements with the lie detector, Gosseyn has no choice but to comply. Gosseyn wishes him good luck with his wife, and Prescott leaves.

Alone yet again, he reflects on how so many people have come to him hurriedly and secretly, each with their own plans in mind. Evidently, there are many conspiracies in the works, and a turning point is rapidly approaching. He thinks on the imminent invasion of Venus — presumably by fleets from outside the solar system — and the ridiculous idea that somehow he will be able to prevent it all.

Several guards show up after the allotted time, and escort him down a few floors to a locked door where they meet up with Crang. He unlocks the door and instructs Gosseyn to go inside and look at the body. Realizing that he must mean the corpse of his first body, he goes inside and finds the room to be a large laboratory, with an elevated slab with a sheet covering a body. He approaches, and momentarily becomes quite nervous at the prospect of seeing his own dead form. He removes the sheet

and sees what he expected: the battered remains of Gilbert Gosseyn I.

The middle part of the body is nothing but a charred mess, but the head is totally intact — Gosseyn speculates that the guards who killed him had orders not to damage it, to preserve his brain for further study. This speculation is confirmed when he notices that the top half of the head had been removed and then replaced at some point — he guesses that the brain was taken out.

He has however made a positive step forward by convincing himself that there is not more than one Gilbert Gosseyn body, despite all the opinions expressed to him to the contrary. To have accepted it as truth would cultivate a careless attitude and could be disastrous.

After finishing dressing, Gosseyn hears a knock on the door and answers it. He is relieved to find just Crang, rather than yet another gang conspirator with hurried whispers and inscrutable motives. Crang escorts him down a few floors to a locked door. He unlocks the door and instructs Gosseyn to go inside and look at the body. Realizing that he must mean the corpse of his first body, he goes inside and finds the room to be a large laboratory, with an elevated slab with a sheet covering a body. He approaches, and momentarily becomes quite nervous at the prospect of seeing his own dead form. He removes the sheet.

#### *Chapter 14*

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He then realizes that this is why he was brought back to Earth: after their study of that brain, they discovered much more about him, and wish to do various tests with a second one, in the head of Gosseyn II.

At that moment X wheels himself into the lab, followed by President Hardie, Thorson, Patricia, and two guards. Gosseyn notices that X is somehow different than the last time they met, but can't quite pinpoint exactly how. When X speaks, Gosseyn also notices that the voice is slightly different.

X tells Gosseyn that he assumes he has no plans for preventing the gang from killing him a second time — and indeed Gosseyn doesn't. X asks the guards to bring in Amelia Prescott, and summons other guards to restrain Gosseyn.

Bound and gagged, and apparently having put up quite a struggle against her guards, she smiles at Gosseyn when she sees him. X explains to Gosseyn that they are ready to launch a massive assault, of a magnitude unequalled since the **Fourth** World War: 9,000 spaceships, 40 million men, and the backing of virtually inexhaustible ammunition factories.

He goes on to say that due to Gosseyn these plans have been put on hold, and offers him an opportunity to join the gang, but only if he is willing to do what is necessary: to kill without compunction — in this instance, 20 million select inhabitants of Venus.

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Bound and gagged, and apparently having put up quite a struggle against her guards, she smiles at Gosseyn when she sees him. X explains to Gosseyn that they are ready to launch a massive assault, of a magnitude unequalled since the **Third** World War: 9,000 spaceships, 40 million men, and the backing of virtually inexhaustible ammunition factories — a force which is but a small part of a mighty empire's.

He goes on to say that due to Gosseyn these plans have been put on hold, and offers him an opportunity to join the gang, but only if he is willing to do what is necessary: to kill without compunction — in this instance, 20 million select inhabitants of Venus.

X states that there is no real difference between killing 20 and 20 million, except in the minds of the survivors, a problem which a solid propaganda campaign should remedy. Gosseyn asks what will be done with those 180 million who will be spared. X's response is that a reign of terror, with merciless punishments, has in the past proven to be enough to control a populace once the government has been destroyed — Venusian's government is very democratic and therefore very large. X offers Gosseyn the ability to reorganize Venus after the massacre and he asks Gosseyn what his decision is: to join or not?

Gosseyn's response is a emphatic refusal, and tells X and the gang to all burn in hell.

X immediately has Thorson kill Amelia with a syringe full of poison, and Gosseyn is held by four guards as he struggles to free himself to save her. X begins to explain that the gang has an advantage over null-A, in that they have no morals, they merely do what they must to succeed. He is in the middle of telling Gosseyn what the death of Amelia was meant to show when he suddenly and inexplicably falls out of his chair, unconscious. Everyone else in the room experiences an identical loss of consciousness, leaving a very confused Gosseyn wondering what has happened.

X states that there is no real difference between killing 20 and 20 million, except in the minds of the survivors, a problem which a solid propaganda campaign should remedy. Gosseyn asks what will be done with those 220 million who will be spared. X's response is that a reign of terror, with merciless punishments, has in the past proven to be enough to control a populace once the government has been destroyed — Venusian's government is very democratic and therefore very large. X offers Gosseyn the ability to reorganize Venus after the massacre and he asks Gosseyn what his decision is: to join or not?

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## SECTION #11

Synopsis of Text 45

*Chapter X - XI*

Gosseyn soon shakes off his confusion and makes the best of this opportunity by taking a gun from one of the unconscious guards and disarming the others. He first examines X to see if he is dead; X is still alive, so he assumes the others are as well. He is on the verge of leaving the room when it opens and John Prescott comes in. **Both men are relieved that they don't have to confront a gang member.**

**Prescott expresses astonishment that Gosseyn was somehow able to remain conscious despite the** Drae sleeping powder he put in the Palace's air conditioning system. Gosseyn explains to Prescott that his wife was injected with something right before he entered, and Prescott hurriedly administers a test to see if she is alive. The test however confirms that she is dead, and Prescott takes two of the nearby guns and kills X, President Hardie, and a few guards. Prescott is on the verge of murdering Thorson, but hesitates, giving Gosseyn an opportunity to recover from his shock in time to stop him. He berates Prescott for being incredibly foolish.

After departing from the Palace (all its inhabitants being unconscious) they steal a car and flee to a different part of the thickly-fogged City. They leave the car and continue on foot.

Synopsis of Text 48/70

*Chapter 15 - 17*

Gosseyn soon shakes off his confusion and makes the best of this opportunity by taking a gun from one of the unconscious guards and disarming the others. He first examines X to see if he is dead; X is still alive, so he assumes the others are as well. He is on the verge of leaving the room when it opens and John Prescott comes in.

**Prescott explains that he put** Drae sleeping powder into the Palace's air conditioning system, **and the antidote he gave Gosseyn earlier protected him from its effects.** Gosseyn explains to Prescott that his wife was injected with something right before he entered, and Prescott hurriedly administers a test to see if she is alive. The test however confirms that she is dead, and Prescott takes two of the nearby guns and kills X, President Hardie, and a few guards. Prescott is on the verge of murdering Thorson, but hesitates, giving Gosseyn an opportunity to recover from his shock in time to stop him. He berates Prescott for being incredibly foolish.

After departing from the Palace (all its inhabitants being unconscious) they steal a car and flee to a different part of the thickly-fogged City. They leave the car and continue on foot.

Over the City's public address speakers, they hear a report of President Hardie's assassination by Gosseyn, and the culprit's escape, assisted by a Venusian detective.

The speaker warns everyone to remain indoors during the manhunt. Gosseyn reflects on how this is the first time null-A has been openly attacked and that the gang have no choice now but to continue with their plans. The report also mentioned that it was the 26th day of the Games — Gosseyn gets Prescott to confirm this, being under the impression that it was only the 22nd or so, and has therefore lost track of four days' worth of time. Prescott also notices how the report failed to describe him as one of the assassins.

Gosseyn realizes that now that X is dead, there is nobody he can think of from whom he can get information about the possible alien involvement in the gang's plot. He also speculates that now that X and Hardie are dead, Crang will undoubtedly take over a leadership role.

# *[The fog reference occurs later in the serial version.]*

Over the City's public address speakers, they hear a report of President Hardie's assassination by Gosseyn. It goes on to say that Gosseyn was acting under the Games Machine's orders, with the assistance of the Venusians, as part of a massive plot against the Earth. The speaker warns everyone to remain indoors during the manhunt.

Gosseyn realizes that this inaccurate report is an open attempt to portray null-A as a harmful influence — the first such accusation that he has ever come across. Obviously the gang is using this incident as propaganda to rally public opposition to null-A to facilitate their takeover plans.

# For a moment he considers how the heavy fog will seriously hinder the authorities' search — radar machines could be used to pierce the fog, but that would pose logistical difficulties that would slow the search.

Realizing that for the first time since his arrival in the city almost a month ago, he is free from the manipulating influence of others and can now act of his own accord.

He settles on a plan to find out as much as possible about himself, to find solutions to unanswered questions.

He explains his plan to Prescott: they will find a psychiatrist and get his brain examined, and find out why it is so important. It is also vital to deal with a psychiatrist with whom he has had no prior dealing, since the authorities are no doubt keeping a close watch on all of his acquaintances. Gosseyn also tells Prescott of how during his manipulation by the gang and the Machine, he went along so easily because he was hoping someone else would sort out the situation. He now knows only he himself can do this, **and that Prescott is currently in the same denial phase he himself went through earlier on. Prescott is almost definitely being secretly hunted as well.**

# **Fortunately**, the heavy fog will seriously hinder the authorities' search.

The plan is to go to a small store and have Prescott buy a map of the City while Gosseyn uses a directory to find the address of Dr. Lauren Kair (whose book on solipsism Gosseyn read on Venus). **Gosseyn knows Prescott to be very inexperienced in conspiratorial matters, so is extra alert to compensate for any mistakes he might make.**

Realizing that for the first time since his arrival in the city almost a month ago, he is free from the manipulating influence of others and can now act of his own accord — **but forced into working in conjunction with the still unpredictable John Prescott, gang member secretly allied to null-A.** He settles on a plan to find out as much as possible about himself, to find solutions to unanswered questions.

He explains his plan to Prescott: they will find a psychiatrist and get his brain examined, and find out why it is so important. It is also vital to deal with a psychiatrist with whom he has had no prior dealing, since the authorities are no doubt keeping a close watch on all of his acquaintances. Gosseyn also tells Prescott of how during his manipulation by the gang and the Machine, he went along so easily because he was hoping someone else would sort out the situation. He now knows only he himself can do this.

# *[The fog reference occurs earlier in the revised version.]*

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## Chapter XI

Gosseyn and Prescott come to Dr. Kair's house. The plan is to have Prescott go up and ring the doorbell, introducing himself as a fellow Venusian, while keeping some Drae powder ready to render the protective group unconscious if there is any trouble. To prepare for such an eventuality, Prescott takes an antidote pill — but Gosseyn, seemingly immune to the powder though seeing the wisdom in taking precautions, refuses to take a pill, wanting to keep his brain uncontaminated for Kair's tests.

Prescott rings the doorbell, and Dr. Kair answers it. Gosseyn and Prescott introduce themselves, and instead of having the reaction of one in danger, Kair merely puts the members of the protective group elsewhere in the house on routine standby. The members can listen to the conversation between Kair and his visitors through closed-circuit television with a scrambling device which transmits only the intonation of words, not the words themselves — this way, privacy is respected while any threatening speech or raised voices can be immediately identified. Kair silently studies Gosseyn's appearance in the null-A fashion of appraisal for a couple of minutes, and Gosseyn patiently permits him to do so.

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Prescott rings the doorbell, and Dr. Kair answers it, after presumably

putting the members of the protective group elsewhere in the house on routine standby.

Kair silently studies Gosseyn's appearance in the null-A fashion of appraisal for a couple of minutes, and Gosseyn patiently permits him to do so.

Kair goes back into the house briefly to fetch a lie detector and, holding it in his hands, tells Gosseyn that the government announcement about the assassination of President Hardie and the others is the most emotionally manipulative material he has come upon in his entire life — the ignorant will have been convinced by this announcement, while those with null-A training will recognize it for the deceitful propaganda that it is. Though unaware if Gosseyn is guilty or innocent of the crimes he is accused of, the fact that such propaganda is being used justifies allowing Gosseyn himself to tell his involvement in the affair. Gosseyn agrees, but insists that at no time during the tests is he to be rendered unconscious; he wishes to remain aware and in full control of himself at all times, as a precaution. Kair understands and respects his request.

Kair administers several dozen tests on Gosseyn, who takes this time to tell Kair what has happened to him since arriving in the City of the Machine several weeks earlier. Gosseyn also explains his theory that Gilbert Gosseyn I and himself were twins, two mutations whom the Games Machine discovered and used to interfere with the gang's plot and to investigate into the possible alien involvement. During all this, Prescott twice leaves the house to wander around outside.

After Gosseyn explains why they've come, Kair goes back into the house briefly to fetch a lie detector and, holding it in his hands, tells Gosseyn that the government announcement about the assassination of President Hardie and the others is the most emotionally manipulative material he has come upon in his entire life — the ignorant will have been convinced by this announcement, while those with null-A training will recognize it for the deceitful propaganda that it is. Though unaware if Gosseyn is guilty or innocent of the crimes he is accused of, the fact that such propaganda is being used justifies allowing Gosseyn himself to tell his involvement in the affair. Gosseyn agrees, but insists that at no time during the tests is he to be rendered unconscious; he wishes to remain aware and in full control of himself at all times, as a precaution. Kair understands and respects his request.

Kair administers several dozen tests on Gosseyn, who takes this time to tell Kair what has happened to him since arriving in the City of the Machine several weeks earlier.

At one point Kair interrupts Gosseyn to ask whether or not he actually killed Hardie and the others. Prescott speaks up, acknowledging his guilt.

He tells Kair that if he comes to trial he plans to plead insanity, but Kair points out that no **Venusian** has ever successfully plead guilty to an offense **before a Venusian judge** and that he had better refine his story. This accusation of deceitfulness surprises Gosseyn temporarily, but is confirmed when Prescott unconsciously moves his hand to a concealed gun in his pocket, **but catches himself before actually reaching it.**

They disarm Prescott, and Gosseyn speculates that the house has been surrounded by gang members.

They tie and gag Prescott. **Gosseyn mentions his observations to Kair about how Prescott had twice gone out at regular intervals, presumably to check up with the men stationed outside. He nervously tells Kair that if Prescott doesn't show up for his next scheduled checkup the gang will probably move in.**

Kair calmly tells Gosseyn that that is not their primary concern at the moment, that the most important thing is for him to describe what the tests have revealed about the extra material in his brain.

At one point Kair interrupts Gosseyn to ask whether or not he actually killed Hardie and the others. Prescott speaks up, acknowledging his guilt — **he was forced to choose between the gang he served and the null-A philosophy he secretly followed.** He tells Kair that if he comes to trial he plans to plead **temporary** insanity, but Kair points out that no **null-A** has ever successfully plead guilty to an offense and that he had better refine his story. This accusation of deceitfulness surprises Gosseyn temporarily, but is confirmed when Prescott unconsciously moves his hand to a concealed gun in his pocket, **but Gosseyn grabs it first.**

They disarm Prescott, and Gosseyn speculates that the house has been surrounded by gang members.

### *Chapter 16*

They tie and gag Prescott. **Gosseyn speculates that although Prescott hasn't ventured outside he must have been in communication with the men surrounding the house by some other means.**

Kair calmly tells Gosseyn that that is not their primary concern at the moment, that the most important thing is for him to describe what the tests have revealed about the extra material in his brain.

After mentioning that the extra material in his head is not an extra brain *per se* that can increase his intelligence, Kair goes into a brief account of the Games Machine. He points out that although the Machine is capable of the seemingly impressive task of administering thousands of tests simultaneously, it is not more intelligent than Man — it can do such a task because it has thousands of subsidiary brains that carry out routine operations. But it can be creative — having been built over a vast mine of various metals, it manages mining, and creates robots to carry out repairs and do lab work, using an almost limitless supply of atomic energy to run things. It however has its limits: it was programmed with three guiding principles that it cannot go against: (1) It has to fairly administer the Games according to the laws set down by the Institute of General Semantics; (2) It has to guard the welfare and development of null-A; and (3) It can only kill in self-defense.

While Kair is explaining what he has discovered, the two men busy themselves with other tasks, knowing that time is short. Gosseyn gives Prescott a thorough search,

eventually finding a tracking device in his shoe. Presumably a similar device was used by Patricia Hardie when she was masquerading as Teresa Clark.

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While Kair is explaining what he has discovered, the two men busy themselves with other tasks, knowing that time is short. Gosseyn gives Prescott a thorough search — **noticing briefly that Prescott is wearing the disposable plastic clothing now in common use** — eventually finding a tracking device in his shoe. Presumably a similar device was used by Patricia Hardie when she was masquerading as Teresa Clark.

Kair is meanwhile gathering together all the test data and putting it into a briefcase, telling Gosseyn what each test indicates: one shows that the new brain material is not related to cortical, thalamic, or memory functions. He shows that there has as yet been no traffic between this new material and his brain. He concludes by explaining that the extra material is a control center, which can manipulate electromagnetic and atomic energy, and has apparently limitless potential.

Gosseyn asks if it is possible for him to train and develop this control center within an hour. Kair responds that it would take more than hours, days, or weeks, and to explain with an example, relates to him the story of George the jungle boy. **Gosseyn thinks back on how so many people he's met recently have alluded to this story, and is relieved to finally hear it in detail.**

A two-year-old boy named George got lost in the woods near his home in the country and was taken in by a stray female dog whose puppies had recently died. She raised him as she would her own young, and when George was found several years later his behavior was that of an animal, leading a pack of wild dogs. Scientists studied him and tried to educate him. Over the next few years he was taught to spell a few words using alphabet blocks. He died at the age of 23, never having been fully rehumanized; the scientists of the time lacked the knowledge and skills necessary for such a task.

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During the post-mortem they studied his brain and found that his cortex never developed. Kair states that using the present day's methods, George could have been made fully human again. Kair compares Gosseyn to George, with the important difference being that Gosseyn is something more than human living among "primitives."

Gratified that his theories of innate superiority have been finally confirmed, Gosseyn is determined to somehow cultivate the use of this new control center. He tells Kair of how he has memories of Gosseyn I being experimented on by Thorson, triggering automatic reactions of superhuman ability, and asks if such conditions could be recreated to force his extra brain into functioning. Kair states that Gosseyn I was in all likelihood driven partially insane, and in any case he will not participate in such brutal experiments — the only acceptable approach to the problem is to use the "multiordinal method of sanity."

Kair says that if he were forced to choose between saving Gosseyn or diverting the gang from their plan of conquest, he would unhesitatingly choose to save Gosseyn — if null-A has any true lasting worth, it will stand up to its first serious challenger, and if it does not then it is truly worthless and its destruction would be deserved.

Kair goes on to say that the possible involvement of aliens complicates the situation, but is a matter that should be left to the Venusian scientists.

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Kair says that if he were forced to choose between saving Gosseyn or diverting the gang from their plan of conquest, he would unhesitatingly choose to save Gosseyn. He wonders if null-A could be destroyed by its first serious challenger.

Gosseyn reminds Kair that the Venusians are unaware of the aliens' presence, and the psychiatrist says that that means the necessity of them escaping the house is even more important.

Turning their attention to Prescott, Kair speculates that he is a high-ranking member of the gang, and killed Hardie and the others — presumably only agents of the gang's true leaders — either under orders or as an attempt to increase his own status. After hearing this, Gosseyn is amazed at his earlier thought that since X was dead, the threat the gang posed was no more — the idea that the gang is even larger than he has witnessed is a disconcerting one. Apparently the assassination of Hardie and the others was part of their plan to start a massive propaganda campaign against the Games Machine and the null-A philosophy to incite widespread panic and manipulate the public into opposing the status quo. It suddenly occurs to Gosseyn that

Prescott allowed his wife to be killed just to gain Gosseyn's confidence. After sharing this thought with Kair, the psychiatrist speculates that perhaps she was not really killed, that the whole incident was an act. Gosseyn is skeptical, but decides that now is not the time to figure everything out — rather, they should work out a plan of escape.

Gosseyn reminds Kair that the Venusians are unaware of the gang's imminent invasion, and the psychiatrist says that that means the necessity of them escaping the house is even more important.

## Chapter 17

Turning their attention to Prescott,

Gosseyn marvels at how he allowed his wife to be killed just to gain Gosseyn's confidence — and the impression that Prescott was a secret null-A sympathizer only contributed to the ruse. He also realizes that the assassination of Hardie and X was planned, intending to remove the Earth natives from the gang's upper echelons. He also recalls how Prescott hesitated over shooting Thorson, the head representative of the off-worlders, allowing Gosseyn to stop him — sparing him so a galactic agent could gain full control of the gang.

Gosseyn is reminded that this year's Games were to select a new President, and he asks Kair if he knows who is ahead the farthest in the Games so far. Kair replies that it's a man named Thorson, and he suddenly connects the two names as being the same man. Gosseyn ponders on two important facts: a galactic agent will soon be the President of Earth, and the Games Machine has become useless since it has been manipulated.

Kair suggests that one of them should impersonate Prescott and check up with the gang members outside. Gosseyn briefly asks if Kair's wife and children are present in the house; Kair replies that Venusian children are not allowed to visit Earth until they're eighteen years old, and that his wife is with them back on Venus in the city of Chicago.

Kair is closer to Prescott in appearance and build — he therefore puts on Prescott's shoes (with the locator device) and practices imitating Prescott's voice using techniques familiar to great public speakers and people highly trained in null-A. They undue Prescott's gag — he tells them that the twelve men outside are assigned to follow but not arrest Gosseyn, and that the prearranged signal that all is well is the word "Venus." Gosseyn tells Prescott that if Kair is not back within five minutes he will shoot him. Kair briefly jokes that perhaps he should stay out for six minutes, then goes outside.

Taking note of the time, Gosseyn informs Prescott that the five minutes have begun. Prescott immediately starts to sweat. Recalling to mind that being unintegrated, Prescott is a neurotic, susceptible to wild emotional swings in time of stress. Gosseyn hits on the idea that since under stress time seems to go more quickly, he informs Prescott that a minute has passed, although in truth only half a minute has gone by — this way he can perhaps force some answers out of Prescott.

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After being told that two minutes have gone by, Prescott begins to talk, saying that Kair might be gone longer than five minutes since one of the gang members out there is very talkative, and urges Gosseyn to be patient. A few seconds later Gosseyn tells him that three minutes have passed. An increasingly nervous Prescott tells Gosseyn that he can't hope to evade the gang for more than a few weeks at best, **that he was told by Kair that he can't learn to use his new brain in that short a time anyway.**

Gosseyn says that four minutes have passed. Prescott babbles about how it is impossible for even a superman to stop the gang, and that they have been treating Gosseyn too easy.

Dissatisfied that Prescott is not confessing as much as he ought, Gosseyn nevertheless continues his plan by stating that the five minutes are up, hoping that the final crunch will force what he wants out of the man. **He is disappointed when Prescott comes up with a half-baked accusation that Kair is one of the gang, that the real psychiatrist is still on Venus. Gosseyn points out the faults in his ridiculous story, and** says that he will give him one more minute if he tells Gosseyn what device they used to influence the Machine's test results for the Games, and where the device is now.

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Gosseyn says that he will give him one more minute if he tells him what device they used to influence the Machine's test results for the Games, and where the device is now.

Gosseyn notices that four real minutes have passed and begins to grow apprehensive, but doesn't let it show. Prescott finally breaks down and says the device in question is called a "Distorter" and that it's hidden in Patricia Hardie's room at the Palace, built into one of the walls. Gosseyn considers this and it strikes him as truthful — the device would have to be near the Machine as well as being hidden. He asks where the Distorter came from, and Prescott's answer is interrupted by Kair's reappearance, but not before he says something about **Crang, a Venusian detective.**

Prescott grows quiet and relaxed again as Kair enters. Kair tells Gosseyn that dawn is approaching and that he told the guards stationed outside that they were getting ready to leave.

They put the gag back into Prescott's mouth and pick up the briefcase containing all the test data. Gosseyn asks where they're going, and Kair is amused by his asking such a question in front of a gang member. He does say, however, that they will be taking his private robo-plane, and since he intends to dispose of Prescott's shoes with the locator device at the edge of the City, they will be able to act freely without fear of being followed. A few minutes later they're well on their way in the roboplane.

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## SECTION #12

Synopsis of Text 45

*Chapter XII*

In the air above the City, and finally in a more relaxed situation than before, Gosseyn asks Kair — who is piloting the plane — to describe city life on Venus. The psychiatrist tells of the climate, how it rains only in the mountains while at lower altitudes the vegetation is watered by a very heavy dew in the morning. Gosseyn rephrases his question to ask about Venusian science, if it is more advanced than Earth's. Kair says it is not: all Venusian inventions are shared with Earth, and indeed the Earth is more advanced in some areas owing to a greater population and a larger degree of specialization.

In that context Gosseyn asks what explanation there is for the same mind to have inhabited two seemingly identical bodies. Kair admits that he can think of none. **Gosseyn then explains to Kair what Prescott told him about the Distorter.** Kair agrees that **neither the Distorter nor** the technique producing Gosseyn's series of bodies **are** the product of Earth's or Venus' science. Gosseyn points out that whoever put him on Earth is against the gang, but are obviously afraid since they are not showing themselves but rather manipulating events safely from behind the scenes.

Synopsis of Text 48/70

*Chapter 18 - 19*

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agrees that the technique producing Gosseyn's series of bodies **is** not the product of Earth's or Venus' science. Gosseyn points out that whoever put him on Earth is against the gang, but are obviously afraid since they are not showing themselves but rather manipulating events safely from behind the scenes.

Struck by a new thought, Gosseyn asks Kair what he would do if he were a top government official faced with the threat of a revolutionary group planning to overthrow the government. Kair replies that he would alert the populace of the threat — and although he has never seen null-As in a war situation, he believes that they would do well. Gosseyn then adds a few complicating factors: what if the revolutionaries' plans were too far advanced, and informing the people of the situation would merely trigger early action by the revolutionaries? He also mentions how many "semantic historians" claim that wars would be avoided were it not for the bloodthirstiness and proud emotional condition of the nations involved. Gosseyn himself — a well-integrated person — is beginning to feel war fever and the excitement of the upcoming conflict. He's also afraid that the gang will launch their attack before Earth and Venus are prepared to defend themselves. This war fever and fear are two intensely emotional, decision-influencing conditions that the null-A philosophy strives to eliminate, yet an integrated individual is apparently anything but immune. Gosseyn speculates that the unknown group who is opposing the gang is aware that informing the populace of the situation would merely produce panic and war fever, thus possibly eliminating the good null-A has done over the past few hundred years, and it would take generations to restore things to their former state.

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Kair understands Gosseyn's speculations, but emphasizes that they still do not know who the other group is, or indeed who is truly behind the gang.

Gosseyn asks an increasingly groggy Kair where they're headed, to which the psychiatrist replies that there is a cabin by Lake Superior that he purchased after a pleasant vacation there three years ago. He assures Gosseyn that they'll be safe there. Gosseyn realizes that Kair is now doing what he himself did for several weeks: deny that he is involved, and try to wiggle out of the situation. He knows that the appearance of two men in such an isolated spot after an assassination will be noticed as suspicious, and Kair can do little more for Gosseyn now that he knows for sure that he cannot learn to use the new control center in his head in any short amount of time. To spend time hiding and attempting to develop his extra brain would be an almost criminal waste of time; Gosseyn must remain in the midst of things, to try to effect a solution.

By now the very tired Dr. Kair has fallen asleep at the automatic controls of the roboplane. Gosseyn sets the controls to return to the City of the Machine and writes Kair a note, informing him of his decision to not go with him to the cabin. He tells Kair to keep an eye on the personal ad section of the evening paper, for one signed by "Guest," and to reply using the name "Careless."

Gosseyn asks an increasingly groggy Kair where they're headed, to which the psychiatrist replies that there is a cabin by Lake Superior that he purchased after a pleasant vacation there three years ago. He assures Gosseyn that they'll be safe there. Gosseyn realizes that Kair is now doing what he himself did for several weeks: deny that he is involved, and try to wiggle out of the situation. He knows that the appearance of two men in such an isolated spot after an assassination will be noticed as suspicious, and Kair can do little more for Gosseyn now that he knows for sure that he cannot learn to use the new control center in his head in any short amount of time. To spend time hiding and attempting to develop his extra brain would be an almost criminal waste of time; Gosseyn must remain in the midst of things, to try to effect a solution.

By now the very tired Dr. Kair has fallen asleep at the automatic controls of the roboplane. Gosseyn sets the controls to return to the City of the Machine and writes Kair a note, informing him of his decision to not go with him to the cabin. He tells Kair to keep an eye on the personal ad section of the evening paper, for one signed by "Guest," and to reply using the name "Careless."

Several minutes later the robo-plane is above the Games Machine, and Gosseyn sets the controls to circle the area for a brief time then return to its original course to arrive at the cabin by Lake Superior. He puts on an ingravity parachute, a device designed by a null-A scientist to slow the speed with which two bodies are attracted to one another — effectively retarding the rate of fall to a safe one. He jumps out of the plane above the Presidential Palace,

**and** using the maneuvering capability of his parachute lands on the balcony of Patricia Hardie's room at the Palace. **Confident** that the Palace would be the last place the gang would expect him to show up, he nevertheless takes precautions to avoid detection. Knowing that she would believe he killed her father, he gags her in bed to stifle any shouts of alarm, intending to explain the truth to her to gain her trust, then

get her to aid his escape from the Palace. **She is fully dressed and had been crying quite a lot recently, presumably upset over her father's murder.** However, before he can say anything to her beyond a simple apology for having to gag her, it becomes apparent that there is someone else in the room — Eldred Crang and several men armed with **machine guns.**

Several minutes later the robo-plane is above the Games Machine, and Gosseyn sets the controls to circle the area for a brief time then return to its original course to arrive at the cabin by Lake Superior. He puts on an ingravity parachute, a device designed by a null-A scientist to slow the speed with which two bodies are attracted to one another — effectively retarding the rate of fall to a safe one. He jumps out of the plane above the Presidential Palace.

### *Chapter 19*

Using the maneuvering capability of his parachute, Gosseyn lands on the balcony of Patricia Hardie's room at the Palace. **Hoping** that the Palace would be the last place the gang would expect him to show up, he nevertheless takes precautions to avoid detection. Knowing that she would believe he killed her father, he gags her in bed to stifle any shouts of alarm and ties her up, intending to explain the truth to her to gain her trust, then **after disabling the Distorter** get her to aid his escape from the Palace.

However, before he can say anything to her beyond a simple apology for having to gag her, it becomes apparent that there is someone else in the room — Eldred Crang and several men armed with **blasters.**

Crang chides Gosseyn for naively thinking that a plane above the Palace would go unnoticed.

Crang informs him that it's become apparent that the person or group behind Gosseyn's appearance actually wanted the gang to kill him the first time so that the second body on Venus could be activated to perform its task there.

The gang now assumes that their enemy expects this second Gosseyn to be killed, so as to activate a third somewhere else, to accomplish something else. **Crang says now that they've caught on to this plan, they refuse to play into their enemy's hands by killing him again.**

Reasoning that either Gosseyn will be forced to kill himself, or that another agent of their enemy will, the gang will let Gosseyn go without condition, **so as to drive this other agent into the open, lure him into a trap, and capture him.**

Crang chides Gosseyn for naively thinking that a plane above the Palace would go unnoticed. **Based on Prescott's report Crang was able to convince Thorson to let him deal with Gosseyn. Gosseyn is surprised that Crang would risk showing any kind of partiality towards him, knowing that such an action could give away his secret allegiance to null-A.** Crang informs him that it's become apparent that the person behind Gosseyn's appearance actually wanted the gang to kill him the first time so that the second body on Venus could be activated to perform its task there — **Crang knows that Gosseyn accomplished it, but does not let him know what it was.** The gang now assumes that their enemy expects this second Gosseyn to be killed, so as to activate a third somewhere else, to accomplish something else. **Yet whoever is behind Gosseyn clearly doesn't want more than one body active at the same time, due to the various problems this would cause, such as a risk that additional duplicates might be created and conflict with one another's personalities.** He says that Thorson suggested keeping Gosseyn a prisoner, but Crang believed that either death or imprisonment would trigger the activation of the third Gosseyn. Reasoning that either Gosseyn will be forced to kill himself or that another agent of their enemy will, the gang will let Gosseyn go without condition, **expecting Gosseyn to be fully able to defend himself.**

Gosseyn — having mentally prepared himself for another death — is incredulous at this new development.

Crang assures him that all charges against him have been dropped, and all police agencies have been informed. The gang is confident that nothing Gosseyn can do will have any effect on their plans, which are so far advanced as to be inevitable — he is therefore allowed to tell anything to anyone. Crang orders a guard to take him to the apartment set aside for him, where he can freshen up and have breakfast. They will then let him go whenever he likes.

A couple hours later Gosseyn leaves the Palace, still not believing the explanation Crang gave.

Gosseyn is puzzled by these new developments — he knows Crang to be a secret supported of null-A and can't figure out why he would be against a third Gosseyn being activated. Crang assures him that all charges against him have been dropped, and all police agencies have been informed. The gang is confident that nothing Gosseyn can do will have any effect on their plans, which are so far advanced as to be inevitable — he is therefore allowed to tell anything to anyone. Crang orders a guard to take him to the apartment set aside for him, where he can freshen up and have breakfast. They will then let him go whenever he likes.

As he is escorted out, Gosseyn restrains himself from talking to Patricia or thanking Crang, knowing that Thorson is likely listening in. A couple hours later Gosseyn leaves the Palace.

## SECTION #13

Synopsis of Text 45

### *Chapter XIII*

Gosseyn takes a bus across town, all the while suspicious that he is being followed, keeping an eye on cars alongside the bus and on the other passengers. He soon concludes that his suspicion is unwarranted, and reasons that instead of relying on such crude methods they undoubtedly just predicted his destinations: the hotel and the Machine.

He has very little money, only that which he took from Prescott. He therefore goes to the hotel's front desk and to collect some money from the amount he deposited when he first arrived in the city almost a month ago. He has to sign for it, which makes him nervous, thinking they'll surely recognize the name and have him arrested. He soon realizes how neurotic he is becoming, evidenced by such fears and his disbelief that the gang really did have all charges against him dropped. He observes with great interest that his signature is the same as Gosseyn I's. The attendant gives him the key to his box.

He sorts through his belongings, including luggage and clothing, noticing with some bewilderment that all the travel documents accumulated during his remembered flight from California to the City of the Machine are missing. Shrugging off this oddity, he departs with \$75 in cash.

Synopsis of Text 48/70

### *Chapter 20*

Gosseyn takes a bus across town, all the while suspicious that he is being followed, keeping an eye on cars alongside the bus and on the other passengers. He soon concludes that his suspicion is unwarranted, and reasons that instead of relying on such crude methods they undoubtedly just predicted his destinations: the hotel and the Machine.

He goes to the hotel's front desk to gain access to the possessions he deposited when he first arrived in the city almost a month ago. He has to sign for it, which makes him nervous, thinking they'll surely recognize the name and have him arrested. He soon realizes how nervous he is becoming, evidenced by such fears. He observes with great interest that his signature is the same as Gosseyn I's. The attendant gives him the key to his box.

He sorts through his belongings, including luggage and clothing, including three suits from his luggage with built-in temperature controls. He recalls Gosseyn I having set one of the suits to 66 degrees and the other two to 72 degrees; he checks the temperatures on the three suits and they correspond with his memories — more evidence that he and Gosseyn I possessed the same personality. He puts on one of the suits and takes \$75 from the larger amount he has deposited and leaves.

Once outside Gosseyn buys a newspaper from a **paperboy**. In it he reads a much calmer account of Hardie's assassination, in which Gosseyn and the Games Machine's previously reported involvement is said to have been a rash error by the information bureau, and that a proper investigation is being conducted.

He finds also a small article further on that mentions that radio contact could not be established with Venus that morning, **but the editor explains that since radio traffic between the two worlds is minimal and now almost purely empty routine, there is no reason to believe anything is out of the ordinary**. Gosseyn is reminded by this that he is now again dependent on what he is told — just like most of humanity.

**Still not believing Crang's explanation for his freedom, Gosseyn is nonetheless at a loss to explain why he is not being harassed by the gang**. He chides himself for foolish behavior in the recent past, particularly parachuting directly onto Patricia's balcony.

He finds a cubicle designed for some of the **more advanced stages** of the test-taking, which allows mental contact between the subject and the Machine. Using this device he allows the Machine to see recent developments through his mind and memory.

Once outside Gosseyn buys a newspaper from **an automated vending machine**. In it he reads a much calmer account of Hardie's assassination, in which Gosseyn and the Games Machine's previously reported involvement is said to have been a rash error by the information bureau, and that a proper investigation is being conducted **at the behest of Thorson, the leading contestant in the Games and the most likely to succeed Hardie as president**. He finds also a small article further on that mentions that radio contact could not be established with Venus that morning.

Gosseyn is reminded by this that he is now again dependent on what he is told — just like most of humanity.

He chides himself for foolish behavior in the recent past, particularly parachuting directly onto Patricia's balcony.

He finds a cubicle designed for some of the **earlier stages** of the test-taking, which allows mental contact between the subject and the Machine. Using this device he allows the Machine to see recent developments through his mind and memory.

The Machine then asks what his plans are. He is taken aback by this, having come to *it* for advice and instructions. He however is able to tell it that he now is effectively free from danger and must take care of himself with no residence and little money. He intends to speak with the Semantics Institute and reestablish contact with Dr. Kair and send warning of the invasion to Venus.

The Machine replies that Venus is aware of the situation because it was invaded 16 hours previously by a massive army and was rapidly conquered. Gosseyn immediately goes on a tirade, shouting in anger at the Machine for not warning the Venusians and condemns it as a "soulless mechanical thing." It interrupts him, explaining that the Distorter prevents it from communicating or making any announcements — the Distorter creates a constant, invariable energy flow between the Machine's parts therefore destroying any varying, information-carrying flow, basically neutralizing its efforts to carry out any specific task.

The Machine then asks what his plans are. He is taken aback by this, having come to *it* for advice and instructions. He however is able to tell it that he now is effectively free from danger and must take care of himself with no residence and little money. He intends to speak with the Semantics Institute and reestablish contact with Dr. Kair and send warning of the invasion to Venus.

The Machine replies that Venus is aware of the situation because it was invaded 16 hours previously by a massive army and was rapidly conquered. Gosseyn immediately goes on a tirade, shouting in anger at the Machine for not warning the Venusians and condemns it as an "incredible monster." It interrupts him, explaining that the Distorter prevents it from communicating or making any announcements — the Distorter creates a constant, invariable energy flow between the Machine's parts therefore destroying any varying, information-carrying flow, basically neutralizing its efforts to carry out any specific task.

Gosseyn then asks how it is possible for it to speak with him now if that is the case. It replies that by channeling all of its efforts it could speak with a few individuals if it chose and warn them of the situation; however, the gang would get word of it and focus another Distorter on the Machine, and the gang could easily create more rumors and propaganda than the Machine could contradict in a year in its present state — it therefore must address the entire planet or its efforts would be wasted.

When asked what it will do, the Machine answers that it can do nothing, though Gosseyn can if only he will realize how correct Crang was that morning when explaining why the gang refuses to kill him again. Gosseyn suddenly realizes with shock that all of Crang's theories and assumptions about there being a Gosseyn III ready to be activated were correct. His reaction is to insist that he has no intentions to kill himself. The Machine says that it would have killed Gosseyn when he entered the cubicle if it had not been constrained by its restrictions on killing only in self-defense. It goes on to explain that the task Gosseyn II was created for has been accomplished, and that he must now die to allow Gosseyn III to be activated. The third Gosseyn will have complete integrated control over the extra brain — although the second Gosseyn could learn to integrate it in this body, it would take an amount of time not available in the present crisis.

He again protests that he will not kill himself, and asks why Gosseyn III cannot be activated while he is still alive. **The Machine explains that the death of II's mind is the necessary activation trigger. He demands to know who he really is. It refuses to tell him, afraid that the gang might capture and interrogate him again — there is a very important reason why he is ignorant of his true identity, and they must not learn it. He counters by saying that they already know and explained it to Gosseyn I, but in his new body has forgotten what it was.**

When asked what it will do, the Machine answers that it can do nothing, though Gosseyn can if only he will realize how correct Crang was that morning when explaining why the gang refuses to kill him again. Gosseyn suddenly realizes with shock that all of Crang's theories and assumptions about there being a Gosseyn III ready to be activated were correct. His reaction is to insist that he has no intentions to kill himself. The Machine says that it would have killed Gosseyn when he entered the cubicle if it had not been constrained by its restrictions on killing only in self-defense. It goes on to explain that the task Gosseyn II was created for has been accomplished, and that he must now die to allow Gosseyn III to be activated. The third Gosseyn will have complete integrated control over the extra brain — although the second Gosseyn could learn to integrate it in this body, it would take an amount of time not available in the present crisis.

He again protests that he will not kill himself, and asks why Gosseyn III cannot be activated while he is still alive. **The Machine says that since the death of Gosseyn I it has been told the basics of the process, and that the death of II is recorded by an "electronic receiver" which then triggers the activation of the next Gosseyn body. Gosseyn asks who told the Machine this information. It replies that it receives all its information by mail, and ejects a letter into the cubicle that it received along with Gosseyn II's body in a truck.**

The Machine says that that information was false and was therefore deliberately kept from the new body during the memory-transference process. That information was what the galactic agents (Thorson, Crang and Prescott) wanted the Earth agents (Hardie and X) to believe, while they themselves knew the real truth. The Machine is displeased with the fact that the gang will not kill him — and says that Gosseyn must kill himself, even though doing so will be virtually impossible for a sane person such as he.

The Machine then states that it will not answer any more questions. Gosseyn gets up to leave, emphasizing that he will not kill himself until he knows all the facts. He then is startled at how he was seriously considering going along with it, but is now determined not to kill himself, no matter what the Machine's reasons are.

He leaves the Machine and goes for a walk. He soon realizes that such a strong unconscious desire to walk aimlessly is a sign of an emerging neurosis, but he reminds himself that being aware of the problem is a way of halting its progress. As a remedy, he therefore resolves to choose a destination with a plan in mind and follow through.

He reflects on how Crang mentioned the presence of another agent of the gang's unknown adversary, who will be forced to kill Gosseyn II to activate Gosseyn III, since the gang will not do so.

Gosseyn reads the letter — it instructs the Machine to transport the body to Venus and then via robo-plane place it near the Prescotts' country home; then once Gosseyn leaves there to pick him up via robo-plane and drop him off near Crang's treehouse and tell Gosseyn to give himself up; it can give Gosseyn any information about Venus, and should take "any necessary precautions." The Machine admits that since no one inquires into any of its shipments there was no difficulty in getting the second body to Venus. Gosseyn asks if this is all it knows; it replies that it has recently received another letter informing it that Gosseyn III is to be delivered soon. Gosseyn accuses the Machine of lying to better convince him of the necessity to kill himself. He then is startled at how he was seriously considering going along with it, but is now determined not to kill himself no matter what the Machine's reasons are.

He leaves the Machine and spends a restless evening considering the situation. He notes that it did not ask him to deal with the Distorter, surmising that it suspects he could not succeed. While eating dinner he forms a plan to make an appointment with Patricia Hardie, with only her knowing of it. He phones the Palace and is connected with her after giving his name.

Knowing that the Machine could not be the other agent — as witnessed by its inability to kill him despite its wishes — he comes up with a plan to facilitate the agent finding him. He goes to the vacant lot where he and Patricia Hardie (as Teresa Clark) had spent the night several weeks ago.

Gosseyn momentarily wonders if the policeless period began as a social experiment, and he comes to the conclusion that its usefulness is limited and should probably be discontinued.

He goes to a nearby store and purchases some spools of thread and makes a deal with the store's owner to borrow his lie detector (used to verify customers' claim of good credit) each night for a very generous sum of money. He returns to the lot and systematically loops thread around the area and ties the ends to his fingers, so as to easily and quickly be notified if anyone comes near. He lies down to wait.

He thinks about Venus and the invasion, eventually concluding that it may be a good idea to stowaway on a ship to Venus so he can tell the Venusians what he knows, figuring that the inevitable resistance to the new conquerors would be made easier if they knew who they were and why they were there.

In the meantime he decides to learn as much as he can here on Earth before leaving, including talking to Patricia Hardie to try to find out why he has false memories in his mind that they were once married and that she had recently died.

While considering all this he feels a tug on the thread — he immediately springs to action and just in time prevents a vengeful Patricia Hardie from killing him with a flame gun, shouting that she knew that her father's murderer would be there.

Still keyed-up by this narrow escape from a second death, Gosseyn loudly and angrily demands to know who she told that she was coming here. She insists that she told no one, a claim that is verified by the lie detector. He then demands to know who sent her to kill him, making clear that he does not believe her pretense of wanting revenge for her father's murder (she still ostensibly believes Gosseyn to be the perpetrator). She replies that her father ordered his death. Gosseyn's reaction is to insist that Hardie is dead. She explains that a few hours prior to Gosseyn's arrival with Crang from Venus that her father said that according to his orders one of them will have to kill him if the gang does not.

She goes on to explain that twelve years ago she was an amnesiac adult just like him, but with no extra control center in her brain. President Hardie told her to act the part of his daughter. Gosseyn asks what the Hardie's task was. Patricia replies that he was under orders to create an organization opposed to the Games Machine and the null-A philosophy, and that the Machine itself had instructions to assist him in this endeavor.

Gosseyn protests that that is crazy and asks why the Machine would be part of a plot against itself. He quickly realizes that he is asking foolish questions — it is evident that everyone involved is being manipulated according to some vast inexplicable plan, one that everyone is ignorant of. He reviews what he has learned from this: Hardie, Patricia and himself were made the way they are by the same individual or group, but only he has the extra control center in his brain; and that same individual or group created an organization intending that it be taken over by their enemy, and letting that enemy use that organization to carry out a plan of slaughter and conquest against innocent people.

Gosseyn verifies all of Patricia's statements with the lie detector. He then insists that she quickly return to the Palace but tell no one of her attempt to kill him. Patricia expresses her amazement that he is letting her go. He makes arrangements to meet at the Palace the afternoon of the next day and instructs her to arrange for his admittance. Before she goes he tells her that he did not kill her father, and verifies the statement with the lie detector. He doesn't think that she truly believes he did, but he decides to make the truth quite clear to her just in case.

He then loops more thread around the area and sleeps fitfully. During his many intermittent waking periods he plans his excursion to the Palace the next day, knowing that the key to success in his plan is to avoid the three galactic agents — Thorson, Crang, or Prescott.

They hurriedly make arrangements to meet at the Palace the next day, and although Patricia believes that particular meeting place to be risky she agrees to it,

but advises him to avoid the three galactic agents — Thorson, Crang, or Prescott

## SECTION #14

Synopsis of Text 45

### *Chapter XIV*

Gosseyn arrives at one in the afternoon the next day for his meeting with Patricia. He checks in with the guards, who have an attendant take his briefcase and escort him to a nearby elevator.

Prescott comes off the elevator and is surprised to see Gosseyn. He asks why he has returned. Gosseyn, hoping to have avoided such an encounter, nevertheless has prepared for it: he says that he's come to meet with Crang. Prescott expresses his amazement at this, since he himself had just left Crang and no mention was made of Gosseyn coming to meet him.

Gosseyn says that Crang intends to see him for just three minutes, and they will discuss things which Prescott can undoubtedly guess at.

Prescott remains incredulous even as Gosseyn relates to him how the Machine wished him to die to allow the third Gosseyn to be activated; he however does not mention the Machine telling him of Venus' invasion. Gosseyn explains to Prescott that he wants to see the third incarnation for himself before killing himself — he's come to the Palace to search for clues and to ascertain whether the third body has been found by the gang.

Synopsis of Text 48/70

### *Chapter 21*

Gosseyn arrives at one in the afternoon the next day for his meeting with Patricia. He checks in with the guards, who have an attendant take his briefcase and escort him to a nearby elevator.

Prescott comes off the elevator and is surprised to see Gosseyn. He asks why he has returned. Gosseyn, hoping to have avoided such an encounter, nevertheless has prepared for it: he says that he's come to meet with Crang. Prescott expresses his amazement at this, since he himself had just left Crang and no mention was made of Gosseyn coming to meet him. **Though unhappy about having his plans upset, Gosseyn is at least relieved that Prescott does not know of Crang's secret allegiance to null-A.**

Gosseyn says that Crang intends to see him for just three minutes, and they will discuss things which Prescott can undoubtedly guess at.

Prescott remains incredulous even as Gosseyn relates to him how the Machine wished him to die to allow the third Gosseyn to be activated; he however does not mention the Machine telling him of Venus' invasion. Gosseyn explains to Prescott that he wants to see the third incarnation for himself before killing himself — he's come to the Palace to search for clues and to ascertain whether the third body has been found by the gang.

Prescott states that they've searched thoroughly for the third Gosseyn but have not found him. He also admits that what was told to Gosseyn I about his origin and purpose was untrue, intended merely to satisfy Hardie and X — Prescott almost referring to X by name, beginning with the syllable "La" before stopping himself. Gosseyn asks where the gang has searched, and Prescott replies that it was initially believed that the Gosseyn bodies may be stored in "aspect of reality" unperceivable to the human nervous system. They also searched caves on Earth and Venus.

Prescott describes a law of nature which is quite obscure, as an example of complicating factors in their search: any two energies which are attuned to the same frequency to within a twenty-decimal place accuracy, the more powerful of the two sources will transmit information to the weaker. Gosseyn briefly condemns this idea as being much like an erroneous ancient Greek philosophy. Prescott ignores this quip and goes on to say that such a law would explain how Gosseyn I's memories were transmitted to Gosseyn II — the two's minds were attuned to one another with a twenty-decimal accuracy, and the mind of the stronger (the living body) was constantly conveying itself to the weaker (the inactive body).

Prescott states that they've searched thoroughly for the third Gosseyn but have not found him.

Gosseyn asks where the gang has searched, and Prescott replies that

they searched caves on Earth and Venus as well as other difficult-to-reach places.

Prescott describes a law of nature which is quite obscure, as an example of complicating factors in their search: any two energies which are attuned to the same frequency to within a twenty-decimal place accuracy, the more powerful of the two sources will transmit information to the weaker. Gosseyn briefly condemns this idea as being much like an erroneous ancient Greek philosophy. Prescott ignores this quip and goes on to say that such a law would explain how Gosseyn I's memories were transmitted to Gosseyn II — the two's minds were attuned to one another with a twenty-decimal accuracy, and the mind of the stronger (the living body) was constantly conveying itself to the weaker (the inactive body).

Prescott also relates how meteorites out to Saturn's orbit were thoroughly searched and examined, the gang hoping to find an hollow asteroid with a subterranean station containing several inactive Gosseyns of various ages.

At this point one of Prescott's aides interrupts him to remind him that their ship leaves in thirty minutes and the car is waiting outside. He begins to leave, but turns to say one final thing:

if Gosseyn finds the third body first the gang will assuredly kill it and him — they're confident that there is a limited supply of Gosseyns. Prescott then leaves.

Gosseyn is aware that within a few minutes Prescott will contact Crang to find out if the two really are meeting. He therefore is forced to accelerate his plans to allow for this new complication.

After Patricia Hardie admits him to her room and chides him for risking coming to the Palace, he wastes no time in tying her up and gagging her, saying that this is for her protection — if someone comes in on them it will seem as if she is a captive and not a collaborator.

He rushes into her bedroom with his briefcase, which is full of sophisticated atomic-powered cutting equipment. He finds the wall which he calculated can be the only one containing the Distorter — judging by the necessary size of the machine, as well as the angle and distance in relation to the nearby Games Machine — and starts cutting.

Prescott also relates how meteorites out to Saturn's orbit were thoroughly searched and examined, the gang hoping to find an hollow asteroid with a subterranean station containing several inactive Gosseyns of various ages.

At this point one of Prescott's aides interrupts him to remind him that their ship [to Venus](#) leaves in thirty minutes and the car is waiting outside. He begins to leave, but turns to say one final thing: [the gang is interested in seeing the third body and reiterates that](#) if Gosseyn finds it first the gang will assuredly kill it and him — they're confident that there is a limited supply of Gosseyns. Prescott then leaves.

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He rushes into her bedroom with his briefcase, which is full of sophisticated atomic-powered cutting equipment. He finds the wall which he calculated can be the only one containing the Distorter — judging by the necessary size of the machine, as well as the angle and distance in relation to the nearby Games Machine — and starts cutting.

He removes the section of wall, exposing the thin but tall and wide Distorter embedded within. He pulls the fifty-pound machine out of the wall and after laying it down on the floor proceeds to examine it. It is not of alien design, but utilizes parts and methods that any sufficiently knowledgeable human could have conceived. **He had expected it to be an alien artifact; that it is not convinces him that alien involvement in the whole affair is far less likely than he previously believed.**

Knowing that Prescott could contact Crang at any moment, he abandons his original plan and prepares to cut the Distorter up using his atomic cutter but pauses to look at the time. Forty minutes had passed; apparently Prescott had not yet contacted Crang, and in fact may not, since the ship presumably left ten minutes earlier. **Gosseyn momentarily stops, realizing that Prescott is probably headed for Venus.**

He uses Patricia's phone to call the carpenters who work at the Palace on a regular basis doing odd jobs and repair work. He gives them instructions, and while he waits for their arrival he moves the Distorter into the main room and puts Patricia in the bedroom, shutting the door so the workmen won't see her. The men soon arrive and pack up the Distorter and take it away, promising Gosseyn to have it delivered within five minutes.

He removes the section of wall, exposing the thin but tall and wide Distorter embedded within. He pulls the fifty-pound machine out of the wall and after laying it down on the floor proceeds to examine it. It utilizes parts and methods that any sufficiently knowledgeable human could have conceived.

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He returns to the bedroom and looks out the windows towards the Machine in time to see the truck carrying the crated Distorter drop off its cargo within the Machine's building. Then, nagged by a strange feeling of dissatisfaction, he unties and ungags Patricia.

He returns to the bedroom and looks out the windows towards the Machine in time to see the truck carrying the crated Distorter drop off its cargo within the Machine's building. Then, nagged by a strange feeling of dissatisfaction, he unties and ungags Patricia.

## SECTION #15

Synopsis of Text 45

### *Chapter XV*

Now free to speak, Patricia is amused by Gosseyn's actions and tells him that his plan didn't work. He is at first confused by this, but does not interrupt. She goes on to say that he planned to come to the palace not to free the Machine from the Distorter, but was a subconscious attempt to put himself into danger and get himself killed to allow Gosseyn III to be activated. He suddenly realizes the truth of her words — being a sane person, he could not commit suicide outright, so in the background of his mind had contrived this dangerous scheme. He turns on Patricia in anger, and she expresses how glad she is that even the heavily-disciplined Gosseyn can deceive himself. His anger turns into pity as he reflects on how the unintegrated live in such a state of self-deceit all the time. As he leaves, Gosseyn advises Patricia to get the wall repaired, and to leave the Palace immediately with no luggage or possessions apart from what she has on her person.

He goes to a store and buys a hypnotic drug called *Coue*, which the seller assumes will be used to aid his studies in preparation for the next year's Games. He goes to another store and purchases an audio-recording machine.

Synopsis of Text 48/70

### *Chapter 22*

Now free to speak, Patricia is amused by Gosseyn's actions and tells him that his plan didn't work. He is at first confused by this, but does not interrupt. She goes on to say that he planned to come to the palace not to free the Machine from the Distorter, but was a subconscious attempt to put himself into danger and get himself killed to allow Gosseyn III to be activated. He suddenly realizes the truth of her words — being a sane person, he could not commit suicide outright, so in the background of his mind had contrived this dangerous scheme. As Gosseyn moves to leave, Patricia asks where he is going. He replies that he's returning to the hotel, where she can contact him if necessary.

Gosseyn advises Patricia to get the wall repaired, and to take any other precautions that she sees fit.

He goes to a store and buys a hypnotic drug called *Coue*, which the seller assumes will be used to aid his studies in preparation for the next year's Games. He goes to another store and purchases an audio-recording machine.

He then goes to the hotel and, after getting some more money from his deposit box, goes to the front desk and requests a room for a week. He explains that he was expelled from the hotel a few weeks ago due to some confusion about his identity; since the Games are just about over and therefore few participants are still in town, most of the hotel is vacant, so the clerk immediately gives Gosseyn a room. He enters the room, makes a recording intending to play it back repeatedly, and takes a dose of the hypnotic drug, placing the gun he took from Patricia on a nearby table.

In the middle of all this, he hears the sudden deafening sounds of explosions — his first thought is one of alarm, that the gang has begun attacking Earth itself. The unaffected half of his mind forces his body to get up and look out the window; he discerns that the battle is taking place near the Machine.

He realizes that the Distorter's absence probably allowed the Machine to begin warning people of what the gang was doing — an action which the gang could not tolerate and took as an opportunity to destroy the Machine. Acting on a hunch, Gosseyn turns on the radio to see if the Machine is broadcasting. He is confronted with a barrage of vitriolic propaganda condemning the Machine as an evil, treacherous monstrosity.

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He begins to fall back into the trancelike state when he suddenly hears his name on the radio. By now the unaffected part of his mind has succumbed to the drugs and regards this as a mere curious coincidence. The voice is that of the Machine: it warns him not to kill himself because Gosseyn III's body has been **accidentally** destroyed. It apologizes for having to contact him by broadcasting on all radio frequencies, but that it's the only way since it is on the verge of being destroyed by powerful projectiles being fired from Venus. It tells Gosseyn that he must learn to use his extra brain; it cannot however tell him how to do this because it is ignorant of its workings. The voice then cuts out as a tremendous explosion is heard. Another voice then comes on, that of a newscaster. It announces the destruction of the evil Games Machine, and says something about its attack on the Palace being avenged.

Gosseyn, now fully in a depressed stupor, turns off the radio, which he now regards as an annoying noise. While thinking thoughts of gloom and despair and the hopelessness of life, something in the back of his mind calls for attention — that something important was just told to him, but he cannot remember what it is.

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Gosseyn, now fully in a depressed stupor, turns off the radio, which he now regards as an annoying noise. While thinking thoughts of gloom and despair and the hopelessness of life, something in the back of his mind calls for attention — that something important was just told to him, but he cannot remember what it is.

## SECTION #16

Synopsis of Text 45

### *Chapter XVI*

*[Part 3 of the serial begins with Chapter XVI, which like Part 2 includes a brief recap that re-emphasizes all the salient events so far. Van later used these serial recaps (unaltered to account for the revised contents of the later, more widely read book editions!) as well as those in the serial of The Players of Â, as an overall memory refresher in the introduction to 1985's Null-A Three.]*

Gosseyn wakes up to find himself in a strange position of laying on top of his hands. He waits for the urge to commit suicide, but it never comes — instead, he is cheerful and optimistic. He realizes that the record has stopped, which puzzles him since he remembered putting it on automatic replay. He tries to open his eyes and cannot — he blames the drug for this, but this deepens his puzzlement: if he is still under the influence of the hypnotic drug, why is his head not filled with negative thoughts? He then half-recalls getting up at one point; he wonders if he shut off the recording at that time, **and such an interruption would have greatly lessened the impact of the drug and the negative ideas being repeated by the recorder — but he still cannot explain why he feels optimistic and cheerful.**

Synopsis of Text 48/70

### *Chapter 23 - 24*

Gosseyn wakes up to find himself in a strange position of laying on top of his hands. He waits for the urge to commit suicide, but it never comes — instead, he is cheerful and optimistic. He realizes that the record has stopped, which puzzles him since he remembered putting it on automatic replay. He tries to open his eyes and cannot — he blames the drug for this, but this deepens his puzzlement: if he is still under the influence of the hypnotic drug, why is his head not filled with negative thoughts? He then half-recalls getting up at one point; he wonders if he shut off the recording at that time.

Suddenly a woman in the room tells him that the drug's effect should have worn off by now. The astonishment allows him to open his eyes — he sees Patricia Hardie sitting in a nearby chair and after trying to loosen his hands realizes that they are handcuffed. Patricia explains that she restrained him because she knows him to be a very domineering inquisitive person and needs him to remain still and calm while she explains a few things. Gosseyn studies her and notices that she is more beautiful and more in control of herself than he has ever seen her before — all signs of neuroticism are gone.

She says that his action of sending the Distorter to the Machine has backfired, and that they must act quickly. She pauses, **noticing that Gosseyn is still too disoriented to carry on a conversation.**

He thinks for a few moments — **despite what she's told him in the past, it is clear that she knows far more than she will admit to. This new development, and the fact that he has false memories about her, incites him to ask about the story she told to the lie detector when she came to kill him to avenge her father's death. She admits that lie detectors can be rendered useless, but refuses to explain how. He asks who she really is, and she refuses to answer that as well** since there isn't enough time. Exasperated with so many people refusing to explain things due to lack of time, he tries to force an explanation from her.

Suddenly a woman in the room tells him that the drug's effect should have worn off by now. The astonishment allows him to open his eyes — he sees Patricia Hardie sitting in a nearby chair and after trying to loosen his hands realizes that they are handcuffed. Patricia explains that she restrained him because she knows him to be a very domineering inquisitive person and needs him to remain still and calm while she explains a few things. Gosseyn studies her and notices that she is more beautiful and more in control of herself than he has ever seen her before — all signs of neuroticism are gone.

She says that his action of sending the Distorter to the Machine has backfired, and that they must act quickly. She pauses.

He thinks for a few moments — **it's clear to him that she knows far more than he had previously suspected. He asks what her role is in all this,**

and she refuses to answer since there isn't enough time **and it would be risky to let him know too much.** Exasperated with so many people refusing to explain things due to lack of time, he tries to force an explanation from her, **asking pointedly what her relationship is with President Hardie.**

She claimed to have the same amnesiac condition as he and was instructed to act as President Hardie's daughter, and he wants to know *who* instructed her to do this. She skirts the question, and reiterates that the Distorter is lying in the ruins of the Machine and must be retrieved as evidence against the gang, it being the only "alien" device available to them. Gosseyn states that the group she is working with is a callous group, for failing to warn the citizens of the Solar System about the gang's takeover of Earth's government as well as their invasion of Venus. She explains that **they meant to send warnings but that the gang's use of the Distorter, "a forbidden instrument," stopped them from doing so. He quickly asks who forbade it, but**

she says that once he retrieves the Distorter she will explain more.

She skirts the question, and reiterates that the Distorter is lying in the ruins of the Machine and must be retrieved as evidence against the gang, it being the only "galactic" device available to them. Gosseyn states that the group she is working with is a callous group, for failing to warn the citizens of the Solar System about the gang's takeover of Earth's government as well as their invasion of Venus. She explains that **the attack was not preventable, and sending out warnings would merely have goaded the gang into action sooner. She also points out that warning Venus would have been useless since the loose structure of the Venusian government was already controlled by the gang. She relates how she and Crang tried to find a solution to the problem but found none — Crang did however suggest that based on research conducted at the General Semantics Institute it would be possible and desirable to create a new Machine that would be able to determine the amount of null-A training a person has undergone merely by examining his brain, thus making the Games obsolete, as well as being resistant to forces such as the Distorter.** She says that once he retrieves the Distorter she will explain more.

Patricia says that a man working in the hotel is the one who saved his life, and he is not one of her agents — he has left Gosseyn a note on the nearby table, which she suggests he reads after she goes. He has also made it so no one will know that Gosseyn is staying there. **She then address him by his first name, without realizing it.** She explains that he is being left in the dark because he is the only agent from the group opposing the gang working openly, **and they fear what the gang might learn if he falls into their hands.** She goes on to summarize his involvement thus far: he was introduced at a critical moment to confuse the gang, **and they killed him. They then proceeded with their plans, but with greater caution.** Gosseyn II was then introduced **at the greatest critical moment of the gang's plans, and quickly captured. But they were greatly startled by this and proceeded with even greater caution.** He was then released once they learned he did not have the training necessary to use his extra brain — Patricia comments that **this was a complex political maneuver, which would take too long to fully explain. She concludes by saying that the gang now do not see him as a threat especially since Gosseyn III's body has been destroyed — they will however kill him if they find him.**

Gosseyn responds to this news of his third body's destruction with amazement — he was heavily under the influence of the drug and the recordings when the Machine spoke to him over the radio, and now cannot remember any of it.

Patricia says that a man working in the hotel is the one who saved his life, and he is not one of her agents — he has left Gosseyn a note on the nearby table, which she suggests he reads after she goes. He has also made it so no one will know that Gosseyn is staying there.

She explains that he is being left in the dark because he is the only agent from the group opposing the gang working openly.

She goes on to summarize his involvement thus far: he was introduced at a critical moment to confuse the gang, **but Patricia did not expect Thorson to kill Gosseyn I.**

Gosseyn II was then introduced **on Venus to infiltrate two of the gang's control centers: Prescott's hospital and Crang's house in the tree.**

He was then released once they learned he did not have the training necessary to use his extra brain — Patricia comments that **when this happened they assumed it was due to Crang's influence, but they later learned it was because Thorson was near to finding Gosseyn III's inactive body. She reminds him that since the third body is now destroyed, he will be sought out by the gang once again to be killed.**

Gosseyn responds to this news of his third body's destruction with amazement — he was heavily under the influence of the drug and the recordings when the Machine spoke to him over the radio, and now cannot remember any of it.

Patricia is alarmed by Gosseyn's ignorance, but expresses her relief that her "husband" is merely ignorant and not an idiot. She chides herself for making such a monumental slip and says she will leave now before she inadvertently reveals anything else. She tells him to take the Distorter to the home of the man in the hotel who saved his life, and that she will meet with him the next day. She tosses him the keys to the handcuffs and leaves.

He releases himself and reflects on her reference to their marriage — it seems just as meaningless as the false memory of her having died. He finds the note she mentioned. It is written by the hotel's desk clerk, Dan Lyttle. In the note he explains how he destroyed Gosseyn's registration card and replaced it with the assumed named "John Wentworth" the moment he heard Gosseyn mentioned in the news, knowing the gang would begin their search for him. He then went up to Gosseyn's room and found him drugged with the recording going — he eliminated that recording and made his own offering positive, optimistic words to counteract the suicidal ones. He however soon discontinued that recording as well, knowing that too much optimism was just as dangerous as too much pessimism. His note concludes with the information that he is a student of null-A and has plans to attempt the Games next year. He offers his services to Gosseyn, and advises him to read the newspaper while waiting for him to go off duty at midnight.

Patricia is alarmed by Gosseyn's ignorance and advises him to learn what he has missed by reading the newspaper since she does not have the time to explain everything to him.

She tells him to take the Distorter to the home of the man in the hotel who saved his life, and that she will meet with him the next day at the man's house. She tosses him the keys to the handcuffs and leaves.

He releases himself and reflects on what she said.

He finds the note she mentioned. It is written by the hotel's desk clerk, Dan Lyttle. In the note he explains how he destroyed Gosseyn's registration card and replaced it with the assumed named "John Wentworth" the moment he heard Gosseyn mentioned in the news, knowing the gang would begin their search for him. He then went up to Gosseyn's room and found him drugged with the recording going — he eliminated that recording and made his own offering positive, optimistic words to counteract the suicidal ones. He however soon discontinued that recording as well, knowing that too much optimism was just as dangerous as too much pessimism. His note concludes with the information that he is a student of null-A and has plans to attempt the Games next year. He offers his services to Gosseyn, and advises him to read the newspaper while waiting for him to go off duty at midnight.

So Gosseyn settles down to look at the newspaper and is quite alarmed to read that the Machine has been destroyed — as he reads he slowly remembers the events that occurred while he was drugged. The articles reports that the Machine fired on the Palace and sent out warnings about an invasion of Venus — which the paper claims never took place — and that it became apparent that the Machine had gone insane. It goes on to say that the Machine was involved in Hardie's assassination — the authorities therefore decided that it must be destroyed. It says that the Machine broadcast over the radio waves a message to someone named Gosseyn, who is to be arrested on sight for further questioning. The newspaper has a photo of Gosseyn in it, but after close examination he realizes with some amusement that it's a photo of the corpse of Gosseyn I.

He lays the paper aside and is greatly relieved that he did not succeed in his suicide conditioning, and is incredulous at how his third body was "accidentally" destroyed. He reflects that now he is the only one openly opposing the gang, then suddenly recalls the possible alien influence involved and wonders if the projectiles fired from Venus at the Machine are connected with these aliens. He reminds himself that any error in his actions will lead to his death, and he will not be reborn in another body this time.

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He lays the paper aside and is greatly relieved that he did not succeed in his suicide conditioning, and is incredulous that his third body was destroyed.

He forms rough plans in his mind: retrieve the Distorter and then train his extra brain. He is filled with doubts about his likelihood of learning how to use it, **but remembers that the group opposing the gang are capable of creating duplicate bodies with their minds tied together, each body with an extra control-center in its brain — whoever they are, they would be able to assist him if they wished to risk it. He then begins to wonder where Gosseyn III was hidden, but soon abandons that train of thought as fruitless.**

He phones the hotel's front desk and reaches Dan Lyttle. He says he is John Wentworth and **would like Lyttle to come up to his room briefly.** When Lyttle arrives, Gosseyn notices from his posture that he obviously has null-A training. Lyttle says that he can't stay away from the desk for too long, and Gosseyn counters that the current situation requires them to take risks. He goes on to say that he expects the authorities to have contrived a manner for the Machine to be taken apart as quickly as possible, perhaps by publishing a notice that anyone who comes to the Machine can take away any amount of material they can carry. Lyttle is amazed at Gosseyn's correct assessment of things, and tells him that such a notice has already been published, and the ruins of the Machine have been properly illuminated and truckloads of material are being continuously taken away — he guesses that maybe one eighth of the Machine has already been removed.

He forms rough plans in his mind: retrieve the Distorter and then train his extra brain. He is filled with doubts about his likelihood of learning how to use it, **but is determined not to be bogged down with details yet.**

**After disconnecting the video transmitter,** he phones the hotel's front desk and reaches Dan Lyttle. He says he is John Wentworth and **Lyttle replies that he's on his way up.** When Lyttle arrives, Gosseyn notices from his posture that he obviously has null-A training. Lyttle says that he can't stay away from the desk for too long, and Gosseyn counters that the current situation requires them to take risks. He goes on to say that he expects the authorities to have contrived a manner for the Machine to be taken apart as quickly as possible, perhaps by publishing a notice that anyone who comes to the Machine can take away any amount of material they can carry. Lyttle is amazed at Gosseyn's correct assessment of things, and tells him that such a notice has already been published, and the ruins of the Machine have been properly illuminated and truckloads of material are being continuously taken away — he guesses that maybe one eighth of the Machine has already been removed.

The realization finally hits Gosseyn that the Machine is now truly gone, and will never be rebuilt.

Gosseyn reiterates the need to speedily retrieve the Distorter from the ruins, but Lyttle insists that if he goes off duty before midnight suspicions will be aroused. Gosseyn asks if he can pretend to be sick — Lyttle answers that any claim of ill health has to be confirmed by a lie detector. Gosseyn asks if they can just leave in Lyttle's car without an excuse — Lyttle explains that all employees' cars are affixed to their spots in the parking area with a time-lock keyed to release at the termination of an employee's duty shift. Lyttle warns Gosseyn that walking to the site or taking public transport would undoubtedly result in his capture and arrest. Lyttle suggests that he alone try to retrieve the Distorter to ensure Gosseyn's safety. Gosseyn tells Lyttle that the frenzy over dismantling the Machine will be dominated by the construction companies, fighting off as many individuals as possible by any means necessary — he concludes that the only option therefore is to wait five hours for Lyttle' shift to end.

Lyttle returns to work, leaving Gosseyn to wonder what to do for the long wait.

The realization finally hits Gosseyn that the Machine is now truly gone, and will never be rebuilt the way the original was.

Gosseyn reiterates the need to speedily retrieve the Distorter from the ruins, but Lyttle tells him that all hotels are being scrutinized by the gang and all employees must finish their duty shifts. Gosseyn asks if his robocar parked on hotel's roof is reachable, but Lyttle earnestly warns him that if Gosseyn tries to use it he will be captured.

Gosseyn concludes that the only option therefore is to wait five hours for Lyttle's shift to end.

Lyttle returns to work.

He reads the entire newspaper, hoping for some information he may have missed. He finds none, but is amazed at the comparatively calm way it reported events, as opposed to the purely emotional rage that he had heard on the radio when the Machine was being attacked — he sees this as a definite sign that a genius is running the gang's propaganda.

He orders something to eat from room service, and settles down with the visiphone to do some research with the library to gain some clue as to how to begin training his extra brain. He views numerous documentaries about the nervous systems of various animals, how they learn from experience and to respond to stimuli and so on. Gosseyn grows impatient but continues watching. The narrator on the documentary discusses how animals perceive similar things as being identical, and that history is full of mankind doing likewise. It relates how null-A is helping mankind to tell the difference between "similar yet different" things and events, and to make this differentiation with greater accuracy. Gosseyn immediately recognizes this fact as the piece of information he was searching for.

## *Chapter 24*

He orders something to eat from room service, and settles down with the visiphone to do some research with the library to gain some clue as to how to begin training his extra brain. He views numerous documentaries about the nervous systems of various animals, how they learn from experience and to respond to stimuli and so on. Gosseyn grows impatient but continues watching. The narrator on the documentary discusses how animals perceive similar things as being identical, and that history is full of mankind doing likewise. It relates how null-A is helping mankind to tell the difference between "similar yet different" things and events, and to make this differentiation with greater accuracy. Gosseyn immediately recognizes this fact as the piece of information he was searching for.

He realizes that the human memory is the key: for something remembered with greater detail and accuracy, the more likely the human mind will have a more complete and better understood model of it. He correlates this new fact with how his personality had been transferred from body to body: the mind and body's memory being reproduced with tremendous detail and accuracy.

He knows this is the critical idea, but still does not know what good it will be in training his extra brain.

He notices that the time is now midnight and feels **sick, knowing that his time is up.**

He knows this is the critical idea, but still does not know what good it will be in training his extra brain.

He notices that the time is now midnight and feels **excited, knowing that his opportunity to act has arrived.**

## SECTION #17

Synopsis of Text 45

### *Chapter XVII*

Lyttle and Gosseyn arrive at the area surrounding the Machine's wreckage, where they are confronted by a huge crowd of onlookers watching workers frantically working to fill trucks and roboplanes with metal and materials. The two men have to carefully maneuver their way through the crowd, avoiding the endless fleet of trucks, and eventually cross into **an open field** that connects with the Machine's grounds. **Seeing the chaos and danger all around him, Lyttle comments how foolish it was of him to think he could have done this job by himself. Gosseyn warns him that it will only get worse once they have to confront gunmen hired by the wrecking crews.**

This side of the Machine is far less busy than the other, but the men taking apart the structure have guards on duty to scare off or kill anyone encroaching on their "territory." Gosseyn is forced to kill two guard who come after them, and he is momentarily shocked at the ease with which he shot them.

Once they get close enough to the Machine's ruins, Gosseyn is able to see that although the wrecking crews have taken away a sizable chunk of it, that most of the damage was due to the massive assault from space.

Synopsis of Text 48/70

### *Chapter 25*

Lyttle and Gosseyn arrive at the area surrounding the Machine's wreckage, where they are confronted by a huge crowd of onlookers watching workers frantically working to fill trucks and roboplanes with metal and materials. The two men have to carefully maneuver their way through the crowd, avoiding the endless fleet of trucks, and eventually cross into **a mountainous area** that connects with the Machine's grounds.

This side of the Machine is far less busy than the other, but the men taking apart the structure have guards on duty to scare off or kill anyone encroaching on their "territory." Gosseyn is forced to kill two guard who come after them, and he is momentarily shocked at the ease with which he shot them.

Once they get close enough to the Machine's ruins, Gosseyn is able to see that although the wrecking crews have taken away a sizable chunk of it, that most of the damage was due to the massive assault from space.

He reflects on how the Machine was to all intents and purposes a living thing, perhaps the most complex and knowledgeable entity the planet has ever seen, and he is greatly saddened by this turn of events. **He looks at the mass of people gutting the Machine, and mentally compares them to maggots feeding on a corpse.** He further considers that this may be the end of the null-A philosophy.

He and Lyttle locate the area of the Machine where the Distorter was delivered a couple days previously. Fortunately, it is being less heavily worked on than other areas, so they are able to find the Distorter without worry of discovery. The crate has the address of the Semantics Institute on it; apparently the Machine had been ready to send it there before the attack — **Gosseyn wonders what would've been discovered if the Institute had been able to study it.**

They carry the crate through the barely-trafficked areas of the wreckage and put it into Lyttle's car. They drive to Lyttle's house, and arrive to find that Patricia is not there as planned.

They unpack the Distorter. **Gosseyn briefly wonders rather worriedly why Patricia did not meet them. But, noticing that the time is very early in the morning, he decides that she probably did not intend to meet them so soon.** Seeing the Distorter again leads Gosseyn to reflect on his past actions. He realizes that sending it to the Machine undoubtedly led to its destruction,

He reflects on how the Machine was to all intents and purposes a living thing, perhaps the most complex and knowledgeable entity the planet has ever seen, and he is greatly saddened by this turn of events.

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They unpack the Distorter.

Seeing it again leads Gosseyn to reflect on his past actions. He realizes that sending it to the Machine undoubtedly led to its destruction.

as well as the all-out war the gang is now waging with virtually limitless manpower and authority, with their enemy being at a disadvantage by having only their mental discipline at their disposal.

Gosseyn explains to a tired but curious Lyttle his plan to investigate the Distorter's mechanisms, borrowing some of Lyttle's tools.

While his host sleeps, Gosseyn leisurely takes apart the machine.

Inside he finds over 800 tubes, each one presumably capable of influencing a cubicle during the Games to allow gang agents to advance to the highest level.

On closer examination he realizes that the Distorter is still on — he concludes that the Games Machine could have deactivated it, but didn't; to do so Gosseyn would require tools unavailable to him.

Knowing that now even greater caution is necessary, he postpones his study until Patricia shows up. He goes to sleep, hoping for her arrival when he wakes up. However, he does so late in the afternoon — he guesses that the Coue sleep/hypnosis drug is still having residual effects — and finds that Patricia has not arrived, and Lyttle is absent, having left a note saying he has gone to work and will return after midnight.

Gosseyn explains to a tired but curious Lyttle his plan to investigate the Distorter's mechanisms, borrowing some of Lyttle's tools. At Lyttle's request, Gosseyn agrees not to try anything with the Distorter without him. While his host sleeps, Gosseyn leisurely takes apart the machine.

While wondering what its exact function is, he recalls Patricia's explanation that the Galactic League has outlawed the Distorter except for "transportation" — a stipulation which he doesn't understand the significance of. Inside he finds hundreds of tubes, and on closer examination he realizes that the Distorter is still on — he concludes that the Games Machine could have deactivated it, but didn't; to do so Gosseyn would require tools unavailable to him.

Having told Lyttle that he would do no intensive work with it until he woke up, he postpones his study until Patricia shows up. He goes to sleep, hoping for her arrival when he wakes up. However, he does so late in the afternoon

and finds that Patricia has not arrived, and Lyttle is absent, having left a note saying he has gone to work and will return after midnight.

Bothered by his vulnerable position, and his dependence on Lyttle and Patricia (whom he worries may have been captured and interrogated), he is a virtual prisoner in the house until night. He chooses to spend the time in his continued examination of the Distorter. He also decides it would be wise to take a few of the tubes with him if the house is raided.

While he tries to find a way to remove the tubes, the phone rings and Lyttle tells him of the news of Patricia's arrest for killing her father. He concludes that the gang has arrested her to force himself or someone else into action. Gosseyn advises Lyttle to quit work early and hide out somewhere, and that he will do likewise. He tells Lyttle to keep an eye on the advertisements in the newspaper, following the same contact procedure as with Dr. Kair.

He then hurriedly attempts to remove a tube from the Distorter. He pulls then pushes on the stubbornly fixed tube and unwittingly activates the device, causing the room to become distorted and his body to intensely vibrate. Too late he tries to reverse what he did to deactivate it. He falls over and after a brief spell of severe dizziness finds himself no longer in Lyttle's house. It is dark, and he smells a familiar odor. It takes him a moment to realize he is back in the tunnels beneath Crang's house on Venus.

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He also decides it would be wise to take a few of the tubes with him if the house is raided.

While he tries to find a way to remove the tubes, the phone rings and Lyttle tells him of the news of Patricia's arrest for killing her father. He concludes that Thorson has arrested her to force himself or someone else into action. Gosseyn advises Lyttle to quit work early and hide out somewhere, and that he will do likewise. He tells Lyttle to keep an eye on the advertisements in the newspaper, following the same contact procedure as with Dr. Kair.

He then hurriedly attempts to remove a tube from the Distorter. He pulls then pushes on the stubbornly fixed tube and unwittingly activates the device, causing the room to become distorted and his body to intensely vibrate. Too late he tries to reverse what he did to deactivate it. He falls over and after a brief spell of severe dizziness finds himself no longer in Lyttle's house. It is dark, and he smells a familiar odor. It takes him a moment to realize he is back in the tunnels beneath Crang's house on Venus.

## SECTION #18

Synopsis of Text 45

*Chapter XVIII (first half)*

Shaking from fear, Gosseyn soon calms himself by remembering that he is to all intents and purposes a "superman" and needs fear nothing.

He estimates that he can survive a while without food or drink, but doesn't think that he will ever become that desperate since presumably the Distorter's selected teleport destination is near a key center of gang activity. He then marvels at the ramifications of this undreamt-of science of instant teleportation over vast distances. He figures that the twenty-decimal method of approximation [previously explained to him by Prescott] was used to "bridge the gap" between the two points in space.

He ruminates on his situation so far: swept up in a seemingly chaotic chain of events, in fact the result of various conspiracies and counter-efforts clashing, with him in the center. He reminds himself that if he just observes things and analyzes the situation more, full understanding will come.

Gosseyn fumbles in the dark and finds the Distorter beside him. He feels the tubes, and the one he pushed in is still in that position. He pulls it out, hoping to reverse the teleport back to Earth, but nothing happens. He manipulates other tubes at random, but the power is gone and the Distorter is no longer functioning.

Synopsis of Text 48/70

*most of Chapter 26*

He estimates that he can survive a while without food or drink, but doesn't think that he will ever become that desperate since presumably the Distorter's selected teleport destination is near a key center of gang activity. He then marvels at the ramifications of this undreamt-of science of instant teleportation over vast distances. He figures that the twenty-decimal method of approximation [previously explained to him by Prescott] was used to "bridge the gap" between the two points in space.

He ruminates on his situation so far, and

reminds himself that if he just observes things and analyzes the situation more, full understanding will come.

Gosseyn fumbles in the dark and finds the Distorter beside him. He feels the tubes, and the one he pushed in is still in that position. He realizes that while some tubes have been designed to manipulate the Games Machine, others apparently have the function of teleporting to various places in the solar system,

Though it is useless for the moment he picks it up and takes it with him down the tunnel.

He chooses one of the two directions at random, resolving that if he doesn't come upon anything within a thousand steps to try the procedure the other way. After a while he detects a small amount of light in the far distance. He follows it and eventually comes to a vast chamber. He is on a thin elevated area around the rim of a miles-wide pit, in which lies an enormous spaceship of an unknown design. He spots small figures on and around the ship, loading cargo and carrying out various maintenance duties. He is reminded of the Games Machine's statement that important evidence of alien involvement was somewhere near Crang's house.

As he watches, all the figures board the ship, obviously preparing to take off. He expects the ceiling to open out to allow the vessel to leave, but is surprised when it glows and shimmers, and dematerializes in the same way he experienced when the Distorter teleported him. Having witnessed this, he realizes that being taken to Venus is the best thing that could have happened, though he wishes that he had been able to come with allies and better weapons than Patricia's handgun.

presumably areas important to the gang. He avoids tampering with any of the tubes, knowing that those other places can be explored later, that he must deal with the present situation first. He picks up the Distorter and takes it with him down the tunnel.

He chooses one of the two directions at random, resolving that if he doesn't come upon anything within a thousand steps to try the procedure the other way. After a while he detects a small amount of light in the far distance. He follows it and eventually comes to a vast chamber. He is on a thin elevated area around the rim of a miles-wide pit, in which lies an enormous spaceship of an unknown design. He spots small figures on and around the ship, loading cargo and carrying out various maintenance duties.

As he watches, all the figures board the ship, obviously preparing to take off. He expects the ceiling to open out to allow the vessel to leave, but is surprised when it glows and shimmers, and dematerializes in the same way he experienced when the Distorter teleported him.

Wishing to descend to the pit area, he skirts the edge of the elevated area until he finds an elevator. After examining the controls — a simple lever that moves in two directions — he discovers that it can go up as well as down. Deciding that going up would be more profitable, he ascends to

a room-size chamber where he deposits the Distorter. He is also surprised that the spaceship pit is not guarded, that no alarms were set off by his unauthorized use of the elevator. He takes the steep and narrow corridor until he finds an exit onto the surface — a large hole in the side of a gigantic Venusian tree. After memorizing the hole and the area of the tree so that he can return later with the Venusians (to show them the pit and give them the Distorter), he climbs through the foliage for several miles in the direction of a meadow. He begins to descend to the ground.

Just before reaching ground level, he hears voices and stops to listen. They are obviously two guards, new to Venus, speculating if there is an ammo dump nearby. Hearing this, Gosseyn realizes that the vast ship's cargo was undoubtedly ammunition; the pit also must be used as a launching point to teleport torpedoes, several of which were used to destroy the Games Machine on Earth.

Wishing to descend to the pit area, he skirts the edge of the elevated area until he finds an elevator. After examining the controls — a complex array of twelve tubes, similar in design to those in the Distorter — he momentarily despairs that it is too complex to operate, but soon discovers that each tube indicates a different direction. He takes his chances and manipulates the one pointing upwards, wondering if it leads to an area that is heavily guarded. The world around him blurs as the elevator teleports to a different location, a room-size chamber where he deposits the Distorter.

He takes the steep and narrow corridor until he finds an exit onto the surface — a large hole in the side of a gigantic Venusian tree. After memorizing the hole and the area of the tree so that he can return later with the Venusians (to show them the pit and give them the Distorter), he climbs through the foliage in the direction of a meadow.

*[Chapter 26 concludes with a scene taken from the end of Chapter XX (Section #20) of the serial. The bulk of Section #20 is wholly absent from the revised editions, though portions of the serial's text were re-used in a new context in Section #22.*

*All of the next Chapter, 27, consists of Section #19. The conclusion to Chapter 26 is in Section #21. This is slightly confusing, but it seemed the best solution to the problem of trying to align these noncontiguous plot elements.]*

The guards continue complaining about Venus, and Gosseyn recognizes one of the voices, though he cannot remember whose it is. He waits for night to come, to knock them out and steal their uniforms and weapons.

In the dark he is able to find the men by their lighted cigarettes. He postpones his attack while the men talk about Venus, information he is eager to hear: the Venusian cities are made up of hundreds of houses, each occupying a large amount of acreage, so the cities are enormous but not highly populated. One of the men also comments on how the Venusians deserted the cities when they were invaded. Once they stop talking, Gosseyn knocks one of the men out, but the sound is loud enough to attract the other man's attention — he points his flashlight towards Gosseyn, who shoots it, but not before the other man exclaims his recognition of Gosseyn. Gosseyn makes clear to the man that he has him covered, and warns him to not attempt anything. The terrified man says that he will not report Gosseyn's presence to his superiors if he leaves in peace. He then admits to Gosseyn that he's been awaiting a second meeting, so he could ask him his advice.

Taken aback, Gosseyn listens as the man explains how it was true what Gosseyn said about him in Crang's house — that he is a fearful man — and he apologizes for having hit him. He pleads for help, agreeing to do anything in return.

Gosseyn realizes that this is Blayney, Crang's incredibly neurotic and violent right-hand man. He is filled with pity for the man, but knows that only Blayney can help himself after being pointed in the right direction by a null-A teacher. He asks Blayney what he intends to tell his superiors — to which the man replies that he will claim they were just attacked in the dark. Gosseyn is not sure Blayney can convince his superiors of such a story, but finds himself unable to kill him. So he advises him to leave his weapons behind and run off, which Blayney does. Gosseyn then puts on the other man's uniform and takes his equipment. He is halfway through the meadow when he is ambushed and restrained.

## SECTION #19

Synopsis of Text 45

### *Chapter XVII (second half)*

Meanwhile, on a distant world, an ambassador for the Galactic League arrives for his meeting with Enro the Red, foreign minister of the Greatest Empire, at Enro's massive office building/hunting lodge. The ambassador accompanies Enro and his men on a hunting excursion, during which he witnesses both their technological sophistication and their merciless aptitude for killing animals.

On their way back to the lodge, Enro comments that the ambassador didn't participate much, to which the ambassador replies that it was his first hunting trip and he was fascinated by the proceedings (and revolted, though he does not mention this). Enro then jocularly condemns the League as being "peaceful," apparently an insult. The ambassador reminds Enro that the League was created at a time of war between 19 different empires, and has flourished as a means of establishing and keeping the peace. Enro expresses his heartfelt opinion that war is preferable to peace in any circumstances. **The ambassador realizes that this is exactly the sort of person the League has to keep a close eye on.**

Synopsis of Text 48/70

### *Chapter 27*

Meanwhile, on a distant world, an ambassador for the Galactic League arrives for his meeting with Enro the Red, foreign minister of the Greatest Empire, at Enro's massive office building/hunting lodge. The ambassador accompanies Enro and his men on a hunting excursion, during which he witnesses both their technological sophistication and their merciless aptitude for killing animals.

On their way back to the lodge, Enro comments that the ambassador didn't participate much, to which the ambassador replies that it was his first hunting trip and he was fascinated by the proceedings (and revolted, though he does not mention this). Enro then jocularly condemns the League as being "peaceful," apparently an insult. The ambassador reminds Enro that the League was created at a time of war between 19 different empires, and has flourished as a means of establishing and keeping the peace. Enro expresses his heartfelt opinion that war is preferable to peace in any circumstances.

Finally getting down to business, the ambassador states his purpose in coming: the Greatest Empire five hundred years previously unlawfully established a transit base on Earth, the third planet in an obscure solar system. Enro feigns ignorance, and asks if the League will permit it to remain there. The ambassador replies that according to the League's charter, it must be "dismantled and removed." Enro brushes it aside as a matter of small importance, and instructs the ambassador to leave a note to that effect with his secretary.

The ambassador asks if it will be done, and Enro replies that they will first try to get the League to recognize its right to remain there, since it has existed there for quite some time without causing any trouble. The ambassador reminds Enro that the Greatest Empire would react with great indignation if some other empire had unlawfully established a base in a star system, so it is unfair for him to adopt such a hypocritical attitude. Enro states that the matter will be discussed at the next League meeting in one year's time, and recalls hearing news of a war going on in Earth's star system — telling the ambassador that perhaps the League will grant them permission to restore order.

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## SECTION #20

Synopsis of Text 45

*most of Chapter XIX*

Gosseyn immediately identifies his captors as Venusians, since they exhibit the kind of strength possible only through null-A muscle training. The men make clear that after procuring his weapons and equipment, they intend to kill him (obviously, the Venusians have been busy fighting the invaders, and assumed Gosseyn was one due to the uniform he was wearing). This causes Gosseyn to struggle with all of his ability, and the Venusians release him, recognizing the muscular training of a fellow null-A.

Gosseyn tells the men his whole story while they travel to a Venusian encampment deep within the mountainous forest. He is instructed to get a good night's sleep. He reminds them that they must get the Distorter, but they reply that they dare not risk losing Gosseyn in such an attempt, that they will try to get it themselves. Before falling asleep, he reflects on the day's events and regrets his merciful treatment of Blayne, which could ruin their attempt to secretly recover the Distorter.

He wakes up the next morning, and sees the encampment in the daylight — large groups of Venusian families now live here, their homes in the cities and in the country having been destroyed or abandoned during the invasion.

Synopsis of Text 48/70

*[Section #20 is wholly absent from the revised editions, though portions of the serial's text were re-used in a new context in Section #22 of the revised editions.]*

He is introduced to three men: James Armour, Peter Clayton, and Karl Mahren. He is to repeat his full story into a recording device and have it verified by lie detector, but is first given a sumptuous breakfast. He expresses his surprise at their plentifulness — one of the men explains that the Venusians' campaign against the invaders has been an unqualified success. They have obtained hundreds of weapons, a few dozen roboplanes, a ship, and tons of supplies, as well as having killed hundreds of enemy soldiers. The man goes on to say that the invaders will continue being hunted down, on Venus and on Earth, by null-As, who have their mental discipline and integration against their opponent's transitory and stealable gadgets and machines.

Gosseyn asks what the Venusians' plan is regarding the alien involvement. One of the men replies that their experts have figured out that the aliens must be similar enough to humans so that the gang's human agents have no problem collaborating with them — normal humans in so great a number would never cooperate with truly alien beings. He goes on to say that the enormous underground facility Gosseyn saw is undoubtedly a transit station, a way point that leads to somewhere far outside the solar system, and that its hidden nature suggests one galactic power is trying to hide its transit station from the others.

If the illegal station is discovered, the other galactic powers will undoubtedly rather agree to give away Earth's solar system, than go to war over it.

Gosseyn thinks for a moment, realizing that events of such galactic enormity would seem dark and mysterious to those who are aware of only a small part of them. He also reflects on how throughout Earth's history, sedition and infiltration from the inside to incite civil war, with the subsequent establishment of a puppet government, has always been a popular system of conquest.

The Venusian goes on to discuss the Games Machine. Its destruction is *not* regrettable. He explains that half a century earlier the Venusians had studied the Machine in order to build another on Venus to use as a repository of knowledge; but the study failed because it was discovered that they were nowhere near scientifically advanced enough to do it. Their conclusion therefore was that the Machine was built by the same benevolent manipulator opposing the gang, who also is responsible for Gosseyn's involvement. The Venusians acknowledge the usefulness of the Machine's work, but now wish no longer to be under the influence of an outside force, no matter how well-intentioned.

Later that day, Gosseyn and Armour undergo a series of null-A training exercises, which all students are taught at an early age — fencing, breathing, gymnastics, and dancing.

This re-treading of early training is their attempt to increase the likelihood of Gosseyn's ability to control his extra brain. Armour briefly comments that in past centuries these exercises were used to train actors. Gosseyn replies that he knew this, but admits to having no recollection of *where* and *when* he learned this — more evidence of the tampering done to his memories by this hidden, benevolent manipulator.

He is then taken to a quite, secluded cave where his first attempt at controlling his extra brain is to be made.

# He is confronted with two blocks of wood painted black on a black table, each pinpointed by a beam of light. Every possible method has been used to make the two blocks as molecularly similar as possible, using the small number of sophisticated laboratory devices the Venusians were able to take with them during their flight from their homes. Light, weight, density, temperature, and the light sources are as identical as Venusian science is able to make them. Gosseyn's task is to strive to discern a difference, no matter how minor, thus stimulating his extra brain. It's been determined that this extra brain must function along the same lines as the Distorter, utilizing the twenty-decimal place similarization technique to manipulate energy and matter.

# [This scene with the blocks was used in Section #22 of the revised edition in a different context.]

For an hour he studies them, going over in his mind the tens of thousands of differences that may exist, most of which he is unable to perceive with normal human senses: the effect of light on each, his body heat, minute air pockets and wood-grain, thickness of the paint and so on. He eventually touches them, but nothing unusual takes place, such as discharge of energy or telekinesis (which the Venusian scientists had said was a possibility). He studies these blocks for over two weeks, with no results. The Venusians then admit that they had best allow him to lead a group of men to recover the Distorter.

He and a hundred men stealthily work their way through the forest back to the tree where the Distorter was hidden by Gosseyn some weeks earlier. The gang has used the intervening time to fortify their position and increase the number of men patrolling the area. Such an stepping up in vigilance has also resulted in fewer weapons being stolen by the Venusians, as well as lower casualties among the invaders with a marked rise in Venusian casualties.

He is reminded of Patricia Hardie's plight during the last few weeks. She'd been captured the day he and Lyttle retrieved the Distorter from the Machine's wreckage, and he speculates that she has been tortured and mutilated, while always being carefully kept alive.

The gang is doubtlessly unwilling to kill her, to take the chance that her mind would jump to a duplicate body upon the death of her current one, as was the case with Gosseyn.

He wonders about their relationship before they came to Earth as agents for the "invisible chess player" — if they were happily married, and if both valiantly volunteered to undergo false memory implants, to inhabit Earth and upset the gang's plans. He knows, however, that he cannot and must not risk his life and the success of the war merely to rescue her — if they both did indeed volunteer for this job, they knew sacrifices had to be made. He then is filled with admiration for her sustained impersonation of an unintegrated daughter of a prominent gang collaborator.

Armour passes Gosseyn a note (if they speak, they may be overheard) explaining that once he indicates the hole in the proper tree, that he is to leave the area, guarded by several Venusians. Other men will then at night cut through the narrow passage and remove the too-wide Distorter.

## SECTION #21

Synopsis of Text 45

*end of Chapter XIX -XX*

As he is making his way towards the hole, a hidden trapdoor opens up in the branch beneath him, and he slides several dozen feet into a dark room.

### *Chapter XX*

He tries to get back out, but the chute is too smooth and steep — he has obviously been trapped, and alarms have undoubtedly been raised. Through the ceiling above him, he can hear the loud noise of machine gun fire — the Venusians have been caught in an ambush.

He explores the chamber with his hands, and finds indications that he is in a furnished room. He finds a lightswitch, and it is revealed to be a rather luxurious bedroom. He tries to open the main door, but it is locked, and heavily reinforced with metal beneath the wooden exterior. He goes into the bathroom and searches for any hidden doorways in the spectacularly-mirrored walls, finding none.

Synopsis of Text 48/70

*end of Chapter 26, 28, 29,  
& start of 30*

*[Chapter 26 concludes with a scene taken from the end of Chapter XX (Section #20) of the serial. The bulk of Section #20 is wholly absent from the revised editions, though portions of the serial's text were re-used in a new context in Section #22.*

*All of Chapter 27 consists of Section #19.]*

### *end of Chapter 26*

A hidden trapdoor opens up in the branch beneath him, and he slides several dozen feet into a dark room.

He tries to get back out, but the chute is too smooth and steep — he has obviously been trapped, and alarms have undoubtedly been raised.

He explores the chamber with his hands, and finds indications that he is in a furnished room. He finds a light switch, and it is revealed to be a rather luxurious bedroom.

He then carefully searches the walls of the living room, even removing a few paintings, but again finds nothing. He returns to the main door and examines it thoroughly for any hidden opening mechanisms, finding nothing.

He hears a key in the lock and backs off, holding his guns ready. The door opens, and a tank-like machine hovers in. Thorson's voice demands that Gosseyn surrender.

Thorson himself then enters.

He invites Gosseyn to sit, but remains standing as he speaks. He explains that although the Distorter cannot be traced, they deduced that Gosseyn was on Venus based on Blayne's account of his mysterious attacker; they then had no trouble in locating the Distorter. Gosseyn silently reflects that although his action of sparing Blayne led to his capture and the ambush of the Venusians above, he could not have killed him in cold blood.

Thorson tells Gosseyn that the gang has yet again decided to take a new attitude towards him. Gosseyn refrains from asking what has happened to the ambushed Venusians, figuring that they are more than able to take care of themselves.

Thorson goes on to say that the Venusians' knowledge of the shipyard beneath the meadow has no effect on the situation; the other galactic empires will not risk a war over such a minor affair.

The locked main door opens, and a tank-like machine, a robogun, hovers in. Thorson's voice demands that Gosseyn surrender, and heavily armed men come in and take his guns. Thorson himself then enters.

### *Chapter 28*

Thorson invites Gosseyn to sit down and expresses a false show of concern for Gosseyn's well-being. Gosseyn silently reminds himself that although he has now been recaptured, there is no way he could have avoided it or done differently. He also reflects that Thorson has in the past proved himself to be not as brutal or sadistic as he could have been.

Thorson informs him that the gang's invasion of Venus has reached an impasse and has indeed almost failed, and that their success lies with Gosseyn's willingness to cooperate. This revelation amazes Gosseyn, who had imagined the invasion an almost certain victory for the invaders: it was a surprise attack, and the Venusians are defenseless and vastly outnumbered.

He explains an astonishing fact about the galaxy: every inhabitable world is populated by human beings. Gosseyn is first relieved that aliens are not involved, then revolted and filled with horror at the idea of trillions of unintegrated men, and no one else, ruling the stars.

Thorson reveals that he arrived in the solar system some months previously, after turning down repeated offers to govern multiple star systems. His instructions were to work with the local agents Crang and Prescott — the former being the leader — in accelerating their scheduled takeover.

Thorson admits his constant amazement at humanity inhabiting so many worlds. His only theory is that a tremendous galactic empire existed in the distant past. However, this theory is not backed up by any scientists, because on each planet there is at least one species of animal life that could reasonably be assumed to have been the one the local humans evolved from — Earth's monkey being the local equivalent. He wonders if some great force has exerted itself to create this deceptive appearance of local evolution.

Thorson continues, saying that only he and perhaps Crang are aware of their dire situation. He asks Gosseyn what he would have done had he been the Venusians. Although he has speculated along similar lines, he lies to Thorson and says he doesn't know. Thorson approaches the question from a different angle, asking Gosseyn if he were a Venusian, what *specifically* would he have done when he became aware of the invasion, to which Gosseyn replies that he would have fled into the forest. Thorson asks what he would have done if he had a wife and children; Gosseyn replies that he would have taken them along. It then occurs to him that this must have been what the Venusians did, and is amazed at the prospect. Thorson explains that is indeed what happened, and expresses his puzzlement at their action — they would have been treated reasonably if they had surrendered, but instead fled and hid in the forests.

Gosseyn realizes the Venusians, though now hidden in the forests, would still be defenseless, and asks Thorson how they solved this deficiency. To best explain things, Thorson shows a short segment of a recording done the first night of the invasion on film using radar to create images in the almost pitch-black darkness.

It shows a heavily-guarded galactic army encampment in the forest, with most of the soldiers sleeping while a few of their fellows and several automated robotanks stand guard. (Two of the sentries in the film talk to each other, and Gosseyn

notices it is a language he is totally unfamiliar with; Thorson comments that the soldiers are from Altair and were not given an education in Earth languages prior to the invasion.) Suddenly thousands of Venusians climb down out of the trees wielding clubs and ambush the unsuspecting encampment, struggling to kill as many soldiers, and to obtain as many sophisticated weapons, as they can. Many Venusians are killed by robotanks and the sentries, but once the melee intensifies it is impossible in the darkness for the soldiers to differentiate between friend and foe.

While watching this, Thorson, in a fury, berates the soldiers for being fools, but after calming down admits that perhaps the most advanced and numerous army in the galaxy being attacked by men with clubs was something they never expected, and the darkness provided an excellent cover for the Venusians — the army has equipment that would allow them to see in the dark, but it takes a while to set up. Thorson also states that similar assaults took place in every galactic army encampment on Venus, almost simultaneously.

### *Chapter 29*

In the film, the Venusians begin digging graves for those who died in the assault on both sides. Thorson stops the film and informs Gosseyn that Crang is due to arrive in almost an hour. He explains that it is now the fourth day of the invasion, and

the casualties on both sides are enormous: the Greatest Empire has lost 2 million men, and the Venusians an astounding 10 million. Thorson also states that now the Venusians have procured a massive number of ships and weapons, soon his men will be dying much faster than their enemies and their own death count will soon rise above the Venusians'.

He describes the usual invasion scenario: the conquerors take over and the majority of people are willing to submit to the new government, no matter how tyrannical, rather than lose their homes, and after a few generations, saturated with propaganda, the population becomes proud of their allegiance to the conquerors.

Gosseyn is momentarily lost in thought, reflecting on the massive casualties the Venusians have suffered. He realizes, however, that this indicates the true worth of null-A — that without planning or coordination, the Venusians were able to decide what needed to be done and implemented it. He wonders how many sane, reasonable people exist elsewhere in the galaxy, and how they will react to the news of the Venusian resistance.

An appalling thought occurs to Gosseyn; he asks Thorson why, if the invasion force is truly so numerous and advanced, why they do not merely exterminate the Venusians *en masse*.

Thorson sits down and collects his thoughts before responding. He explains how the Greatest Empire is a member of the Galactic League, and as large and powerful as they are without peer, they control only one-fourth of the membership. They signed a treaty long ago forbidding the use of certain devices and activities in war, including the Distorter, atomic weapons, and, most of all, genocide. They have already violated the restrictions on the first two during their attack on the Games Machine. Genocide is defined as killing more than 20% (or 20 million minimum) of a population. To commit genocide would bring the wrath of the League upon the Greatest Empire, and would start a long and terrible war. Thorson explains that if more than 20 million Venusians die at their hands — with 10 million already killed — the Empire will be charged with genocide.

Thorson now explains how Gosseyn's cooperation can change things. Gosseyn is however momentarily absorbed in rage against the Empire and is temporarily filled with the desire to die fighting them alongside the Venusians. But after integrating his thoughts, he realizes that his unique situation [having the extra brain, being able to be reborn, and so on] gives him a different set of responsibilities. He knows that whatever option Thorson offers, he must accept it and strive to use it as best he can do accomplish his own purposes.

He asks Gosseyn if he realizes how unique he and null-A are in **a galaxy with such commonality between worlds**. As an aside, Thorson chides himself for having not realized the truth at the start, and for having treated Gosseyn as a mere nuisance, by killing him, **then capturing him on Venus**.

In a tone of voice nearing religious fervor, Thorson states that whoever put Gosseyn into this situation has discovered a means of making man immortal — to die and be reborn in a new body — even accounting for fatal accidents.

Thorson expresses his puzzlement at Gosseyn's exact role in all this. He was introduced on the scene at a critical moment, apparently to halt the Empire's attack, though he only served to postpone it. And the Venusians are winning the war not due to Gosseyn's efforts, but due to their own philosophy.

He asks Gosseyn if he realizes how unique he and null-A are in **such a mundane universe**.

As an aside, Thorson chides himself for having not realized the truth at the start, and for having treated Gosseyn as a mere nuisance, by killing him **because that was easier than keeping him captive**. He relates that when Gosseyn's presence was then reported on Venus by Prescott, he was incredulous. He had Crang search for him, capture him, and then take him back to Earth. Prescott was instructed to eliminate Hardie and Lavoisseur — who were becoming an inconvenience to the gang — while ostensibly helping Gosseyn escape to gain his confidence. Prescott's function was also to learn about the extra-brain through Kair's tests. (Gosseyn recalls having heard X's real name, "Lavoisseur," somewhere before but can't place it.)

In a tone of voice nearing religious fervor, Thorson states that whoever put Gosseyn into this situation has discovered a means of making man immortal — to die and be reborn in a new body — even accounting for fatal accidents.

He explains that they released Gosseyn back on Earth because they knew a League agent was in the solar system, and they hoped letting him live would be taken as a gesture of goodwill — they dare not yet go against the League itself by killing one of their agents. They also hoped that Gosseyn, once free, would learn the identity of the "invisible chess player" who has been orchestrating opposition to the gang from behind the scenes, and then they would recapture and interrogate Gosseyn. And to demonstrate their power to the League, they went ahead and invaded Venus as planned.

Thorson reveals that once he, Crang, and Prescott realized that someone had discovered the secret of immortality, they were willing to sacrifice all — even risk a galactic war with the League — to obtain it for themselves. He explains that Earth's solar system has been used as a long-term experiment set up by the "chess player" — demonstrated in part by the unprecedented action the Venusians took just as the invasion was beginning: they fled the cities and hid in the forest, making the entire population an immediately-ready army of guerilla fighters.

He outlines his plan to Gosseyn: together, they will drive the "chess player" into the open, and Thorson and his associates will force him to give them the secrets of immortality and the extra-brain, then take over the whole galaxy. He asks if Gosseyn will cooperate with them; Gosseyn admits that he will, having no choice in the matter.

Thorson begins to describe where the body of Gosseyn III was found, when he mentions that he was suspicious of Lavoisseur betraying null-A after his accident. It is then that Gosseyn suddenly remembers the name: Lavoisseur was head of the Semantics Institute. Thorson confirms this, and explains that he held that position until two years previously when he suffered a terrible car accident, leaving him severely damaged both mentally and physically.

Thorson explains that Gosseyn III was found at the Semantics Institute, in a special kind of case. The men attending the package said it had arrived just recently and was about to be shipped to the Games Machine. Thorson's men attempted to open it, but it was booby trapped and the body was destroyed. However, merely seeing the third body convinced Thorson of the feasibility of immortality and convinced him to pursue his own goals.

He explains that Enro the Red, a leader of the Greatest Empire, wishes war with the League and ordered its treaty to be violated — therefore they used the Distorter and atomic weapons. Enro has also commanded that the Venusians be exterminated, thus committing the greatest crime recognized by the League, and this final step will undoubtedly trigger an all-out war within the League. However, Thorson reveals that he has no intention of following this order, choosing instead to make the best of the current situation and gain immortality for himself.

Thorson leads Gosseyn out of the room to an elevator, explaining that similarity is not used for transportation here — the gang took a big enough risk in using the Distorter on Earth, and see no need to use the same technology on Venus more than strictly necessary. During the descent to the lower levels, Gosseyn reflects on his situation, and expects that the "chess player" is wise enough to have provided for his own protection. He plans to cooperate with Thorson only to discover the player's whereabouts and motives, then do all he can to assist him against the gang.

Gosseyn asks if they are prepared to assist in training his extra brain, a necessary step if they are to locate the player. Thorson replies that preparations have been made, including the presence of the now-captive Dr. Kair and all his information, as well as a team of Venusian psychologists. Thorson briefly reminds Gosseyn that he is constantly under their supervision and control, and to try anything foolish would be severely dealt with.

They exit the elevator in a vast room with sleeping areas, below the pit Gosseyn discovered earlier. There is a large group of men living there, all of whom are obviously mentally retarded and severely unintegrated. Thorson explains that the number of such people increases each year on the inhabited planets, and that measures have been taken to systematically exterminate them, and yet their numbers continue to multiply.

Gosseyn now comprehends his role in all this: to create the irresistible lure of immortality for the invasion force's leader, to draw him away from his inevitable duty of genocide.

Thorson attempts to convince Gosseyn to cooperate in locating the "invisible chess player," reasoning that his unique abilities will be of assistance, and that Gosseyn must realize that he is a mere pawn, as well as a shadowy duplicate of somebody else. He also points out that he should act out of a concern for self-preservation; now that Gosseyn III is dead, his next death will be his last. Also, since Gosseyn is a pawn, his creator obviously thinks of him as expendable. Thorson explains quite clearly that in return for Gosseyn's cooperation, he will avoid using atomic weapons and spare the Venusians; the war will be restricted solely to protecting his soldiers, and he will try to keep as much information about the true state of the war from Enro as long as possible. However, if Gosseyn does not cooperate willingly, Thorson will destroy null-A and the Venusians.

When asked his view on the situation, Gosseyn explains that the larger a civilization is, the greater the number of such people becomes, and that the efforts to exterminate them merely helps to make them grow and flourish. He then stops, appalled at the enormity of the murder involved. He asks Thorson if they have tried any kind of mental training to help them, but Thorson replies that only null-A could be effective, and that it is only to be found in Earth's solar system. Gosseyn expresses his astonished disgust that the gang is trying to destroy null-A as well, the only hope for such people.

Thorson explains that hundreds of years ago, when the base on Venus was first established, a scientist working there requested large groups of these retarded people to be shipped in, under the pretext that they were creating a special kind of fertilizer from their excrement. In fact, the scientist set up a project of giving them null-A training, to see if they could be made useful. It succeeded, and they were used to dig underground and enlarge the subterranean base. This continued until Crang and Prescott arrived to take over things [ten years previous to the current situation]. When it was decided that the large number of marginally-integrated retarded people were ideal for the gang's purposes: they were loyal, and no one, not even the government that created the gang, had any idea of what they were being used for, or that there were so many now on Venus.

Thorson asks Gosseyn's expert null-A opinion about what exactly is wrong with these people. Gosseyn explains that a human goes through four stages of mental development. Most people stay in the third, adolescent stage of self-obsession, while a slim percentage progress to the third, "social" level but whose efforts are hindered by the large number of adolescents among the population. He diagnoses these people as being stuck in the second stage, giving them the minds of children.

Thorson explains his plan: if Gosseyn were to work alongside these retarded people in their null-A training, and continues to re-work his way through the entire program, he should be able to gain use of his extra-brain. The problem with his attempts with the Venusians with the two identical blocks, was that they began his training at too advanced a level.

Gosseyn is taken to a schoolroom, where a normal man is teaching the retarded people the basics of differentiation, using two large wooden blocks as an example, pointing out the one has a crack and the other does not, that the coloration in the grain is different and so on. The teacher then points at Thorson and Gosseyn, asking the students to notice differences between two men. They point out the obvious differences in hair color, height, and dress. Gosseyn considers their observations and reflects that the most glaring difference between them is not physical, but mental.

Having expected such an ultimatum, and knowing resisting would be useless, Gosseyn agrees to the deal but points out that the first step must be to train his extra-brain, asking if Thorson is willing to provide for that. Thorson says that he has already prepared for that, and explains that Crang and Dr. Kair are due to arrive via Distorter transport, and that Prescott is en route via spaceship.

They leave the classroom, and Thorson explains that these retarded people are never given too much training, only enough to make them useful. He says that Kair's plan for Gosseyn's training will involve the use of the Distorter's similarization technique, and will speed up the training of the extra brain.

Seconds later Crang and Kair come in. Gosseyn greets Kair while Thorson has a whispered conversation with Crang. Thorson then states that there is a revolution brewing on Earth and he will have to return there to direct the fighting, leaving the three men to make arrangements for the training.

Kair tells Gosseyn that it was Crang who caught him, and Gosseyn momentarily reflects that the secret null-A is keeping his cover quite well, and decides not to threaten that by asking about Patricia.

A room has been prepared for the extra-brain trials, and Kair marvels at the gang's enormous secret underground facility and their technological advancement. He tells Gosseyn that since the extra-brain is much like an organic version of the Distorter, they will be using the device to assist in similarizing two blocks of wood.

### *Chapter 30*

Almost a week later, the first effects of the training show — Gosseyn uses his extra brain to similarize two blocks of wood, moving them towards each other without touching them.

After two days, the first effects of the training show — Gosseyn uses his extra brain to similarize two blocks of wood, moving them towards each other without touching them.

## SECTION #22

### Synopsis of Text 45

*most of Chapter XXI*

Having finally succeeded in making his extra brain work, Gosseyn takes a moment to reflect **on his surroundings. The room was designed by Dr. Kair according to as much knowledge of similarity as he could gain from asking the many engineers present from outside the Solar System.**

# *[This scene with the two blocks was taken from Chapter XIX (Section #20) and placed in this new context in the revised edition.]*

The walls are specially designed to absorb all forms of **vibration (except heat) from outside the room to keep it as "still" as possible and free from** outside interference. Room temperature is dealt with by means of an extremely sensitive thermostat and heating/cooling system that keeps temperature variation to within a thousandth of a degree.

The Distorter had similarized the blocks up to nineteen decimal places, but it was Gosseyn himself who pushed it up to twenty, causing the two blocks to converge.

### Synopsis of Text 48/70

*most of Chapter 30 - 31*

Having finally succeeded in making his extra brain work, Gosseyn takes a moment to reflect **on his progress and the blocks themselves.**

# **There are** two blocks of wood painted black on a black table, each pinpointed by a beam of light. Every possible method has been used to make the two blocks as molecularly similar as possible, but he reminds himself of the **slight** differences that may exist between the two, most of which he is unable to perceive with normal human senses: the effect of light on each, his body heat, minute air pockets and wood-grain, thickness of the paint and so on.

**Also, the room itself has an influence:** The walls are specially designed to absorb all forms of outside interference. Room temperature is dealt with by means of an extremely sensitive thermostat and heating/cooling system that keeps temperature variation to within a thousandth of a degree.

The Distorter had similarized the blocks up to nineteen decimal places, but it was Gosseyn himself who pushed it up to twenty, causing the two blocks to converge.

He is then taken out of the room, and a wide variety of intensive tests are performed on him, **as is done after each of his sessions**. Kair and Thorson are pleased to see that small but permanent connections have finally formed between his normal brain and the extra brain.

As Gosseyn is escorted to his room by the usual contingent of guards, Prescott and a floating machine join it. Prescott explains the machine's role: it is a vibrator, and automatically will follow Gosseyn around and create constant molecular vibrations in all nearby floors, walls, and ceilings to prevent him from memorizing any containment surface and transporting himself out via similarization. Prescott concludes by stating that a surprise awaits Gosseyn in his apartment, also with the design of keeping his behavior in check.

Wondering what Prescott meant, Gosseyn enters his apartment and **starts undressing** in the dim bedroom when he notices the presence of Patricia Hardie asleep in the other bed. She awakens **and Gosseyn asks why she was placed with him. She replies that she was put under a lie detector and they found out she and Gosseyn were married. He asks why she did not fool the lie detector as she had before when she came to the vacant lot ostensibly to kill him. She explains that only when the "invisible chess player" is present can lie detectors be deceived.**

He is then taken out of the room, and a wide variety of intensive tests are performed on him. Kair and Thorson **(who has returned from Earth briefly to see the test results)** are pleased to see that small but permanent connections have finally formed between his normal brain and the extra brain.

As Gosseyn is escorted to his room by the usual contingent of guards, Prescott and a floating machine join it. Prescott explains the machine's role: it is a vibrator, and automatically will follow Gosseyn around and create constant molecular vibrations in all nearby floors, walls, and ceilings to prevent him from memorizing any containment surface and transporting himself out via similarization. Prescott concludes by stating that a surprise awaits Gosseyn in his apartment, also with the design of keeping his behavior in check.

Wondering what Prescott meant, Gosseyn enters his apartment and **changes into his pajamas** in the dim bedroom when he notices the presence of Patricia Hardie asleep in the other bed. She awakens **and quips that the two of them seem to travel around quite a lot.**

### *Chapter 31*

**Gosseyn learns from Patricia that Thorson will have her killed if he tries to escape, a compromise arrangement worked out by Crang, a secret null-A and Patricia's lover, to ensure her safety from Thorson who wanted her killed outright.**

He expresses his astonishment at this revelation that at one time he was within a short distance of the player, and, slightly enraged, he asks why she did not let him know of the player's presence at the time.

He calms himself and inquires if Thorson and the gang are now aware that they are married. She confirms that is so; this sets Gosseyn thinking about his strange situation of amnesiac matrimony. She deduces what he is pondering, and hastily explains that although she remembers their life together quite clearly he does not, and she requests that he courts her from the beginning again, and she will return his affection only after she is convinced his attraction to her is more than just physical. And since they are to share the same living quarters, she advises him to turn out the light, then undress and go to bed.

As they lie awake, Gosseyn asks exactly who the player is. She says that he has a beard, and they've met only once: 35 years ago, she and Gosseyn were an elderly married couple and adept null-As. She was in a plane wreck and died. The player then approached Gosseyn and offered to grow a new body for him and her if he would be allowed access to her body — in order to regrow her and transfer her consciousness, he would have to get to the body as soon as possible. Gosseyn agreed, and it took the next 30 or so years for the new bodies to fully develop — though he was not in the plane crash, his body was regrown to make him and Patricia the same age in their new forms.

Patricia invites Gosseyn to ask her some questions. Knowing that the room may be under surveillance, he decides to only discuss things that Thorson would be already aware of. He sums up the Greatest Empire's and the Galactic League's roles in all this: they are highly advanced technologically, but it's all for naught since they are unable to integrate themselves and work together, and hence this current power struggle. He does however ask Patricia what her role in all this is, admitting that he is still not clear on that point. She jokingly replies that she is his wife, to which he inquires as to the prudence of blurting out such potentially dangerous information when they could be overheard. She explains that Crang has used his influence over Thorson to ensure that their room is not bugged. She does say that once they've outlived their usefulness, Thorson will not hesitate to have them killed and Crang will be powerless to stop him, as was the case when Thorson had President Hardie and X assassinated once they became inconvenient. She also states that if the "invisible chess player" fails in his task they are all doomed.

He is momentarily annoyed by Patricia's absolute faith in Crang, and he asks what Crang's plans are for them once Gosseyn learns to use his extra-brain. Patricia's reply is that Gosseyn will be on his own when that time comes, and Crang's plans do not go that far.

Gosseyn asks Patricia if she had considered the possibility that her memories, too, may be false, and therefore this whole story about the plane crash may also be false. She admits it has occurred to her, but considers it highly unlikely since in her case there was no need.

Gosseyn asks why she did not tell him all this when they first met. She explains that the reason was two-fold: she was wearing a locket that allowed Thorson to hear everything they said, and besides Gosseyn was never supposed to know, his amnesia being a necessity for his mission. When asked what they are supposed to do now, Patricia replies that she has no idea, having had no communication with the player since her mission began.

In response to a question from Gosseyn about her father's assassination, Patricia explains that both Hardie and X were heavily under Crang's influence and when Thorson decided to eliminate them he refrained from informing Crang to avoid any arguments and used his own man, Prescott, to do the dirty work. This leads Gosseyn to wryly comment that Crang seems to be the keystone of opposition to Enro's plans for war.

Suddenly struck with a thought, he asks Patricia if Crang is the "invisible chess player." Patricia says he is "definitely not," explaining that he has photos of himself as a child, which Gosseyn points out could have been faked. Seeing that this topic is going nowhere, he asks about President's Hardie involvement in all this. Patricia explains that her father became bitter about a perceived injustice when the Games Machine did not give him as high a placement he thought he deserved, on the basis of his tests. His bitterness spread to his daughter, who likewise scorned null-A for many years, but eventually saw her father's error when he continually displayed careless disregard for the consequences of his actions and she took up studying null-A in secret. When she met Crang over a year and a half previously, he introduced her into the world of galactic politics.

Although Crang was a member of the Greatest Empire and not the Galactic League per se, it led her to become a League agent herself, striving to subtly protect Earth from being annexed by the powerful Empire while the League sat by and did nothing, to avoid war.

She explains that many in the League are aware of null-A but due to their failure to understand it properly have done nothing to introduce it elsewhere in the galaxy, inaccurately viewing it as a group of pacifists rather than an ability to effectively adapt to any situation, even war. Gosseyn realizes this is why Enro chose Venus for the invasion: with the null-As viewed as mere defenseless pacifists, the League would see this flagrant disobedience of their treaties and be forced to declare war.

Patricia also explains that Lavoisieur, ex-head of the Semantics Institute, was caught in an explosion at the Institute a few years previously, and as a result of his horrible injuries underwent a personality change, turning into a "bloodthirsty maniac" who became known as X. Crang hoped to use X for his own purposes, expecting him to eventually recover his former personality, which never happened.

Patricia falls asleep, leaving Gosseyn to think.

He ponders on how the player has but a few largely-ignorant agents like Gosseyn at his disposal, compared to whole galactic empires — **an apparently hopeless situation.**

Patricia becomes quiet, presumably falling asleep, leaving Gosseyn to think. He reminds himself that Thorson will stall the war while he pursues his own quest for immortality, giving the null-As time to better prepare themselves for a lengthy conflict, as well as giving time for the League to respond to the Greatest Empire's treaty violation. But he has no illusions that if the pressure becomes too great Thorson will have to proceed with the plans for genocide. He ponders on how the player has but a few largely-ignorant agents like Gosseyn at his disposal, compared to whole galactic empires. Gosseyn resolves to take up a more active role in things.

## SECTION #23

Synopsis of Text 45

*end of Chapter XXI*

Two days later, Gosseyn is still practicing using his extra brain, now being able to bend light with his mind. He also finds himself equipped with a new sense: an awareness of electrical fields and energies around him, and four days later than that the ability to distinguish one person's energy field from another — Kair having a "friendly" field, the others having "unfriendly" ones. He is also able to "read" the emotions of the men, and is able to distinguish the men by their emotions alone: **Thorson and Crang have differing degrees of cold manipulation, and Prescott has a red hot rage.** Gosseyn assumes that Prescott is still furious with him because of the episode at Dr. Kair's house, where he tricked Prescott into thinking he was about to be killed when Kair took longer than expected to return to the house after making contact with the gang agent outside.

**Two days later than that, he is able to discern enough similarity between his body and a block of wood in order to transport the wood across the room to himself.**

Synopsis of Text 48/70

*Chapter 32*

Two days later, Gosseyn is still practicing using his extra brain, now being able to bend light with his mind **without help from the Distorter.** He also finds himself equipped with a new sense: an awareness of electrical fields and energies around him, and four days later than that the ability to distinguish one person's energy field from another — Kair having a "friendly" field, the others having "unfriendly" ones. He is also able to "read" the emotions of the men, and is able to distinguish the men by their emotions alone: Prescott has a red hot rage. Gosseyn assumes that Prescott is still furious with him because of the episode at Dr. Kair's house, where he tricked Prescott into thinking he was about to be killed when Kair took longer than expected to return to the house after making contact with the gang agent outside, **as well as being enraged at being fooled into letting Gosseyn into the Palace.** Thorson's emotional aura is that of a master manipulator relatively indifferent to Gosseyn except as a tool, while Crang is virtually unreadable due to his ability to mask his emotions, obviously one of the reasons why he is able to act as a double agent with such skill. But Gosseyn fails utterly to read anything from Patricia and eventually concludes that men are unable to read the emotional states of women.

Later that day, during a moment by himself he tries to override the vibrator following him around. He is able to see inside it and all its functionings — it emits energy on many different wavelengths and at many different intervals, but he is eventually able to stop it. He then tries to memorize an area of floor in order to similarize himself out of the room, but finds that he cannot override the vibrator and similarize himself at the same time: one or the other, but not both. This is obviously part of the intricate method of keeping him prisoner and evidence that the gang is very familiar with similarization. He realizes that this complex method of captivity is very difficult for his captors to maintain, and is a sure indication that once he has outlived his usefulness the gang will not hesitate in killing him, if only so they no longer need to maintain such a complicated setup.

He realizes that his mental image of the "chess player" is based almost entirely on the impressions the mysterious man's actions have made on unintegrated people, such as Thorson and even Crang (who, having taken up null-A in adulthood, does not have the innate mastery that would come from someone trained in null-A since childhood). Their impression is of a powerful manipulator like themselves, and Gosseyn strives to disentangle himself from this image and evaluate the facts objectively — he speculates that the player stumbled upon immortality by accident and is using what little is at his disposal in a feeble attempt to oppose the Greatest Empire. He also clearly has no regard for Gosseyn's life — therefore he decides to disregard the player's plans and to strike out on his own.

Later, he tries to override the vibrator. He is able to see inside it and all its functionings — it emits energy on many different wavelengths and at many different intervals, but he is eventually able to stop it. He then tries to memorize an area of floor, but finds that he cannot override the vibrator and similarize himself at the same time: one or the other, but not both. This is obviously part of the intricate method of keeping him prisoner and evidence that the gang is very familiar with similarization.

He later tries to read the minds of Thorson and the others, but the human mind is far too complex for him to read or manipulate at such an early stage of training.

On the nineteenth day of his captivity, his final exercise involves a rod of metal and a power source, unconnected. While Thorson and the others observe from a within an enclosed observation area with transparent nonconductive walls, Gosseyn uses his mind to similarize the two and transfers the energy from the power source to the rod where it discharges. A soldier then removes the rod and power source, and Thorson again feels safe to enter, and converses with Gosseyn.

He explains that he has now been given as much training as they dare without enabling Gosseyn to become too powerful to control. **They are going to take him to Earth, and he emphasizes that Patricia is remaining on Venus as a hostage to ensure Gosseyn's cooperation. Their plan is to go over all the places Gosseyn has been in the hopes that this time, with his new abilities, he will be able to notice some critical clue he missed before, that will lead them to the "invisible chess player."**

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He explains that he has now been given as much training as they dare without enabling Gosseyn to become too powerful to control, **but just enough to make him able to find the "chess player."** He tells Gosseyn to go to his apartment and pack, and to be ready in an hour to leave for Earth. Three guards, Prescott and the vibrator get into an elevator with him, and Gosseyn suddenly knocks Prescott unconscious, grabs a guard's gun and kills all four of them.

## SECTION #24

Synopsis of Text 45

Synopsis of Text 48/70

### *Chapter 33*

*[Section #24 is wholly absent from the serial, present only in the revised text.]*

Gosseyn takes off the clothes provided for him by the gang, which he suspects to have remote-controlled devices sewn into the fabric that could render him unconscious if his captors learn of his escape. He puts on Prescott's suit and gets off at a random floor. He shoves the vibrator and the dead bodies off, and goes to another random floor.

He uses his extra brain to memorize a section of floor right outside the elevator, assigning it a number designation, "1," for quick memory recall. He then goes down the hall a ways and memorizes another section of floor there, giving it the alphabetic designation "A." He then recalls pattern #1, and using his similarization technique teleports himself back at the elevator door. Greatly excited by the success of his first teleportation attempt, he goes to other floors and repeats the procedure, upping each designation by 1 from the previous floor, i.e., elevator sections 2, 3, 4 and so on, and hall sections B, C, D and so on — eventually he has nine patterns of each type memorized. He also memorizes the pattern-locations of several dozen electrical sockets, to use them as a source of power, to use as a weapon should the need arise. During his trips from floor to floor, he only encounters one guard whom he mercilessly shoots dead.

He returns to his apartment briefly, where Patricia — unaware that Gosseyn has escaped — tells him that Crang contacted her to give them instructions. Gosseyn is momentarily appalled by this, having postponed his escape attempt as long as possible, awaiting such instructions, and now they have come but apparently too late. She tells him that Crang wants him to feign cooperating with Thorson, and pretend locating something at the Semantics Institute on Earth. There he will meet a bearded man, the "invisible chess player," whom Gosseyn will assist. Patricia expresses her amazement that Crang was aware of the player's identity and location all along, and to Gosseyn's inquiry replies that Crang did not tell her who the player really is.

The plan is to kill Thorson, so Crang will have control of the 100 million-man strong galactic army currently under Thorson's command. This will delay (for about a year) any further attacks on Venus by Enro, who will be forced to rebuild his army. Gosseyn is taken aback by the grandeur of Crang's plan, in comparison to the small disruption he himself had in mind. Patricia adds that Thorson can only be killed once he has left the base, there being far too much protection for him there.

He thinks over his choices, and is struck by the fact that he still has no idea who Crang is. He asks Patricia, who explains that five years previously he was a Venusian detective who became aware that one of his assistants was merely *pretending* to be a null-A, in fact one of Prescott's galactic agents who gained a job on Venus through the gang's manipulation of the Games. Crang eventually learned of the imminent invasion and was able to involve himself in the Greatest Empire, eventually killing his way to the top diplomatic position. Gosseyn is surprised at Crang's ruthlessness, but reminds himself that Crang undoubtedly acted on information not available to anyone else.

Minutes later, Gosseyn is being pursued around the base — he jumps from one number-designated location to another, and then once he's used all those up he pretends to be cornered and gives up. He hopes that the interrogation via lie detector will not give away the rest of his plan, or that he has a whole other set of locations designated with letters, intending to use such information for an escape if the truth comes out. Thankfully it is Crang who interrogates Gosseyn, and he carefully phrases his questions to merely confirm what the gang already knows, to avoid giving away any further information. Crang informs Thorson that it is safe to take Gosseyn to Earth to search for the player. Gosseyn realizes that this is the perfect setup to get Thorson away from the safety of his base: to

find immortality for himself, a quest that could not be trusted with subordinates who would use the knowledge for themselves and not report back to Thorson.

Thorson proudly points out to Gosseyn that his extra-brain obviously has its limitations — as demonstrated by his "failed" escape attempt, as well as Gosseyn III having not been immediately put into action to foil the invasion single-handedly. He further explains that a single man, no matter how powerful, is limited, and can easily be killed and his plans destroyed, using a single atomic bomb even if only the conspirator's general location is known. Thorson goes on to say that he's glad Prescott is dead, that things are thereby greatly simplified. He does however claim that Gosseyn's actions show that he's totally misinterpreted his plans — he does not wish the player dead, but merely wants to use what he knows.

Gosseyn reflects on history, how unintegrated leaders have let their ambitions kill innocents and cultivate chaos. He knows Thorson's quest for power will not end with immortality, which will be just the beginning of the man's schemes for domination.

Knowing that the end is finally near, they set off for Earth.

## SECTION #25

Synopsis of Text 45

### *Chapter XXII*

Gosseyn, Thorson, and a large group of soldiers with robotanks scour the ruins of the Palace. They can hear gunfire in the distance; the surrounding area is still a battle ground.

They explore Patricia's old room, and Gosseyn stares out the window at a mound of dirt where the Games Machine once was. They find nothing of interest at the Palace, and head for Dan Lyttle's house.

Gosseyn is surprised to see that the abandoned house is still relatively tidy and clean; he attributes this to the automatic cleaning machines called "de-dusters." He sees the crate in which the Machine had put the Distorter to be shipped elsewhere, and realizes that the address label "The Semantic Institute" is the clue they are searching for. He tries to hide his discovery, but after being questioned by the gang with a lie detector the truth comes out. Thorson excitedly has an aid contact Prescott and Crang on Venus to inform them of their discovery of the player's location: the Semantic Institute. With that done, they head out to the Institute, followed by a fleet of planes above them and ships in orbit.

Synopsis of Text 48/70

### *Chapter 34 - 35*

Gosseyn, Thorson, and a large group of soldiers with robotanks scour the ruins of the Palace. They can hear gunfire in the distance; the surrounding area is still a battle ground. Thorson remarks to Gosseyn that the null-As on Earth fight as viciously and determinedly as on Venus, like "mindless fiends" — Gosseyn replies that on the contrary it reflects a total adaptation to their situation. They explore Patricia's old room, and Gosseyn stares out the window at a mound of dirt where the Games Machine once was. There obviously was an effort to bury all trace of the Machine, but their efforts were interrupted by the war. They find nothing of interest at the Palace, and head for Dan Lyttle's house.

Gosseyn is surprised to see that the abandoned house is still relatively tidy and clean; he attributes this to the automatic cleaning machines. He sees the crate in which the Machine had put the Distorter to be shipped elsewhere, and realizes that the address label "The Semantic Institute" is the clue they are searching for. Gosseyn suggests to Thorson that the Institute would be a good place to search. They head out to the Institute, followed by a fleet of planes above them and ships in orbit.

They arrive, and Gosseyn briefly and sadly reads the plaque "Words, ah, words" in the entryway of the abandoned building. The guards searching the rooms find a man whom they take before Thorson. The man bitterly complains about his rough treatment. Thorson asks who he is, and the man produces a medallion as a means of identification. Thorson sarcastically explains to Gosseyn that the man is an agent of the Galactic League, whom they seem to have caught by surprise with their sudden arrival.

Thorson taunts the agent, saying that it is an incredible coincidence that the Institute was hit accidentally during their orbital attack — and the Institute also holds thousands of bodies in its vaults for study, corresponding with the Machine's statement that Gosseyn's third body was accidentally destroyed.

The agent is forced to lead Thorson and his men to a room where fourteen other agents are in hiding. The agent calms himself down and confronts Thorson, saying that the League will hear of his actions, and his government will be held accountable. Thorson ignores the man and tells Gosseyn that he is faced with the difficulty of needing to get null-As and League agents out of the way to get what he wants, but if he does so will face the wrath of his government.

They arrive, and Gosseyn briefly and sadly reads the plaque "The Negative Judgment is the Peak of Mentality" in the entryway of the abandoned building. The building is searched by the guards and found to be empty. Gosseyn is struck by the momentousness of this: the Institute is abandoned. Even though it's in the middle of a war zone, and knowing that it would be madness to remain there under such circumstances, for the Institute's personnel to be gone Gosseyn sees as an incontrovertible sign that Earth society is in dire situation indeed.

Thorson orders the vibrator to be reactivated as he and his men prepare for a thorough search of the Institute, looking specifically for hidden rooms. One group of guards reports back to Thorson and tells him that an elderly man has been found in a laboratory, and they are unsure how they could have overlooked his presence in their first search. Thorson disregards the surprise and moves in. Gosseyn has to restrain himself from asking if the man has a beard, hoping it is in fact the "chess player."

The Institute's interior is fashioned from precious metals and jewels. Gosseyn recalls how those who erected the building were intent on demonstrating that such symbols of wealth are worth no more than any other scarce materials.

The agent scoffs at Thorson's boasts of destroying null-A, affirming that it cannot be destroyed and that the Venusians have already won the war against the gang. The reason why previous conquerors won is because the native population was willing to tolerate taxation and new laws in order to stay in their homes — the Venusians knew this and immediately retreated into the forests to wage a guerilla war. The agent exclaims that the League secretariat has been searching for such an educational system, and has finally found it. Thorson's response is to make snide remarks to Gosseyn about the League secretariat being a group of pompous, foolish men. He states that Earth's solar system will be handed over to the Empire at the next League meeting under the pretext of putting an end to the terrible war — without revealing, of course, that they themselves are the reason for the war in the first place.

The agent retorts that null-A will always be triumphant, due in part to Professor Lavoisseur's "development" of Gosseyn's extra-brain, giving the ability to bypass the actions of bloodthirsty power-seekers like Thorson and the gang. Thorson contradicts the agent's affirmation, noting that they have Gosseyn under their control. He then demands that Professor Lavoisseur step forward, when he realizes the full implications of the name. Thorson is amazed that Lavoisseur had an extra body just as Gosseyn did.

They come to the door leading to the laboratory. Thorson instructs Gosseyn to go in and tell the old man, who is already under guard, that the gang knows he is defenseless and therefore any resistance is pointless. Thorson warns Gosseyn not to try anything, or both Venus and Earth will be destroyed. They attempt to stare each other down, and Thorson finally laughs and admits to being tense and perhaps he exaggerated, but that he still means business.

He orders his men to ask the League agents a series of predetermined questions, to be verified by lie detector, and then have the agents shot. Thorson sets off to find Lavoisseur and the Institute's medical section, leaving a slightly bewildered Gosseyn hoping that the player, now revealed to be Lavoisseur, is able to protect himself.

They find Lavoisseur in a room with dozens of bodies in storage. Thorson's men explore the room thoroughly. The man has a beard and vaguely resembles someone Gosseyn has seen before — and judging by his demeanor and body language, he has also had the highest degree of null-A training. It is only when the man speaks to Gosseyn in greeting that the recognition is complete: Lavoisseur's voice and physical appearance are identical to X's. His face, however, is normal and is not the damaged caricature of a human that X's was. Gosseyn thinks back and realizes that Prescott, when being interrogated at Kair's house, slipped and referred to X as "La — " — obviously the gang knew X as "Lavoisseur," and this explains Thorson's comment, made minutes earlier, that Lavoisseur must have had a duplicate body as Gosseyn did.

Lavoisseur explains that in order to infiltrate the gang himself in a duplicate body he underwent surgery to simulate the effects of a serious accident.

While expecting the gang to eventually find him, he is surprised that they risked taking Gosseyn along with them. Gosseyn only half-hears the Professor's words, his attention directed elsewhere, trying to figure out a method of defeating the gang but the armor-plated vibrator is always present, making any similarization attempts futile.

Lavoisseur explains the immortality process to Thorson and Gosseyn, showing them various instruments and the body cases as he speaks. Gosseyn is still heavily preoccupied with their apparent defeat and misses much of the explanation, but soon he is able to focus on the man's words.

# Duplication of a human body is accomplished by taking the "duplicate potentials" inherited from one's parents and growing them separately into a new individual. Such duplication is theoretically possible under normal circumstances, such as identical twins, but the differences in minute experiences make similarization between them impossible. Lavoisseur's process is to create a duplicate body under strict laboratory conditions, and keep it unconscious — its mind will automatically receive the thoughts and memories of the original since the two bodies are alike to within 20 decimal places, and a machine ensures that the duplicate mind has no thoughts of its own. When the original body dies, the duplicate body is "activated," taking up life where the other left off.

# *[This explanation was, in the revised text, placed at the end of the chapter.]*

Gosseyn again considers his situation, using his new abilities to sense and probe the energies around him. He becomes furious at Lavoisseur for explaining the entire immortality system to Thorson.

He is very surprised when the Professor's mind makes contact with his, saying that he is explaining the system for Gosseyn's benefit. The Professor is meanwhile speaking aloud, explaining to Thorson that the extra-brain was not designed but was a freak chance occurrence at birth, and can only be reproduced in duplicate bodies. Thorson expresses his refusal to believe this, since the extra-brain was a thing he wanted for himself, and confronts Lavoisseur that Gosseyn has one and he himself must have one also. He then realizes what this means: with two extra-brains in one room, one can deactivate the vibrator while the other attacks Thorson and his guards.

Thorson orders his men into action, now aware that they are in grave danger. Lavoisseur telepathically tells Gosseyn that each body case has an energy reservoir in it (which their extra-brains can tap into and manipulate the flow), and to go sit at his desk. Gosseyn follows his instructions, and in the back of his mind realizes that telepathy via similarization is possible — yet there must be some key piece of information he is missing that would explain, if such a degree of similarization is possible, how he has been unable to do so with his earlier attempts.

Gosseyn hesitantly moves towards the door, unsure what he can do, when a voice suddenly tells him to hide in the alcove near the door, where he will be safe — there are energy reservoirs in the walls throughout the Institute that can be channeled, by means of similarization, into deadly electrical force. He is startled by this, seeing no one near enough to have spoken to him, but slowly realizes that it was not a voice but someone else's thoughts being transmitted directly into his brain. He assumes this means that Prescott was wrong when he insisted that telepathy without similarization is impossible [Gosseyn does not yet know that the mind communicating with him is Professor Lavoisseur's, or that he has his own extra-brain].

Lavoisseur mentally instructs him to nullify the vibrator.

As Gosseyn does so, Lavoisseur is free to tap into the energy reservoirs and use their power to kill Thorson by striking his head off with a bolt of electricity. Then he kills Thorson's men and destroys their tanks and guns, as well as the vibrator itself. As the carnage ends, Gosseyn notices that Lavoisseur was terribly wounded in the fight. The Professor's mind touches Gosseyn's and tells him it is vital to finish off the remaining gang members before they regain consciousness and instruct the planes overhead to bomb the Institute.

Gosseyn uses his now-liberated extra-brain to kill the remaining gang members.

As soon as he has done this, he returns to Lavoisseur

He receives further mental instructions to nullify the vibrator once he has reached the alcove. He hurries to get there and Thorson, sensing something is wrong, orders Gosseyn to stop.

The man again mentally shouts for him to nullify the vibrator. As Gosseyn does so, Lavoisseur is free to tap into the energy reservoirs and use their power to kill Thorson by striking his head almost clear-off with a bolt of electricity. Then he kills Thorson's men and destroys their tanks and guns, as well as the vibrator itself. As the carnage ends, the man's mind touches Gosseyn's and tells him he was terribly wounded in the fight and unable to do any more; he says it is vital to finish off the remaining gang members before they regain consciousness and instruct the planes overhead to bomb the Institute.

Gosseyn uses his now-liberated extra-brain to kill the remaining gang members, hoping that the ships overhead will either wait a while before bombing or have already been commandeered by Crang. As soon as he has done this, he returns to Lavoisseur — who, he can now see, indeed has a beard — who although badly injured is still conscious. He exultantly shouts to Gosseyn that they have done it.

Gosseyn recognizes the voice as being identical to X's.

## Chapter 35

Gosseyn examines the man's horrible wound; the man says that he can keep the pain at bay through self-hypnosis, except when he coughs. In response to Gosseyn's connection between him and X, he explains that he created X to infiltrate and spy on the gang's upper echelons. X truly had a twisted mind and was unaware that he was not the real Professor Lavoisseur, who went into hiding to avoid being seen with X taking his place in everyday life. He also created X to have a stronger mind, so that his thoughts would be transferred to himself via similarization while he was conscious — a perfect surveillance system.

Lavoisseur seemingly loses consciousness, and Gosseyn, frantic to learn something about himself, tries to waken him. Lavoisseur comes to and tells Gosseyn that he was concentrating, trying unsuccessfully to use an energy source to kill his body to end his suffering, finding it increasingly difficult to keep the pain away. He explains how he expected to be killed by Thorson's guards when their master died, but they were too slow and died themselves only seconds later. He pleads with Gosseyn to fetch a gun from a dead guard so he can kill himself.

Gosseyn does so, but debates with himself whether to prolong Lavoisieur's suffering while he gets more information, finally deciding that he must. He keeps the gun when the Professor tries to take it — the man laughs, and asks what Gosseyn wants to know. Gosseyn asks about his multiple bodies, and Lavoisieur explains.

# *[In the serial, the explanation of duplication took place before Lavoisieur died.]*

# Duplication of a human body is accomplished by taking the "duplicate potentials" inherited from one's parents and growing them separately into a new individual. Such duplication is theoretically possible under normal circumstances, such as identical twins, but the differences in minute experiences make similarization impossible between them. Lavoisieur's process is to create a duplicate body under strict laboratory conditions, and keep it unconscious — its mind will automatically receive the thoughts and memories of the original since the two bodies are alike to within 20 decimal places, and a machine ensures that the duplicate mind has no thoughts of its own. A Distorter and a machine similar to a lie-detector are used to filter the thoughts of the living body that end up in the mind of the unconscious duplicate. It was using this method that Gosseyn was given false and missing memories — only the personality was duplicated. When the original body dies, the duplicate body is "activated," taking up life where the other left off.

only to find him dead. He is momentarily stunned, since now he will never know exactly what has been going on, and reflects that in real life many things are never explained. He searches the room trying to find any kind of clue that would provide more information, but the contents of the building were almost totally destroyed during the brief, intense fight. He looks at the body in the cases — there is no indication of who they are or why they are there. Surprisingly, only one body has been killed. He looks for any survivors, finding that all the innocent League agents have already been shot, but their murderers were also killed in the fight.

Lavoisseur confirms Crang's theory — immortality acted as a lure to prevent the genocide of the Venusians and to sidetrack Thorson into making himself vulnerable.

Gosseyn asks about his extra-brain. Lavoisseur explains that it exists in an embryonic state in all human brains, but due to the strain of consciousness it almost never fully develops — he draws a parallel to George the jungle-boy, and the inability of his cortex to develop in the primitive conditions of living with a pack of dogs. [Apparently, the extra-brain has to be grown in an unconscious body, such as the duplicates, and can only be used once the body reaches a certain age, about 30.]

Lavoisseur pauses, and Gosseyn assumes the man must rest for a moment before continuing. He takes this time to remind himself that the techniques involved are nothing new: the growth of human tissue in incubators, isolating particular cells and so on. It is merely the details and combination of techniques that makes this process work.

He asks Lavoisseur where the duplicate bodies are kept. When the man fails to respond, Gosseyn tries to shake him awake, only to find that he is dead. He is momentarily stunned, since now he will never know exactly what has been going on, and reflects that in real life many things are never explained. He searches Lavoisseur's pockets trying to find any kind of clue that would provide more information, but they are empty.

Gosseyn begins to make his way out of the building when he realizes this is his final opportunity to learn *anything* — once he leaves he can not come back. He returns to Lavois-seur's body and thinks. He realizes that though the body is dead there may yet be some residual brain activity, even *an hour* after death. Reminding himself that the Professor had somehow been able to similarize their minds for communication, Gosseyne desperately strives for several minutes to make contact. Unfortunately, enough time has passed for natural decay to create enough difference between the two men's minds to make contact very difficult.

He is about to give up when he receives a "loud," random thought. He realizes that though the body is dead there may yet be some residual brain activity, even *minutes* after death. Reminding himself that the Professor had somehow been able to similarize their minds for communication, Gosseyne desperately strives for several minutes to make contact. Unfortunately, enough time has passed for natural decay to create enough difference between the two men's minds to make contact very difficult.

*[From here on, Text 70 has some additions, highlighted in green, and eliminates a bit of information, indicated with italics.]*

Suddenly and without warning, he catches a short burst of thought from Lavois-seur. Over the next few minutes he achieves intermittent contact with the few remaining organized brain cells, and takes in a bewildering hodgepodge of information: *Lavois-seur had discovered immortality via duplication a very long time ago, and the extra-brain was the result of an otherwise disastrous, accidental mutation in one of the duplicates. He advises Gosseyne not to put himself in danger until he has grown a few of his own duplicate bodies. He explains that he deliberately refrained from giving Gosseyne the memory of being married to Patricia, since each body has its own ego and desires.*

Suddenly and without warning, he catches a short burst of thought from Lavois-seur. Over the next few minutes he achieves intermittent contact with the few remaining organized brain cells, and takes in a bewildering hodgepodge of information: *he advises Gosseyne to wait for the other bodies, which are eighteen years old, to reach the age of thirty before using them. He comments that it is unfortunate that due to his accident, the memory-continuity between his group and Gosseyne's was broken, but says that Gosseyne has learned to live as an individual.*

He further advises that Gosseyn keep a few duplicate bodies out simultaneously, but to always ensure they are less than an exact replica of the original, just as Lavoisseur had X, and someone else (whose name comes through garbled). X was created to infiltrate the gang, and to do so Lavoisseur had to make X a truly vicious monster of a man.

Lavoisseur's last communication is a fragmentary history of his life. He's now used immortality duplication for over half a millennium, and was present to help the **first** development of null-A. He traveled to Venus **shortly thereafter, and by that time had the extra-brain, which allowed him to**

stumble upon the Greatest Empire's secret base **there. He learned their non-terrestrial sciences and used it to** create the Games Machine back on Earth to govern the undisciplined masses and cultivate null-A. **After that** he made a long trip to other star systems. **When he returned to Earth's solar system he found that the gang, an independent group within the Greatest Empire, was nearing readiness to wage a war of extermination against null-A.**

Lavoisseur compares himself to a queen on a chess board, and Gosseyn to a pawn almost reaching the opposite end of the board to become a queen himself; yet he feels that they are still both just that, game pieces, each being manipulated by an unseen player. Lavoisseur wonders who the "invisible chess player" truly is **and where this whole cycle started,** but expresses his opinion that there isn't one after all.

Lavoisseur's last communication is a fragmentary history of his life. He's now used immortality duplication for over half a millennium, and was present to help the **further** development of null-A. **He decided to settle on Earth and realized that null-A was what he had been searching for. He kept the secret of immortality to himself, knowing that all but null-As would use it for personal gain and power.** He eventually stumbled upon the Greatest Empire's secret base on Venus, and ventured beyond the solar system. He helped build the Games Machine to govern the undisciplined masses and cultivate null-A, **and established the system of sending the best null-As to live as free men on Venus. Then, in spite of his own accident and loss of memory, he was able to begin again the process of growing duplicate bodies.**

After explaining this, Lavoisieur's mind finally degrades into a jumble of random, indiscernible impulses. Gosseyn now feels fulfilled, **understanding Lavoisieur's role**, but the mystery of his own identity still bothers him. He begins to put previously unconnected scraps of information together: **Lavoisieur had multiple duplicates of himself active simultaneously, X and someone else.**

*Also, Lavoisieur and Gosseyn were able to similarize their brains to communicate, something that was impossible to achieve between Gosseyn and anyone else.*

To confirm his suspicions, Gosseyn locates in the nearby bathroom some salve **called "Beardex"** that instantly removes facial hair. He smears it onto Lavoisieur's face and rubs off the dead man's beard, revealing an elderly visage that is otherwise identical to Gosseyn's own. Gosseyn now comprehends the full truth: he is an independent duplicate body of Lavoisieur.

After explaining this, Lavoisieur's mind finally degrades into a jumble of random, indiscernible impulses. Gosseyn now feels fulfilled **and triumphant**, but the mystery of his own identity still bothers him. He begins to put previously unconnected scraps of information together. **He is also displeased that he was not able to discover the secret of the duplication process. He also realizes the meaning of Lavoisieur's statement on the break of continuity between his group and Gosseyn's, that it refers to memory and his own true identity.**

*Also, Lavoisieur and Gosseyn were able to similarize their brains to communicate, something that was impossible to achieve between Gosseyn and anyone else.*

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**[Icshi: the A.E. van Vogt information site](http://www.home.earthlink.net/~icshi/)**

[www.home.earthlink.net/~icshi/](http://www.home.earthlink.net/~icshi/)

**[The Three Worlds of Null-A:](#)**

A Comparative Study of  
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